

ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND
THE ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE THE KOREAN QUESTION
1953-1960

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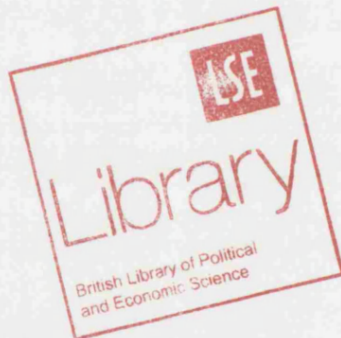
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the nature of Anglo-American relations in their dealings with Korea between 1953 and 1957. It assesses the different attitudes and approaches of the two governments over the conduct of the Korean phase of the Cold War. The truce negotiations, the political conference in Geneva, the discussions at the United Nations and the issues of troop withdrawal and economic aid are examined. Debates over these issues created a certain degree of tension in the US-UK relationship but it was not as acute as it might have been. The thesis explains why and how the US and UK tried to avoid confrontation and cooperate in seeking a peaceful solution to the Korean question. / 60

At Panmunjom, Britain was disappointed by the American hardline position, but accepted the stalemate with the Communists. The Korean phase of the East-West struggle continued in Geneva: the British mediation which was highlighted by Eden's compromise proposals, satisfied neither the US-ROK nor the Communists. The US was determined to dictate the conduct of the peace process but experienced increasing difficulties in maintaining their Cold War strategy. The US had to retain control over the ROK without alienating the Western Allies. The difficulty in reconciling the positions of the ROK with its allies led the US to decide to insist on the status quo of a divided Korea. The US maintained this position and prevented the ninth UN General Assembly reopening the Korean question, for they were not prepared to risk upsetting the status quo. The British wished to end their military commitment when the strategic and financial considerations outweighed any meagre political influence over the Americans. Britain, nevertheless, was always ready not to allow Anglo-American solidarity to be undermined by disputes over Korea. Britain's overwhelming interests lay in the prospect of cementing the 'special relationship'. In examining British and American attempts to deal with these issues this study will contribute to the understanding of an important aspect of Anglo-American relations at the height of the Cold War in East Asia.

ABBREVIATIONS

COS	Chiefs of Staff
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North)
F.O.	Foreign Office
F.R.U.S.	Foreign Relations of the United States
GAOR	UN General Assembly Official Records
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
NA	National Archives, Washington D.C.
NNRC	Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission
NNSC	Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission
NSC	National Security Council
POWs	Prisoners of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRO	Public Record Office, London
ROK	Republic of Korea (South)
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
UN	United Nations
UNC	United Nations Command
UNCURK	United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNKRA	United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Any historian who contemplates Anglo-American relations in the 1950s can only be struck by the contrast between the rhetoric and the realities of the alliance.¹ To some the fifties were an era of British decline and American omnipotence, and to others the period was fraught with misconceptions and misunderstandings. It is a challenge to distinguish the realities from the rhetoric, and to explain how, if the perceptions differed on both sides, the relationship managed to maintain a common position over the Korean question in the context of the Cold War in East Asia.

The spread of the Cold War from Europe to Asia was climaxed with the Korean War of 1950-53. The subsequent developments in Korea represented a significant turning point in the Cold War. The Cold War in Asia symbolized by the division of Korea provided a basis for the Anglo-American regional cooperation, as they shared a common goal of containing communism in East Asia. It is the main purpose of this thesis to explore the extent to which the US and Britain maintained a united front in the Asian Cold War with reference to the developments following the Korean War.

Post-war Korea posed a new challenge to the Anglo-American relationship despite

¹D. Cameron Watt, 'Demythologizing the Eisenhower Era', in Louis and Bull eds., *The Special Relationship*. Oxford, 1986. p.72

the commonly proclaimed aim of finding a peaceful solution to the Korean question. Before long both governments recognised their different approaches to the Korean problem in the context of the Cold War. The differences which had not been so apparent during the war were now clearly recognized in the process of defining their ultimate goals in Korea and ordering priorities according to their own national self-interests. The thesis identifies some of the complex issues over which the US and the UK differed, and examines to what extent their disagreements influenced the US-led course of action in the attempts to find a peaceful solution to the Korean problem.

The scope of the thesis is limited to an examination of Anglo-American dealings in regard to particular issues. Attention has been focused on the final stage of the truce negotiations in 1953, the abortive Geneva Conference and its aftermath, the discussions at the ninth UN General Assembly, the efforts to reduce the Allied military commitment, and the economic reconstruction of Korea through US and UN aid. The last chapter on foreign aid is not viewed from an Anglo-American aspect, but the British observations on America's almost unilateral aid to Korea are discussed; it thus completes the picture of the attempts to settle the Korean question in political, military and economic terms.

The existing literature on Korea, with a few notable exceptions, focuses on aspects other than the Anglo-American relationship, whereas publications on the Anglo-American alliance are predominantly concerned with non-Korean issues. However, some individual essays do highlight episodes which have not been covered adequately in the fragmented general literature. A few valuable articles on the Korean War have been written from an

Anglo-American angle,² but, there is no comprehensive study of the period following the Armistice. Another serious drawback among the secondary sources on Korea is that most of them have not consulted Korean-language materials.³ Sydney Bailey's book⁴ is a unique account with access to the American, British and United Nations archives, but again, it focuses on the Armistice of 1953 and is somewhat sketchy on the Geneva Conference of 1954. Rosemary Foot's latest work is another thorough and excellent account of the truce negotiations.⁵

Korea has long been singled out as an area whose delicate international strategic equilibrium could collapse in a matter of moments. That the peninsula lies in the heart of northeast Asia where the four great powers - USSR, PRC, USA and Japan - meet and intersect constantly reminds the world of its geo-political fragility. If the balance in East Asia does indeed require the maintenance of the four-power interactive system, American

²Jong-Yil Ra, 'Special Relationship at War: The Anglo-American Relationship during the Korean War', in *The Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol.7, no.3, September 1984; M.L.Dockrill, 'The Foreign Office, Anglo-American Relations and the Korean Truce Negotiations July 1951-July 1953', in James Cotton and Ian Neary (eds.), *The Korean War in History* Manchester 1989; Peter Lowe, 'The Settlement of the Korean War', in John W.Young (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration 1951-1955* Leicester University Press, 1988; William Stueck, 'The Limits of Influence: British Policy and American Expansion of the War in Korea', *Pacific Historical Review* Vol.55, 1986.

³Some of the important materials by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been de-classified: *Uriey dae UN Ouekyo* (South Korea's Diplomacy towards UN, 1948-1991) Seoul, 1991; *Hankook Ouekyosillok* (South Korea's diplomatic history) Seoul, 1965. Newspapers such as Dong-a Ilbo and Kyung-Hyang Shinmoon are useful and they are kept in the Library of the National Assembly, Seoul.

⁴Sydney D.Bailey, *The Korean Armistice*. Macmillan, 1992.

⁵Rosemary Foot, *The Substitute for Victory: the politics of peacemaking at the Korean armistice talks*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1990.

political willingness to continue to be a Pacific power is crucial. It is therefore not surprising that since 1945 the volatile and changing security environment in the region demanded America's unceasing attention. At the height of the Cold War during the fifties, the political significance of South Korea for the US was indeed great.

In 1945 few anticipated that the Korean status quo would become permanent in spite of all attempts to change it, and that those attempts would change the character of the Cold War. After Soviet and American forces occupied Korea in August 1945, both governments were unable to agree on a unified Korea. Partition at the 38th parallel was a reflection of post war power politics. The US started an active defence vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and was willing to contest Asian continental domination of the Korean peninsula. The new launch was backed by American determination that no other governments should have greater control of events in the Asian Cold War than the US. However, it is questionable whether containment was viewed in 1945-6 in the Asian context.⁶ It was not fully recognized until late 1947 that Soviet-American interactions on the Korean question were essentially of the same character as in Europe.⁷ Korea was the opening phase of a world-wide power struggle with the Soviet Union.

In spite of the evolutionary concept of containment, Washington's confusing and contradictory policy towards Korea can be explained in terms of early US-UN relations.

⁶The term 'containment' was first used by George F. Kennan, the chief of Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State in 1947 referring the Soviet Union's control in areas of Eastern Europe. See Robert D. Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford University Press, 1994. pp.208-209

⁷Stephen P. Gibert, *Northeast Asia in US Foreign Policy*. Georgetown University, 1979. p.38

Unable to reach agreement with Moscow for more than two years, the US brought the Korean question of independence and unification before the United Nations in September 1947. The fledgling UN was in fact an American instrument, and Korea was one of the first cases to be dealt with. The body set up a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) in 1948, which was replaced by a UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation (UNCURK) two years later.⁸ The primary role of both Commissions was to hold an all-Korean election in order to establish a democratic government for an independent and unified Korea. As soon as this government was established, it was to take over the functions of the two occupying military commands and Soviet and American troops were to be withdrawn.

The commissions failed to fulfil their tasks, for the Soviet government refused to cooperate with the United Nations. Consequently, the General Assembly decided to hold elections only in that half of Korea occupied by American forces.⁹ In July 1948 a new constitution for the Republic of Korea was adopted by the National Assembly which contained many traces of the British parliamentary system and the American system of an independent executive. Syngman Rhee became the first president, and the creation of a separate government for South Korea was thus accomplished in August 1948.

In September 1948, the Supreme People's Assembly met and Kim Il Sung was installed as the first head of government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

⁸*South Korea's Diplomacy towards UN, 1948-91*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seoul, Doc. no.91-77

⁹*Hankook Ouekyosillok* (South Korea's diplomatic history). Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seoul, 1965.

The establishment of two political entities on each side of the 38th parallel ended any organized efforts for unification. The developments during the three years after 1945 also indicated the perpetuation of the conflict of interests of the two occupying powers. The temporary military armistice line, which was of convenience for allied war-time purposes, evolved into rival zones of the hostile governments of the North and South with each claiming jurisdiction over the entire country. The stage was thus set in Korea for one side or the other to attempt national unification by war.

The war for national unification was initiated by North Korea in 1950. It is beyond the scope of the thesis to ascribe particular causes for the detailed developments directly related to the war. It is nevertheless important to point out that, with the American offensive¹⁰ and the subsequent Chinese involvement in the war, the Korean question became a potential source of a global conflict generated by the east-west struggle. Korea became a powder keg in Asia. As the demarcation line was fixed as a de facto division, the pressing need to prevent the communist attack on South Korea succeeding was seen as crucial by the US.¹¹ While the western allies' military commitment formally ended in 1957, American forces have remained in South Korea ever since. The basic rationale for their presence - to deter a new North Korean attack - has remained throughout.

As the difficulty of limiting the Asian Cold War to Korean territory increased,

¹⁰US-UN forces advanced to the Yalu during the crisis of 1950-1951.

¹¹A good account on this subject, Robert O'Neill ed., *East Asia, the West and International Security*. International Institute for Strategic Studies, Macmillan, 1987.

Korean policy became a part of the US global policy of containment. The concept evolved into a more active form of forward policy which was designed not only to 'contain the Soviet Union' but to disintegrate its area of control by 'increasing enormously the strains under which Soviet power must operate'.¹² US military officials certainly defined communist control of all Korea as a likely threat to the security of the Pacific, as a communized Korea would lose its buffer character between the two rivals in the Cold War conflict; the communist threat would then quickly spread to Japan and other parts of East Asia including Taiwan. As long as the political value of South Korea to the US remained, the US would not compromise over Korea. This basic attitude persisted throughout the period.

The imperative to prevent communist influence from spreading in the region made it important for America to seek a reliable ally. Britain was more than ready to remain America's chief ally as she had been during the Second World War. Britain would have resented it if America had undermined the renewal of wartime intimacy.¹³ The British dependence on America's help in Europe dictated the character of the Anglo-American relationship in Asia. The advance of the USSR to nuclear status was leading to reappraisals of the vulnerability of the British position in Europe.¹⁴ The Churchill administration also had inherited numerous economic problems at home. They had to defend the welfare state and at the same time wished to maintain British influence abroad.

¹²Robert D.Schulzinger, *op.cit.*, p.209

¹³Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*. Routledge, 1995. p.102

¹⁴C.J.Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*. Longman, 1992. pp.52-53

Some conservative leaders believed that they could achieve these objectives by making defence cuts. A relaxation in East-West tensions was thus essential. In addition, from their experiences before and during the Second World War, Britain was more inclined to value international cooperation and reconciliation when faced with the Asian Cold War.

Britain believed that the Korean question should find its solution through peaceful negotiation accommodating, and not antagonising, the Chinese communists. This attitude certainly influenced the British position during the Geneva Conference. A multilateral approach, however, inevitably exposed the conflicting interests of the great powers. The apparent disagreement with the US, which resulted from Britain's policy of appeasement towards the Chinese communists, heralded a certain degree of tension in the Anglo-American alliance. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of Anglo-American cooperation, it is essential to assess how the British government formulated its policy over critical issues such as all-Korean elections and the timing of troop withdrawals, and to examine how much freedom of action the Americans had in the face of growing pressure from Syngman Rhee.

The United Nations was important not only because it had been involved in the Korean question from the very beginning, but because of the clear advantage of using this international body to legitimize American policy and obtain international consent. The UN's authority over Korea inevitably became a key issue. During 1954 the US tried to identify the UN's authority with its own containment policy in order to defend its Cold War strategy in Korea. This attempt was challenged by its own western allies as well as

the communists. The Americans were concerned that they might drive their allies into opposition. It is important to examine how successful the US was in its attempt to maintain control in winning the Cold War without losing its main ally, Britain. Why did the Washington administration attach so much importance to the UN's authority and take the course they did? To understand this it is essential to investigate the nature of the difficulty the US was faced with in its relations with Syngman Rhee and his government. It is equally important to assess why and to what degree Britain was prepared to accept the US Korean policy by submitting to America's lead and compromising over issues such as the UN's authority and free elections in Korea.

Military and economic aid to Korea as part of the containment periphery was designed fundamentally to maximise American security interests. Nevertheless, defence expenditures to maintain containment bulwarks often created budget deficits. The Eisenhower administration was aware of a growing congressional and public dissatisfaction with the cost of containment in general, and the role of the US as 'world policeman' in particular.¹⁵ A division of security labour between the US and its allies was contemplated. Central and critical to a new direction¹⁶ in American aid policy since 1953 was the provision of large scale military aid and training to enable local forces to take over the security role being vacated by the US. It is important to investigate the way in which the US and allied countries tried to reduce their military commitments without damaging their effectiveness. Some of the key questions examined are: what was the link between the issue of troop withdrawal and the issue of unification of Korea; why did

¹⁵Stephen P. Gibert, *op.cit.*, pp.40-41

¹⁶It was as part of the New Look.

America have reservations about withdrawal; how did Britain endure the pressure from home, especially from the Treasury, and why did the British finally decide to withdraw their forces when they did? All these questions can find answers only in relation to the strategies for fighting the Cold War.

Korea presented a case where it seemed Britain and the US had a large degree of interdependence in the pursuit of their foreign-policy priority of containing communism. The basic assumption is that the Korean question was of primary importance for the US but secondary for Britain. Beyond the rhetoric about Anglo-American relations, the thesis aims to find out why and how they differed in their Cold War politics, and how their differences affected their attempt to settle the Korean question.

CHAPTER TWO

The Armistice - An Initial Settlement for Peace

Although the Korean War was formally ended with the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement on 27 July 1953, the truce talks had started as early as the summer of 1951. By the time a cease-fire was suggested by Yakov Malik, the Soviet delegate to the UN, on 23 June 1951, both the Communist and the UN Commands recognized that further fighting would contribute nothing towards the realization of their respective goals. Thus one of the longest negotiations in history began in order to obtain a truce, not peace.¹ Despite the initial hope that the war would soon be over, the talks at Panmunjom dragged on and the war continued to take its toll.

In a global context, the truce negotiations symbolized a stalemate between the two incompatible ideologies and the political cultures which had been rapidly growing since the Second World War. The POW issue was a prime example of this as it became an intense wrangle due to intransigence, abuse, hypocrisy and inconsistent policies on both the Communist and the US/UN sides. The POWs were arguably the real victims of the Cold War left in their frustration and despair. The final arrangement for the POWs had to wait for several months even after the Armistice was signed. The US determination to prevent any further aggression, which largely directed the final phase of the

¹R. Leckie, *The History of the Korean War, 1950-1953*. N.Y., 1962. p.323

negotiations, was accompanied by the milder and more moderate approaches of the UK. This chapter does not attempt to follow the details of the negotiation talks, but tries to examine the key issues debated by the US and UK governments in an attempt to understand the effect of the Armistice as an initial arrangement for peace on the subsequent Anglo-American dealings with the Korean question.

The joint meetings for a cease-fire between the UN Command and the commanders of the North Korean and the Chinese armies went on without any agreement until the summer of 1951. A British representative was included on the UN Command negotiating team and tried to exercise some influence on the conduct of the UN Command. In July 1951 the Chief of the Air Staff, Sir John Slessor, becoming impatient with the slow progress at the negotiations, urged the Foreign Office to raise the issue in Washington. He argued that the Americans were conducting the negotiations as though the whole matter was their concern, and that the British government should adopt a role of something little more than an interested spectator. However, the Foreign Office, realising how sensitive the Americans were about keeping the truce negotiation in their hands, refused to raise the matter in Washington and the other Chiefs of Staff did not support Slessor's proposal.²

The British objective was to prevent the conflict from becoming a global confrontation by cooperating with the Americans. Britain acknowledged that America would not deploy its resources against the Soviet threat in Europe unless it could obtain

²PRO FO371 92791 FK1071/11 Minute by Shattock, F.O. Sir John Slessor to Sir K. Mclean, MOD, 26 July 1951.

full support from Britain for its policy in East Asia. The combination of sweeping revolutionary forces and burgeoning nationalism in Asia became a concern to Britain. Britain believed that, by collaboration with the US in helping Asian powers to achieve political stability and economic progress, the revolutionary forces could be resisted. The difficulties in pursuing this objective lay largely in the different perceptions and attitudes towards Communist China; although Eden acknowledged that the US and UK governments had different priorities in their global strategy, many British officials thought the Americans were unnecessarily harsh in their dealings with China.

By the end of 1951 there were very few voices raised in support of General MacArthur's policy of extending the war to the Chinese mainland, and in 1952, the theme, 'In war there is no substitute for victory' was quietly buried in the Republican Convention. The American Presidential campaign had indeed its own effect on the US conduct of the Korean War. General Dwight Eisenhower came back to America to run as a Republican candidate. His job as Supreme Commander of NATO was taken by General Ridgway, while Ridgway was relieved as United Nations Supreme Commander by General Mark Clark, who eventually signed the Korean Armistice Agreement a year later.

As the Republican presidential candidate, Eisenhower, endorsed the Truman Administration's pro-European policy and promised no major changes in foreign policies except to take a somewhat tougher stand against Communism and to end the Korean War. However, Eisenhower did not propose any radical or imaginative ways to bring the Korean War swiftly to a satisfactory conclusion. On 5 June 1952, at his first press

conference since he had returned from Europe, Eisenhower admitted that he 'did not have any prescription for bringing the Korean War to a decisive end...we have got to stand firm...and try to get a decent armistice out of it'.³ To his credit, Eisenhower courageously stood by his convictions throughout the campaign, even though his doing so enraged the Republican hawks.⁴

The Foreign Office was concerned that the American Democrats might become tougher on the Korean issue in order to secure electoral credit: the administration might want either to end the war with some precipitate action against the Communists, or to delay the negotiations until after the election which would make the situation in East Asia even more dangerous. Robert Scott, the Under Secretary of the Far Eastern Department, forwarded Eden's instructions to the British UN representatives in New York. He noted that Britain wanted, firstly, to relax tensions between China and the West, beginning with Korea, in the hope that agreement on Korea would open the way to a settlement of other Far Eastern issues, and secondly, to achieve a satisfactory ending of the Korean commitment or at least to avoid any extension of the fighting.⁵ But Eden's view on British interests was countered by the compelling American argument that any political settlement which provided for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea would immediately lead to a Communist takeover. The Foreign Office was forced to conclude that little could be entertained for the political settlement of Korea during an American

³*New York Times*. 6 June 1952.

⁴R. Whelan, *Drawing the Line: The Korean War, 1950-1953*. London, 1990. pp.278-281

⁵PRO FO371 99569 FK1071/142 Scott to Jebb, 2 January 1952.

election year, and that the impasse would last for some time, if not years.

The Panmunjom negotiations were deadlocked principally over the issue of the repatriation of the POWs. The issue in fact nearly disrupted the whole negotiations several times before the Armistice was finally achieved in July 1953. The United Nations adopted the principle of 'voluntary repatriation' which was later changed to 'non-forcible repatriation'. The UN Command was determined never to force any man to return against his will to the state from which he had defected. The Communists, on the other hand, demanded the total repatriation of all prisoners. The UN Command contended that the 1949 Geneva Convention had been written for the protection of the prisoners of war and not for the benefit of their country of origin. The Communists based their argument on Article 7 and Article 118 of the Geneva Convention.⁶

The Geneva Convention, if taken literally, asserts that all prisoners should be repatriated. But the UN Command now interpreted it differently. As it was expressed in Truman's vow, an armistice could not be bought by 'turning over human beings for slaughter or slavery'.⁷ It is ironical that, when the Convention was written, it was the US which was in favour of Article 118, against Russian opposition. This was of course

⁶Article 7

Prisoners of war may in no circumstances renounce in part or in entirety the rights secured to them by the present Convention, and by the special agreements referred to in the foregoing Article, if such there be.

Article 118

In the absence of stipulations to the above effect in any agreement concluded between the Parties to the conflict with a view to the cessation of hostilities, or failing any such agreement, each of the Detaining Powers shall itself establish and execute without delay a plan of repatriation in conformity with the principle laid down in the foregoing paragraph. In either case, the measures adopted shall be brought to the knowledge of the prisoners of war.

⁷R. Leckie, *op.cit.*, p.329

before the Korean War, and the Americans were anxious to get all unrepatriated prisoners from the Communist side. The Communists never mentioned this fact during the Panmunjom negotiation, nor did the UNC mention the Russian attitude. It remained unmentionable as if both had predicted their ambiguous attitudes towards the issue. In fact, the US had been a signatory to the 1949 Convention but had never ratified it.⁸

The Allied Command was influenced by events during the Second World War when many millions who had fled, mainly from the Soviet Union and Germany, were returned to their country of origin after the conclusion of hostilities only to suffer the indignity of punishment of one type or another. Many were believed to have been executed. As a result of this 'forced' repatriation by the Western free world, the message was spread quite naturally to those behind the Iron Curtain that to surrender to the free world was virtual suicide. Now in Korea the UN Command was well aware that the issue of prisoner repatriation was inextricably related to the ultimate outcome of the war.⁹

At the Plenary Session of the Panmunjom negotiation, the UN Command sought Communist approval for International Red Cross visits to prisoner of war camps, and for the immediate exchange of seriously sick and wounded prisoners. Admiral Joy's suggestion of an exchange of certain lists of prisoners was declined by the Communists. At the second meeting the issue became clear. The Communists insisted on agreeing to the principle of immediate release of all POWs on the grounds of the Geneva Convention, which they had never signed, and refused to report the names of all prisoners as that

⁸W.H. Vatcher, *Panmunjom*. N.Y., 1958. p.122

⁹Ibid., p.117

Convention required. The UN Command refused to discuss any substantive matters until it had full information on the prisoners of war held by the Communists. They argued that without the data and information the talks could not make any progress. The UN Command's request for bringing the International Red Cross into the prisoners' camps was again rejected by the Communists who claimed that the Red Cross was not neutral.

Prospects for a cease-fire diminished at the end of January, 1952, as the talks reached a new deadlock. J.M. Addis, on the Korea desk in the Foreign Office, described the manner in which the UN Command had conducted the negotiations as 'rapid and unexplained changes of front on the main question and a policy of sometimes stepping up demands after concessions have been made'. This attitude 'has not contributed to removing the suspicion that undoubtedly exists on the Communist side that the Americans do not sincerely want an armistice'.¹⁰ The Foreign Office was concerned that the US's seemingly inconsistent actions would breach any possible agreement on the prisoners of war and eventually lead to an extensive war into China. While dismissing this speculation as baseless, C.H. Johnston, head of the China and Korea Department, recognized that it was time 'the Americans should describe to us the action which they would wish to take...in the event of any breach'.¹¹ The Foreign Office felt that Britain was totally left out of the peace negotiations.

On 4 April, both sides at Panmunjom agreed to suspend the talks in order to determine the number of POWs to be repatriated by each side. Hopes were high when

¹⁰PRO FO371 99564 FK1071/34 Minute by J.M. Addis, 24 January 1952.

¹¹PRO FO371 99564 FK1071/29 C.H. Johnston to Franks, 25 January 1952.

the Communists' declaration of an amnesty, which had been requested by the UN Command, was delivered on 6 April.¹² The declaration of an amnesty announced that individual prisoners' decisions were most important and that the procedure of making these decisions should be carefully considered. During the recess the UN Command screened the POWs in its custody in an effort to determine how many prisoners wished to be repatriated. When the meetings were resumed on 19 April, the UN Command presented the Communists with the number of 70,000 prisoners who wished to be repatriated. The figure was 'embarrassingly' small against the total 132,474 prisoners held by the UN Command. The Communists immediately and forcefully rejected the UN Command figure and criticised the screening method. The Communists submitted their round number of around 12,000: 7,700 Korean POWs and 4,400 non-Korean POWs.¹³

On 8 May General Matthew Ridgway brought his successor, General Mark Clark, to Munsan to meet his negotiators. At that time Admiral Joy requested that he be relieved of his duty as UN Command Senior Delegate if the Communists failed to accept the UN Command's April proposal. This so-called 'package proposal' was drawn up in the hope that the concrete arrangements for the cease-fire and the POW issue could be solved together. It was, however, rejected by the Communists, and Admiral Joy's choice of his successor, General Harrison, was approved by General Clark.

The POW issue divided the British government. C.G. Kemball, the Head of the Consular Department, stated that Britain's interest lay in the release of British prisoners

¹²W.H. Vatcher, *op.cit.*, p.142

¹³*Ibid.*

of war and civilians, and 'callous as it may seem, I would rather have a few North Korean POWs liquidated by the Communists than delay the liberation of our people'.¹⁴ Eden wavered on the subject; he did not like the idea of 'sending back these poor devils to death or worse'.¹⁵ J.C. Lloyd, the assistant head of the China and Korea Department, complained that 'the State Department seems oblivious to the humanitarian issue involving our own prisoners in Communist hands...A little more solicitude for our own people would be a good thing on their part'.¹⁶ The Prime Minister, Churchill, dismissed all these views, and in a further missive reminded Eden that he hoped that 'there will be no question of our differing from the Americans on this point of moral issue as I think the consequences will be far reaching'.¹⁷

During May and June, 1952, there were some hopes that the British government might be able to do something to settle the prisoners issue. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, expressed his personal view to the Indian ambassador in Peking that he was deeply concerned about the situation in Panmunjom and was interested in the British government mediating in the dispute so as to make sure that prisoners should be able to decide their fate on a basis of genuine motives. This message was relayed to London when Eden met Krishna Menon, the Indian High Commissioner, to discuss the possibility of breaking the deadlock in the armistice talks. The Indian government believed the Chinese were anxious for an armistice, but thought it would be necessary

¹⁴PRO FO371 99651 FK1551/21 Minute by Kemball, 16 February 1952.

¹⁵PRO FO371 99667 FK1551/46 Minute by Eden, 21 March 1952.

¹⁶PRO FO371 99570 FK1071/176 Minute by Lloyd, 19 April 1952.

¹⁷PRO FO371 99632 FK1551/38 Churchill to Eden, 28 April 1952.

to find a formula which would 'save their face'. Eden told Menon that he would explore any possibility of reaching an armistice in Korea, provided that he did not have to concede the principle of non-forcible repatriation. Significantly, Eden suggested that 'it would be helpful if the Indian Government could tell the Chinese that the conclusion of an Armistice would make it possible to discuss Formosa and other matters'.¹⁸ There was no evidence that the US learnt about the conversation between Eden and Menon, and it is unlikely that Eden's suggestion would have ever reached Washington.

The optimism that the British government's mediation aided by the Indians would improve the situation was spoiled by the American bombing of the power stations in North Korea near the Yalu between 23 and 25 June. This, not surprisingly, resulted in the Communists refusing to come to the negotiating table in early July. The Foreign Office was infuriated by the bombing and by the fact that they had not been informed in advance.¹⁹ However, Selwyn Lloyd and Eden had to bear with the unsatisfactory explanation from Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who argued that the bombing was a purely military operation endorsed by the State Department and President.

The Korean question returned to the United Nations in September 1952, and the POW issue was discussed intensely at the General Assembly. The primary objective of

¹⁸PRO FO371 99573 FK1071/265 Record of conversations between Menon and Secretary of State, 20-21 May 1952.

¹⁹M. Dockrill, 'The Foreign Office, Anglo-American relations and the Korean truce negotiations, July 1951-July 1953.' J. Cotton & I. Neary eds. *The Korean War in History*. Manchester University press, 1989. p.107

the American delegation, as well as some other member countries who had fought in Korea, was to obtain UN endorsement for the principle of non-forcible repatriation. The US Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, suggested that India should take the lead in finding an end to the problem, and thus India sought to end the prisoner exchange deadlock by introducing a compromise proposal in the United Nations. In the meantime, the UN Command made one last attempt to resolve the issue on 28 September with additional proposals on the treatment of the non-repatriates. These were rejected by the Communists and the UN Command suspended the talks indefinitely.²⁰ It was then that Krishna Menon brought forward his alternative resolution. The Indian proposal upheld the American principle of non-forcible repatriation, while accepting the Communist notion that the fate of those who refused to go home should be decided at the peace conference to be held after an armistice. The proposal noted:

1. All prisoners held by both sides would be taken to the Demilitarized Zone and released to a neutral commission of five nations.
2. All prisoners who told the Commission they wanted to go home would be immediately repatriated.
3. Decision on those still in the commission's custody after ninety days would be referred to the peace conference, which, as both sides already had agreed, was to be held ninety days after the armistice. The peace conference would therefore get the prisoner issue as soon as it began.
4. If, after thirty days, the peace conference had not settled the problem of non-repatriation, the prisoners would be turned over to the United Nations for resettlement. Meanwhile, the United Nations would always have the power to block any attempt at the peace conference to impose forcible repatriation.²¹

The Indian proposal, although it was carefully drafted, satisfied neither side. The

²⁰PRO FO371 99584 FK1071/447 Franks from Washington, Telegram 11891, 6 October 1952.

²¹General Assembly Official Records(GAOR), 7th session, Annexes, Agenda item 16, A/2228, pp.2-16 Cited in Sydney D. Bailey, *The Korean Armistice*. London, 1992. p.213-216 See also R. Leckie, op.cit., p.369

Communists still insisted on forcible repatriation, whereas the US demanded unconditional non-forcible repatriation. The UN Command thought that it was pointless to refer the prisoners' problem to a peace conference. Eden, anxious to prevent the proposed US statement which had been circulated from becoming a resolution and being put to a vote, went to the United Nations General Assembly to support the Indian plan. On 13 November in New York, he met with Acheson, Lester Pearson, the Canadian Foreign Minister who was also presiding over the Assembly, and Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister. Eden tried to persuade Acheson that the principle of voluntary repatriation was observed in India's draft resolution. Eden also attempted to enlist President-elect Eisenhower's support for India's resolution. In his telegram to the Foreign Office Gladwyn Jebb said, 'it is satisfactory that a head-on collision was avoided. The difference between the American and the Indian view has now been narrowed to what should prove manageable proportions. We are continuing our efforts to bridge it completely'. The press in New York, however, gave great prominence to the Anglo-American difference of view over the Indian proposal as if Britain 'was abandoning the principle of non-forcible repatriation', and the British officials were rushed to correct the statement.²²

It was only after the vigorous attack against the Indian proposal by the Soviet representative, Andrei Vyshinsky, that Acheson finally decided to support the proposal. The Russian rejection proved to be a rallying point in support of the Indian proposal. It was put to a vote on 1 December 1952 and, despite the violent opposition from the

²²PRO FO371 99590 FK1071/671 G. Jebb, N.Y. to Foreign Office, 24 November 1952.

Communist side, the resolution passed by 54 votes to 5.²³ The Chinese rejected the resolution several days later. It was evident that the Communists regarded the General Assembly's acceptance of the Indian resolution as a diplomatic and propaganda defeat.

The US President-elect, Eisenhower, went to South Korea on 2 December 1952 as he had pledged to do during the election campaign. He spent three days conferring with General Clark and Van Fleet, reviewing the ROK troops, visiting American and UN units, and meeting President Rhee. Plainly, he rejected the MacArthur alternative, and decided to follow the Truman Administration's policy of seeking an honourable truce, and later full peace, while standing firm against forcible repatriation of prisoners.²⁴ The President wanted to end the war and halt the drain of American power in a conflict that offered no hope of a decisive settlement in the struggle against Communism. To do so, the new President decided to stiffen the American attitude towards Communist China.

On 20 January 1953, the problem of Korea was officially handed over to the Eisenhower Administration and soon after Eisenhower's famous State of the Union message was delivered on 2 February. The impact of the message was grave, as it meant the de-neutralization of the Seventh Fleet in Formosa. It was not clear whether Eisenhower thought of war against mainland China at this moment. It seemed, nevertheless, that the action taken by the President and his Secretary of State, Dulles, was more of a warning to Communist China, in the belief that the Chinese would reach an agreement on Korea when they became convinced that American military action against

²³M. Dockrill, *op.cit.*, p.112

²⁴R. Leckie, *op.cit.*, p.365

them on other fronts was an alternative to the stalemate. The Foreign Office was alarmed by Eisenhower's apparent intention. Eden expressed his concern saying that it might have very unfortunate political repercussions.²⁵ It seemed, as one newspaper put it, that Eisenhower was 'unleashing Chiang'.²⁶ The de-neutralization of the Seventh Fleet would cause Peking to deploy units on mainland China opposite Formosa.

On 4 February 1953, just two days after Eisenhower's State of the Union message, Chou En-lai, the Chinese Foreign Minister, announced that China was 'ready for an immediate cease-fire on the basis of the agreement already reached in Panmunjom'.²⁷ The Chinese were not of course ignorant of American planning. They knew all too well that the Republicans were now in power, and that if the Communists dragged out the negotiations too long, the right wing elements in the Republican party would bring great pressure to bear on the Washington authorities to bring the forces of Chiang Kai-shek into the fight. And if Chiang was really going to attack the mainland, Peking would not want to have major forces tied down in Korea.

Certainly the economic stability of China had been affected by the Korean conflict. The war was a drain on Chinese manpower and resources that the Chinese could no longer afford. In 1952 China had a lower per capita production of pig iron, steel,

²⁵Ibid., p.371

²⁶R. Whelan, op.cit., p.352

²⁷*Congressional Quarterly, China: US policy since 1945*. Washington D.C., 1971.

cotton textiles, and fewer miles of railway track per square mile, than Russia had in 1900.²⁸ It was no random occurrence that on the very day of Chou's appeal for the reopening of the peace talks, Peking announced the 1953 production goals of its initial and incipient agricultural plans.²⁹ The Chinese believed that their involvement in Korea, when they had been able to stop the UN advance during the early stage of the Korean War, was the first victory against the west since 1840. It certainly brought considerable prestige to the Communist Chinese regime. However, the euphoria which the initial military success brought was soon ended. When there was no sign of a cease-fire, it became clear that further fighting in Korea might cost the Chinese what they had gained. They must get out before the propaganda gains of the initial victory were lost. The Peking government must have sensed the implication of Eisenhower's message and have been concerned about the US' stiffening inclination.

In February 1953, following the Chinese approval the new American Administration made one last effort to break the deadlock at Panmunjom. They took up the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies, which called for an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners. The State Department asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to put this to the Communists, and on 22 February, General Mark Clark sent a message to North Korean Premier, Kim Il Sung, and Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese People's Army, Peng Teh-huai. The initial reply from the Communist side was silence, but it was not long before the Communists came out with

²⁸Fairbank & Reischauer, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*. Allen & Unwin, 1965. p.872

²⁹*New York Times*. 11 February 1953.

a favourable answer.

On 30 March 1953, Chou En-lai, returning from Stalin's funeral in Moscow - where it was believed he argued China's case for ending the war - announced that prisoners who refused repatriation might be handed over to a neutral state and that explanations be given to them, thus ensuring that the question of their repatriation would be justly settled. Chou's remarks were the most encouraging yet made on the POW issue.³⁰ The Soviet Foreign Minister, V.M. Molotov, endorsed Chou's statement. Agreement was reached on the exchange of sick and wounded on 28 March and was followed by the resumption of full armistice meetings a month later.

The exchange known as Operation Little Switch began on 20 April and lasted until April 26. The United Nations handed over 5,194 North Koreans, 1,030 Chinese and 446 North Korean civilian internees, or a total of 6,670 sick and wounded prisoners. The Communists returned 684 United Nations prisoners, among them 471 South Koreans, 149 Americans, 32 British, 15 Turks, 6 Colombians, 5 Australians, 2 Canadians, 1 Greek, 1 South African, 1 Filipino, and 1 Netherlander.³¹ In the meantime, the talks were resumed at Panmunjom on 26 April. This was the first full-scale meeting of the senior delegations since the recess on 8 October of the previous year. The atmosphere was rather cordial, although the exchange of propaganda messages on both sides continued.

³⁰R. Leckie, *op.cit.*, p.373

³¹*Ibid.*, p.374 The so-called Big Switch was carried out on 5 August and 6 September 1953.

Hope for peace rose again.³²

The new Communist proposal on 7 May was along the lines of the Indian resolution. It called for the establishment of a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) whose members were to be Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and India. The Repatriation Commission was to take custody of the non-repatriates, and the 'explanation' time would be up to four months. A meeting in Washington later that day agreed that the new Communist proposal represented a significant shift in position and offered 'a basis for negotiation of an acceptable agreement'. Yet the Washington government refused to accept it saying that 'a number of problems had still to be resolved'. This stance did not correspond to the UN resolution based on the Indian proposal, for which the US had voted. Chester Ronning of Canada claimed that the UN Command, 'without consulting the others, rejected Chinese proposal almost identical to that contained in the 1952 UN resolution'.³³

The real US problem was South Korea. President Rhee was indignant and fomenting public opposition in South Korea to any armistice along the Indian lines. In particular, Rhee was adamant that Koreans refusing repatriation should be released immediately upon an armistice coming into effect rather than being turned over to the custodial commission for processing in the same manner as the Chinese were to be

³²Mark Clark, *From Danube to the Yalu*. New York, 1954. pp.259-261; W.H. Vatcher, *op.cit.*, pp.188-189

³³Sydney D. Bailey, *op.cit.*, p.131

treated.³⁴ The Washington administration had been wavering on the issue. Before 1952 they had supported the ROK position of the immediate release of all non-repatriates at the time of the armistice. But then they had agreed on the Indian resolution accepting the custodial commission in December 1952. The US changed its position again in early 1953 by supporting Rhee's stance, and this subsequently pushed the US further away from its allies.

The US modified its position again in May. The US Security Information paper of 19 May showed the US changing position on several points. They withdrew from their position of immediate release, and now agreed that Korean non-repatriates would be turned over to the custody of the commission. They also agreed that the commission would reach a decision on all matters by majority vote. They, however, maintained that the POWs would be released if the commission failed to determine their disposition within 90 days after they were taken into the Commission's custody.³⁵ However, the paper, unlike the UN resolution, did not mention the peace conference. The continual changes in the US position reflected the difficulties the Americans had in reconciling support for Rhee with adherence to the less hardline proposals which were favoured by their partners in the UN operation.

The US decision to moderate their position was followed by concessions to Syngman Rhee. The most politically effective concession that they could make would be to negotiate a bilateral security pact with the ROK which Rhee had been trying to obtain

³⁴NA RG59 795.00/5-1953 Memorandum for the President, 19 May 1953.

³⁵NA RG59 795.00/5-1953 Korean Armistice Negotiations, 19 May 1953.

for some time. Such a security pact, however, had political and military disadvantages which would have to be weighed against the need for securing Rhee's acceptance of the armistice. General Clark was authorized to make several major promises. As soon as an armistice was signed, all sixteen UN members who had sent forces to Korea would issue a joint statement declaring that if the Communists violated the truce, all sixteen nations would again send forces to defend South Korea. The US would underwrite the expansion of the ROK army to about twenty divisions and would also enable South Korea to build up 'appropriate air and naval strength'. With such forces at its disposal, South Korea should be able to deter any Communist attempt to violate the truce. Clark made it clear to Rhee that if, at any time in the future, he initiated aggressive action against the North, the US would abandon South Korea to its inevitable fate. The US would give South Korea \$1 billion over the course of the next few years for the reconstruction and economic rehabilitation of the nation. In case a political conference were to be convened following the signing of the armistice, the US would make every effort to secure the withdrawal of the Chinese Communist forces from North Korea and to bring about the unification of the entire Korean peninsula under Rhee's government.³⁶

The Security Information paper was elaborated in the UN Command's counterproposal which was delivered by General Clark on 22 May. The UNC proposal allowed all non-repatriates, North Koreans as well as Chinese, to be submitted to screening and persuasion. It also provided for a demilitarized zone to be established between North and South Korea guarded by Indian troops, so that the non-repatriates

³⁶*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.1, pp.1086-1090 The Acting Secretary of State (Smith) to the Embassy in Korea, 22 May 1953.

were interned in camps while the procedure of persuasion was being carried out. Then within six months of the signing of the armistice, all the remaining non-repatriates were to be released. Significantly, the proposal added an alternative to the planned final position that the 'question of disposition of remaining non-repatriates would be promptly referred to UN General Assembly. We would accept Communist choice of either alternative'.³⁷ It represented substantial concessions to the Communists. But again, it carefully avoided the reference to the peace conference.

The Eisenhower Administration regarded the above proposal as an ultimatum, for its patience was running out. As Secretary of State Dulles told Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 21 May, the US would not abandon its concept of political asylum.³⁸ Undersecretary of State General Walter Bedell Smith told a group of British Commonwealth diplomatic officials:

When decisions have been reached on the position which we were discussing, the UN Command would have reached the end of its bargaining position and in the absence of clear indications from the Communists that agreement could be reached upon the basis of these positions within a reasonable period there would be no purpose in carrying on negotiations any further...The people of the US would not stand for such a situation and it must be expected that the military operations will have to be intensified.³⁹

The US made it clear that if the final position of the UN Command was not

³⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.1, pp.1082-1086 Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Far East (Clark), 22 May 1953.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p.1069 Political Advisor for the Armistice Negotiations (R. Murphy) to the Department of State (A. Johnson), 21 May 1953.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p.1056 Memorandum of conversation by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, A. Johnson, 19 May 1953.

accepted by the Communists within a period of one week, negotiations would be terminated rather than recessed, and all previous agreements would be voided including the immunity and neutralization of the border area, Munsan-Panmunjom-Kaesong, and access thereto. Also, all Korean and Chinese POWs opposed to repatriation would promptly be released, the Koreans to remain in South Korea and the Chinese to go to Formosa.⁴⁰

The British government was concerned by the tone of the 'final position' of the UNC. They believed that there was still room for a compromise. They even believed that acceptance of the Communist terms without substantial modification would be preferable to the break-down of talks, because the basic principle of non-forcible repatriation would be maintained, and hardship in individual cases would be more than compensated by the achievement of an armistice. Churchill captured the public imagination by his speech in the Commons on 11 May which won unqualified approval from both the Conservative and Labour parties. His statements that 'there is only one vital point, namely, a POW cannot, and should not, be repatriated against his will and that the question of conditions governing the exchange of POWs has been reduced to terms which no longer involve any difference of principle, and that all that remains is methods and procedure were a succinct definition of the UK position'.⁴¹ Acknowledging that both sides at Panmunjom repeatedly took a firm stand on the repatriation issue, Britain believed that the stalemate would not permit either side to dictate the terms of the armistice. The longer the

⁴⁰NA RG59 795.00/5-1953 Korean Armistice Negotiations, 19 May 1953.

⁴¹*Hansard* 1952-53, Vol.515, Cols.883-898. NA RG59 795.00/5-1953 London to Secretary of State, 19 May 1953.

negotiations continued the more difficult it would be to compromise. Thus a mutual accommodation should be obtained as soon as possible.

The State Department was aware that the British press had been highly critical over the UNC handling of the truce negotiations. This stemmed in part from a feeling of frustration over the interminable length of the negotiations, and 'the realization that the UK (which in the British mind could do it better) was without representation' at the negotiation table. The US officials were, however, convinced that General Harrison at Panmunjom 'tried to go a long way toward reassuring the Foreign Office that the negotiations on the part of the UN Command was(sic) conducted in a reasonable and moderate manner'. The officials recalled what the Foreign Office had often said privately that the UN conduct of the negotiations was sensible enough and that its shortcomings were in large measure due to a lack of attention given to public relations.⁴²

General Smith tried to make the US position clear when he met with the British Ambassador, Sir Roger Makins. Smith said that the US had gone a great distance to meet the British requests for moderation and these were incorporated into the UN Command's proposal. The Americans were sure that they had secured the support from the Australians and New Zealanders, and could obtain Canadian support. The final proposal had been put to a group made up from the appropriate committees of the Congress and they had agreed to support the proposal even though one or two wanted a more hard-line position. General Smith said that he had been surprised to learn that one or two Congressmen thought it was better to go on fighting than to give way to a weak or bad

⁴²NA RG59 795.00/5-1553 London to Secretary of State, 15 May 1953.

armistice. He also noted Churchill's reference to what he called 'minor' procedural points. He said that these had been given careful consideration in the planning and there would be sufficient teams on the spot to make the procedure work. The point was that the US was not going to reopen the issue of the proposed procedures again.⁴³

Churchill was quoted as saying that the 'burden of blood and treasure was borne by the US, and the matter was not for the UK to decide', but it was 'Britain's duty to express opinions freely and frankly'. He also noted that the US gave 'most careful consideration' to UK representations, and expressed certainty that the US was as anxious as the UK regarding achievement of an effective armistice.⁴⁴ Churchill added that he 'did not think there is any real difference between the US and the UK on the main principles involved'.⁴⁵

Giving the US general support in public was one thing, and trying to influence and moderate the US position in private was another. Eden, early in April, had sent messages to Washington opposing any widening of the war and urging the US to exercise initiative and flexibility in the armistice negotiations.⁴⁶ Churchill had also sent a message to Molotov via the British Ambassador in Moscow stressing that the present push to reach a truce in Korea was most serious and the UK, together with its allies, was determined

⁴³NA RG59 795.00/5-2453 Korean Truce Negotiations, 24 May 1953.

⁴⁴NA RG59 795.00/5-2153 Aldrich to Secretary of State, 21 May 1953.

⁴⁵NA RG59 795.00/6-1253 Churchill's Statement on Korean Truce Talks, 9 June 1953.

⁴⁶*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.1, pp.848-849 Current Policy with Respect to Korea, contained in NSC 118/2, Foreign Attitudes toward Korean conflict, 6 April 1953.

to make every possible effort to obtain it. He also suggested that Molotov should be able to impress this on the Chinese and North Korean Communists and exert influence which would make an agreement possible. Molotov's reply to this was nothing more than an amiable exchange of pleasantries. He said that the Soviets agreed that a truce was desirable, but did not indicate any intention to communicate with the Chinese, take any other action, or make any other offer.⁴⁷

Another problem in US-UK relations was over the so-called Greater Sanctions Statement (or Joint Policy Statement) on Korea. The British government had long-standing reservations about its implications. The Statement, a result of the agreement by all the participating governments of the UN, dated back to early 1952 when the UN Command delegation at Panmunjom had learnt about the Communists' plan for the construction and rehabilitation of military airfields in North Korea.⁴⁸ It seemed clear that the construction of military airfields in North Korea would have a great effect on the security of the US and other forces in Korea. In this circumstance, the UN Command had managed to bring the sixteen allied governments which were militarily engaged in the fighting to agree on the sanctions if South Korea was attacked. It was basically a warning that further aggression against South Korea would be met with 'full retribution without geographic limitation'.⁴⁹ From the British view this seemed too menacing, and Eden had

⁴⁷NA RG59 795.00/6-553 London to Secretary of State, 5 June 1953.

⁴⁸NA RG59 795.00/5-953 Comments on Points Raised in British Memorandum, 9 May 1953.

⁴⁹PRO FO371 99575 FK1071/7 15 February 1952; *F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1173-1174 NSC 154, 15 June 1953; *Ibid.*, p.1409 Joint Policy Declaration, 21 July 1953.

suggested a less pugnacious formulation. Nevertheless, on 20 February 1952, the British government had agreed to the document, and it was decided to issue the Statement immediately after the conclusion of an armistice.⁵⁰

The British memorandum of May 1953 clearly indicated that the government was having second thoughts. It was now suggested that no decision on the issuance of the Statement should be made until after an armistice was concluded. The British arguments were that the conditions and the atmosphere of an armistice might differ from those anticipated when the statement had been prepared, and that the terms and the timing of any warning should be decided after the armistice.⁵¹ Yet the real fear for Britain was that the Greater Sanctions Statement would be taken as an endorsement of the US policy over the possible use of nuclear weapons. Recognizing the grave implication of endorsing such a statement, the British government decided to draw the American attention to the dangers of a nuclear war.

The British Memorandum was regarded by the State Department as 'most serious', for the US considered the agreed statement as a binding commitment on all participating governments.⁵² There was no doubt that the US could not accept the thesis that a decision on the issuance of the statement should be deferred until after the armistice was signed, since they considered the Greater Sanctions Statement as an important and integral part

⁵⁰PRO 371 99575 FK1071/11 Greater Sanctions Statement, 22 February 1952.

⁵¹NA RG59 795.00/5-953 Comments on Points Raised in British Memorandum, 9 May 1953.

⁵²NA RG59 795.00/5-853 Dulles to Embassy in London, 8 May 1953.

of the armistice arrangements. If the Statement was to be weakened by the withdrawal of any one of the participating governments or if the decision on its issuance was to be reviewed and possibly deferred, the US Government would immediately have to reconsider its position on the acceptance of the terms of an armistice, with particular reference to the question of military airfields in North Korea. The US Government firmly believed that if the issuance of the Statement were delayed after the armistice it might appear gratuitous, but if issued at the time of the armistice, it could not be considered provocative since it would appear to be associated with the armistice agreement. Showing the world a collective determination to meet Communist aggression was not just important for security in the region but was vital for winning a propaganda advantage.⁵³

The State Department called the British Ambassador, Roger Makins, in order to make sure that there would be no last minute hitch or delay over issuance of the Statement, and to confirm their understanding that the British government would proceed as originally agreed. Roger Makins referred to a suggestion made by his government. The suggestion was for consideration of possible 'confidential' notification in lieu of a public statement and for reviewing circumstances prevailing on the day the armistice was signed. However, he said, the British government was prepared to go ahead with the original procedure if he could be assured that the suggestions contained in the British message had been considered but had not been found sufficiently weighty to alter the original agreement.⁵⁴ Later he was told that the US stood firmly on the immediate public

⁵³NA RG59 795.00/5-953 Robertson, FE to the Acting Secretary, 9 May 1953.

⁵⁴NA RG59 795.00/6-1053 UK Adherence to Greater Sanctions Statement, 10 June 1953.

issuance of the original statement upon signature of the armistice and he could report this as the US government position.⁵⁵ The British position was once again abandoned in the face of American persistence.

While the US secured Britain's support and concurrence only by making their position clear to the British government in no uncertain terms, the US continued to try and conciliate Syngman Rhee in order to get his cooperation over the armistice. An aide-memoire was presented to President Rhee by the US Ambassador in Seoul, Briggs, on 27 May.⁵⁶ The aide-memoire indicated that the US was fully aware of the feeling of insecurity on the part of the ROK regarding its future status and its defence against aggression. In view of its long-term interest in the security of the Western Pacific, the US intended to maintain armed forces on a long-term basis. Nevertheless, it was made clear that those forces should clearly be a deterrent to renewed aggression as well as a major factor in the US response to any such aggression.⁵⁷

The aide-memoire also attached urgent and serious consideration to the agreed statement of the sixteen countries. It was emphasized that the statement was an unprecedented international undertaking by the members of the UN which should have a profound effect in discouraging future aggression against South Korea. The ROK was assured that the statement would remain in effect for the duration of the armistice, and

⁵⁵Ibid., p.2

⁵⁶NA RG59 795.00/6-353 Transmitting Aide-Memoire Presented to President Rhee, 3 June 1953.

⁵⁷NA RG59 795.00/6-353 Aide-Memoire dated 27 May 1953.

that the US would not go back on it as long as it was in force. It was proposed that the statement conclude with the following sentences:

We affirm, in the interests of world peace, that if there is a renewal of the armed attack, challenging again the principle 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.⁵⁸

If there was no alternative, Eisenhower was prepared to seek a 'military solution' to meet the aggression on acceptable terms. He accepted the military point of view that it would be highly advantageous to use nuclear weapons. The President thought it might be cheaper, dollar-wise, to use atomic weapons in Korea than to continue to use conventional weapons against the dugouts which honeycombed the hills along which the enemy forces were presently deployed.⁵⁹ He was not therefore opposed to using nuclear weapons against tactical targets in order to dislodge Chinese forces from Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff went even further saying that, if it should be necessary to take more positive action by expanding the war beyond Korea, it would be necessary to use the atom bomb.⁶⁰ The minutes of the National Security Council meetings showed that the possibility of America using atomic bombs against targets in Korea was seriously considered.⁶¹ The strategy was to deal China such a swift and devastating blow that it

⁵⁸*F.R.U.S.*, 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1407-1411 Joint Policy Declaration in connection with the Korean Armistice, 21 July 1953; pp.1636-1645 173rd Meeting of the NSC, 3 December 1953.

⁵⁹*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.1, p.1014 144th Meeting of the NSC, 13 May 1953.

⁶⁰Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*. N.Y., 1963. pp.179-180

⁶¹*F.R.U.S.*, p.770 131st Meeting of the NSC, 11 February 1953; pp.817-818 JCS Meeting, 27 March 1953; pp.826-827 Special Meeting of the NSC, 31 March 1953; p.977 143rd Meeting of the NSC, 6 May 1953.

would be knocked out of the war before the Soviets would have a chance to intervene.⁶²

The Secretary of State, Dulles, mentioned to Nehru in New Delhi that if the armistice negotiations failed, the US would probably take stronger military action, and that could well be beyond the area of conflict. The message was relayed to Peking. What impact this might have had on the conference table at Panmunjom is hard to judge.

In addition to British concern over the use of nuclear weapons and the possible extension of the conflict, the US was faced with the difficulty of satisfying the views of both the Allies and the South Koreans. The US commitment to a collective settlement with its allies was bound to alienate the Koreans. The Koreans' fear was based on the assumption that a truce would leave Korea divided again. Nothing short of unification was acceptable to the Koreans. They were increasingly impatient as they longed for an opportunity to get the Communists out of Korea and unite the country by force. The US was deeply disturbed by the South Korean agitation against an armistice and by statements that the ROK would not observe the terms of any armistice. While many US officials thought Rhee was bluffing, Dulles believed that Rhee should be induced to accept US authority and that it should be made clear that the US had no intention of unifying Korea by war.

The US warned the ROK that their defiant tendency would in all probability cause the governments which had agreed to the Greater Sanctions Statement to reconsider their position, which could well jeopardize the issuance of it. On the other hand, the US tried

⁶²Ibid., p.1066 145th Meeting of the NSC, 20 May 1953.

to reassure the ROK by promising that they would proceed with a political conference designed to achieve a unified, democratic and independent Korea and to bring about the rapid withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces. They stressed that the Korean question ought to be resolved through peaceful means, and it was made plain that there was no chance of resuming the war unless the Communists initiated it. The US repeated their promise to assist in the development and maintenance of Korean ground forces, so long as they were necessary for the defence of the ROK, provided satisfactory assurances were received of cooperation by the ROK in the armistice agreement.⁶³

By early June 1953 the differences over the issue of POWs were significantly reduced. Britain however still wanted the UN resolution of 1952 to be the official UNC position, which would entail a reference to a peace conference. At the plenary meeting on 4 June, the Communists agreed to the main elements of the proposal of the UNC except that 'non-repatriates who might elect to go to neutral nations should be assisted by a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and by the Red Cross Society of India'.⁶⁴

The Communists and the UNC signed the terms of reference on prisoner exchange on 8 June 1953. As the San Francisco Chronicle headlines proclaimed, the 'Truce was all set with the signing of the completed terms of reference'.⁶⁵ According to these final terms of the POW settlement, prisoners who still refused to go back to their original

⁶³NA RG59 795.00/6-353 Aide-Memoire presented to President Rhee, 3 June 1953.

⁶⁴*F.R.U.S. 1952-54*, Vol.15, pt.1, p.1137 The Chiefs of Staff, US Army (Collins) to the Commander in Chief, Far East (Clark), 3 June 1953.

⁶⁵W. Vatcher, *op.cit.*, p.194

place would not have to accept repatriation. The eighteen-months dispute over the prisoners was at an end, with a triumph for the principle of voluntary repatriation. The UN Command felt confident that the truce could be signed by June 18.⁶⁶ In an effort to win the cooperation of the ROK's president, President Eisenhower secretly invited Rhee to visit him in Washington, but Rhee declined. The UN Command was to learn, only days later, that there was another obstacle to be overcome.

The progress in Panmunjom led the ROK to realize that an armistice was imminent. The ROK could not accept the division of the country and the presence of the Chinese Communist forces in North Korea. That would mean abandoning the goal of immediate realization of unification. At a meeting in Washington on 17 June, the South Korean Prime Minister said to Dulles that 'now would be the best opportunity to get the Communists out of Korea, unite the country, and liberate the people in North Korea from Communist tyranny'. The Korean Prime Minister appealed to Dulles and his officials that a negotiated settlement would mean the restoration of the 38th parallel with the unmistakable prospect of Korea remaining divided. The presence of nearly a million Communist Chinese troops in North Korea was obviously the biggest threat. There was a fear that what was being pursued in Korea by the UN was a policy of appeasement with the dangerous implication that the ROK's interests might be sacrificed in the name of world peace.⁶⁷ It was clear that the ROK still wanted to unify Korea by war. Dulles stressed that the US had no intention of helping the ROK to unify the country by force. Realizing the futility of the debate, the Korean officials brought up the issue of security.

⁶⁶Mark Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu*. N.Y., 1960. p.276

⁶⁷NA RG59 795.00/6-1753 Various Matters Concerning Korea, 17 June 1953.

Before it was forced to accept a truce, the ROK felt that at least it had to obtain a security guarantee. The officials argued that a mutual defence treaty with the US would be an answer to the ROK's future security problem.

The documents of the State and Defence Departments show that the US did not favour a mutual security pact with the ROK. Officials in both departments agreed that many difficulties stood in the way of such a treaty: a bilateral treaty might detract from the international character of UN action in Korea weakening the principle of collective security and impairing the effectiveness of the statement agreed among the sixteen allied countries.⁶⁸ Moreover, a formal treaty requiring US Congressional approval would of necessity not apply to territory in North Korea not under control of the ROK. It would be most undesirable to create the impression that the US was not interested in the unification of all Korea under a free government or to acknowledge and give legal effect to the Communists' control over any part of Korea.⁶⁹

Certainly the US foresaw that their undertakings, in any form of bilateral treaty, would increase their already far-reaching commitment in Korea. The American public began to see the militant stance of the ROK as unjustifiable, and it would continue to drain American resources. In view of the official Korean statements regarding the breaking-off of the armistice talks, the American public became increasingly doubtful about the Koreans' commitment to an early and peaceful settlement. In these circumstances, it would be extremely difficult to justify to the American people and the

⁶⁸NA RG59 795.00/5-853 Dulles to Ambassador Briggs, 8 May 1953.

⁶⁹NA RG59 795.00/6-353 N.W. Bond to Washington, 3 June 1953.

Congress such a commitment as the ROK demanded.

It was significant that Dulles rejected Rhee's suggestion for the simultaneous withdrawal of UN and Chinese Communist forces which would remove the barriers to a ROK attack on the North. Dulles tried to point out that the withdrawal would weaken their negotiating position. The presence of US and UN forces in Korea provided bargaining power against the Communists. Dulles explained that 'if we keep US forces in Korea and in the general area, and if we give the Communists the impression that Korea might become a threat as a jumping-off place for American power, then the Communists might prefer a unified Korea if it meant the withdrawal of this threat'.⁷⁰ This argument, however, was not convincing. Given that Rhee had threatened to withdraw his forces from the UN Command if a truce was agreed and Chinese troops remained in the North, the real intention of the US would be to keep the ROK force under control. US/UN forces were needed in order to deter any provocative action.

On June 18, without any warning, 25,000 prisoners guarded by the ROK troops were released from detention camps.⁷¹ Apparently it was a well-planned operation. The release halted the final arrangement of the armistice at Panmunjom as the Communists immediately suspended the armistice talks. The Communists made a propaganda harvest of the incident. They demanded that these prisoners be recaptured and accused the UN Command of connivance with the ROK. The incident also provoked a wave of world-

⁷⁰NA RG59 795.00/6-1753 Various Matters Concerning Korea: Conversation between Dulles and Korean Prime Minister, Paek, 17 June 1953.

⁷¹NA RG59 795.00/6-1853 ROK Release of Anti-Communist Korean Prisoners, 18 June 1953.

wide criticism of the ROK and its President. Washington and Eisenhower were astonished. General Clark denied any collusion in the release. Dulles issued a statement designed to placate the infuriated Communists:

This action was in violation of the authority of the United Nations Command to which the Republic of Korea agreed. On behalf of the United Nations we have conducted our negotiations for an armistice in good faith and we have acted and are acting in good faith.⁷²

The Foreign Office required an immediate and full report on the break-out of the prisoners and on the measures which the UN Command intended to take. Frank Tomlinson, the British Counsellor in the Washington Embassy, said to Kenneth Young at the Northeast Asian Bureau, that the incident was obviously a most serious development which unfortunately seemed to be irrevocable. He thought it would be difficult to explain publicly why the US security guards had not replaced Koreans, since everybody was fully aware that such a release could be carried out at any time.⁷³

The House of Commons was 'surprisingly' calm, apparently impressed with the seriousness of the problem and refrained from attempts to generate any political capital. Churchill characterized the escape as a 'deplorable occurrence'. He placed great emphasis on 'grave and serious problems of a most serious character and full of danger'. However, he denounced the Communists' accusation of the US as colluding in the incident by saying that 'nothing was further from the truth than that the UN Command connived in the event'. He did not spare his support for the Americans stating that the

⁷²R. Leckie, *op.cit.*, p.383

⁷³NA RG59 795.00/6-1853 F.S.Tomlinson, Washington to F.O., 18 June 1953.



UK was 'resolved to act in good faith' and had the 'fullest agreement with the great ally across the ocean'. He rejected the suggestion of an investigation of the event and regarded it as a matter for the US to decide. He also defended the use of ROK troops as guards because US forces were needed at the front. In answer to a supplementary question by Attlee, he refused to admit that 'the question was one of lack of discipline', but stated it was a 'secret and treacherous action'.⁷⁴

Some members of the Labour Party were more agitated about the event. Philip Noel-Baker queried whether it was necessary to call a special session of the General Assembly, while A. Irvine asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of Rhee's defiance of the authority of the UN, the government should consider, in consultation with other member states of the UN, withdrawing recognition of the South Korean Government.⁷⁵ Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, backed by Churchill, said that the government did not consider that the courses suggested by the Labour members were the way to handle the present situation in Korea. Because the arguments for withdrawing recognition might well have been used against the People's Republic of China when their aggression took place in Korea. The UK government did not take that step because 'we regarded recognition as being a matter of fact when a particular government was in control of a country, and it has nothing to do with whether we like it or not'.⁷⁶

⁷⁴*Hansard* 1952-53, Vol.516, Cols.1182-1185. NA RG59 795.00/6-2253 London to Secretary of State, 22 June 1953.

⁷⁵NA RG59 795.00/6-3053 London Embassy to the Department of State, 30 June 1953. See also *Hansard* 5th Series, 29 June 1953, cols. 25-26

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

The action of the ROK, regardless of its own justification, was fraught with dangers. It could have provoked the Communists to the point of breaking off the armistice negotiations. This might have resulted in a resumption of hostilities on a larger scale. Then the UN policy for a negotiated settlement would have to have been abandoned. There was no doubt that the ROK wanted to unify the country by war. But the risk was too great without US support. The Korean officials' meeting with Dulles on 17 June was the last attempt to solicit the help, but their mission was not successful. It was out of this desperation that Rhee took the action to sabotage the peace settlement. The constant opposition and the repeated threats from Rhee exposed him to charges of irresponsibility by many of the allies, with the inescapable result that the ROK's international image was seriously damaged. It was a heavy price for the ROK to pay.

Aware of the serious effect of Rhee's explosive move on the armistice negotiations, President Eisenhower sent the Assistant Secretary of State, Walter Robertson, to Korea on 25 June. When Robertson conferred with Rhee the following day, the latter reiterated his views concerning his opposition to the armistice terms especially in connection with the prisoners, the fact that the armistice instrument would not require the withdrawal of Chinese Communists from North Korea, and that the political conference would involve a period of endless discussions providing the communists with unlimited opportunities for concentrated infiltration and subversive propaganda in South Korea. Robertson in turn presented American views, emphasizing the advantages accruing to the ROK from American assurances, the allied countries' unwillingness to continue fighting to unify Korea by force and the Secretary of State's intention of collaborating, particularly with the ROK, in a political conference to attain the objective of a free,

united and independent Korea.⁷⁷

President Rhee realized that a breach with the US at this time was unthinkable and that every effort for continued cooperation should be made. Without repudiating his fears of the situation which would develop following the proposed armistice, he finally indicated his acceptance of the truce with the following conditions: moving the remaining 8600 Korean anti-communist POWs to the demilitarized zone for take-over by NNRC; placing a time limit of 90 days on the political conference discussions; economic aid and the build-up of the ROK Army to approximately 20 divisions as previously promised; and an immediate guarantee of a Mutual Defence Pact.⁷⁸

An aide-memoire was drawn up the day after the meeting by Rhee, Robertson and General Clark. The US government assured Rhee on various issues. On the other hand, the US envoy made it clear that the US government could not impose any time limit upon any other governments who might participate in the political conference to follow the armistice, but that 'if, at the end of 90 days after the opening of a political conference, it became clear that the conference was not making progress and was being exploited by the Communists to infiltrate and propagandize or embarrass the ROK, the US government would be prepared to act in concert with the ROK with a view to retiring jointly with the ROK from the political conference'.⁷⁹

⁷⁷NA RG59 795.00/6-2653 Seoul to the Secretary of State, 26 June 1953.

⁷⁸Ibid., p.2

⁷⁹NA RG59 795.00/6-2753 Seoul to the Secretary of State, 27 June 1953.

When the US Acting Secretary of State, Smith, met with the British Ambassador, Makins, a similar message was delivered. With regard to Rhee's unofficial request that 'the US agree to resume hostilities in the event political discussions failed after 90 days', Secretary Smith said to the Ambassador that the US had informed President Rhee that they were unable to give any such guarantee, that, even if President Eisenhower was willing to do so, it would be impossible since any commitment to this effect would require Congressional action and would amount to a declaration of war. Secretary Smith also said that it was 'our intention not to withdraw from Korea', and Makins confirmed this as his own government's view. Makins took pains to point out that the British government realized fully the difficulty of the American negotiating position. He then indicated that 'there had been, and would probably continue to be, criticism by elements of the British public and in the House, but that this did not represent the position of the British government which had full confidence'(sic).⁸⁰

By July 4 the meeting with Rhee and Robertson in Seoul revolved around two principal questions: the possible result of the political conference and the US Senate's treatment of a Mutual Defence Treaty. Rhee said that the main difficulty was in knowing what would happen should the political conference fail. He expressed his great desire for a pledge from the US for joint military action in the post-conference period. Robertson explained that the US President could, for constitutional reasons, give no such pledge. Rhee said he understood the difference between the US carrying on the war as a member of the UN and acting alone. He again expressed his hope that the US at least could give him moral and material support in fighting alone for Korea's reunification. Kenneth

⁸⁰NA RG59 795.00/7-353 Korea, 3 July 1953.

Young, Director of the Northeast Asian Bureau, pointed out to Rhee that the Greater Sanctions Statement was to be issued on or about the time the armistice was concluded, and that would be of tremendous importance not only to the US but also to the ROK as a warning to the Communists in case of their breach of the armistice. The Greater Sanctions Statement was such an unprecedented undertaking and guarantee benefiting the ROK that the ROK government could safely leave to the post-armistice period the negotiation and ratification of a Mutual Defence Treaty with the US.⁸¹

Rhee, while undoubtedly disillusioned by the firm stand of the US, retreated from many of his previously declared positions: he gave up his condition that the withdrawal of Chinese Communist troops and the unification of Korea take place prior to conclusion of the armistice, and gave up his demand for all non-Communist POWs to be immediately released to countries of their own choosing. He agreed that anti-Communist Korean and Chinese POWs would be transported to the demilitarized zone and turned over to Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. He also gave up his refusal to submit the issue of the unification of Korea to a political conference and agreed to cooperate in the 'peaceful achievement' of the unification of Korea. He accepted the assurances of Eisenhower and Dulles that the defence treaty would be ratified. He abandoned his request that the US agree to resume hostilities after 90 days of a political conference if it failed to achieve its objectives. For the first time in writing he had formally agreed not to obstruct the armistice.⁸² Finally Rhee came round and agreed that he would accept the armistice terms as binding upon him 'so long as no measures or actions taken under the

⁸¹NA RG59 795.00/7-453 Meeting with President Rhee, 4 July 1953.

⁸²NA RG59 795.00/7-953 Briggs to Secretary of State, 9 July 1953.

armistice are detrimental to our national survival'.⁸³ In return for Rhee's cooperation Eisenhower confirmed all the terms of the offers that he and General Clark had made.

Officials in the State Department and the British Embassy in Washington sounded each other on a number of questions relating to the final truce negotiations. It was notable that the British officials came up with their old reservation in regard to the issuance of the Greater Sanctions Statement. Allen at the British Embassy said that his government felt strongly that the issuance of the Statement was unnecessary and undesirable as they had been uneasy about the situation since Rhee's action with the non-repatriates of June 18. He argued that in the new circumstances the impact of the Statement on world opinion would be quite negative and overall the Statement might do more harm than good. Even if the allies communicated it privately to the Communists, the latter could publish it, and referring to the fact that it was not they but Rhee who had already jeopardized the armistice, challenge the US/UNC to make a similar declaration to Rhee. Therefore, the total effect might be very undesirable in terms of propaganda. Alexis Johnson at Far Eastern Affairs said to Allen that the US had always looked at the statement as a deterrent, feeling that if the Communists knew what would happen if they renewed the aggression they might refrain from doing so. The British officials were not convinced and maintained that they still 'felt uneasy'.⁸⁴

The Australian Ambassador, Sir Percy Spender, said his Government's view was

⁸³*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1357-1359 Syngman Rhee to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, 9 July 1953.

⁸⁴NA RG59 795.00/7-1653 Korean Truce Negotiations, 16 July 1953.

that the Statement should be made publicly and promptly after the armistice; the Statement would have considerable deterrent value, in part because it would come from all sixteen participating nations. Makins, on the other hand, reminded Dulles of his government's position and stressed that there was real need to give the whole question more thought, especially since there was a possibility of a breach of the armistice from either side. Dulles maintained the US view that it was not necessary to change the language of the Statement which had been accepted by all participating countries. One feature of the language which was particularly important was the reference to the fact that 'if hostilities were to be resumed it was doubtful whether they could be confined to Korea'.⁸⁵ The UN Command had been considerably concerned with the lack of restrictions on rehabilitation of airfields in North Korea and had conceded on this point only in consideration of the Greater Sanctions Statement. At the same time, the Statement was a security guarantee given to the ROK as a *quid pro quo* for its cooperation with the US.

Dulles suggested that the joint Statement might be sent to the UN Secretary General as a part of the formal transmission of the armistice by the UN Command to the United Nations. The other US representative stressed that the language would make it clear that the Statement applied only 'in the case of unprovoked aggression', and that the Statement was to be signed following the signature of the armistice.⁸⁶ The UK representative, Tomlinson, after getting a message from Lord Salisbury, expressed the

⁸⁵NA RG59 795.00/7-2153 Joint Policy Declaration in Connection with the Korean Armistice, 21 July 1953.

⁸⁶NA RG59 795.00/7-2453 Korean Truce Negotiation, 24 July 1953.

view that the UK agreed with the US and that the UK would fall in with the Secretary's suggestion for including the Greater Sanctions Statement in the proposed UN Command Report.⁸⁷

Meanwhile the final agreement was reached at Panmunjom. On 27 July, Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, Senior UNC Delegate, and General Nam Il, Senior Communist Delegate, entered the Armistice building at their separate entrances, and quietly and with no speeches, affixed their signature to eighteen copies (six in English, six in Chinese, six in Korean) of the Armistice Agreement. Nine copies were then delivered to Munsan and Kaesong respectively for the signatures of the UN Commander General Mark Clark, and the Supreme Commanders of the North Korean and Chinese Army Marshal Kim Il Sung and General Peng Teh-huai.⁸⁸ It was a short and quiet end to the battle for the armistice. Once the battle for the armistice had ended, there began the battle for the peace.

The truce in Korea was attained after lengthy negotiations between the US-led UN Command and the Chinese-North Koreans. The initial arrangement for peace in Korea marked a new phase in Anglo-American relations in that both governments began to come to terms with their different priorities and concerns in the conduct of the Asian Cold War. Britain, feared the possible extension of the war into China and wished to end the conflict by appeasing the Communists. The US hard-line containment policy, which made direct confrontation with the Communists inevitable, was at odds with the British plea for

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ W. Vatcher, *op.cit.*, pp.201-202

compromise. The UNC and the Communist side were at loggerheads over the issue of prisoners of war, which characterised the Korean aspect of the Cold War. Britain pleaded for compromise and tried to bridge the differences between the American and the Communist proposals. The tedious wrangle over the issue finally reached an agreement which was close to the 1952 UN resolution and was actively encouraged by the British government. However, the British efforts to moderate the US-UNC position were far from successful. Britain could not alter the US decision to use nuclear weapons in case the conflict escalated. Despite the grave concern over the far-reaching effect of the Greater Sanctions Statement, Britain was unable to prevent the Statement from becoming a part of the Armistice Agreement. All this revealed was that Britain possessed only meagre influence over the US.

The truce negotiations presented the US with a double-edged problem: on the one hand, the Eisenhower Administration had to deal with the Communists in the Cold War battle, and, on the other, had to keep South Korea and President Rhee under its control. Rhee's pledge to unify the country by war became a threat to the US/UN peace process and the armistice. The release of prisoners by Rhee was one last attempt to sabotage the peace process. The US was committed to a negotiated settlement and they were wary of a war provoked by the ROK as much as by the Communists. Dealing with the ROK required the US to use some carefully chosen 'carrots and sticks': numerous promises including the Greater Sanctions Statement were made to the ROK along with the warning against provocative military action.

Britain, despite her insubstantial position during the peace negotiations, supported

the Americans. Churchill and his ministers publicly acclaimed Anglo-American unity during crises, particularly when the peace talks were on the brink of collapse because of Syngman Rhee's irrational act in June. The Conservative administration also resisted pressure from the opposition party. This, however, did not mean they gave the same amount of support in private. The truce talks confirmed the unequal Anglo-American partnership in Korea whereby Britain accepted America's lead in order to maintain US support in other parts of the world, namely, Europe and Middle East where Britain had more vital interests to protect. Anglo-American solidarity could not be sacrificed over the dispute in Korea.

The armistice left two main questions unresolved: what to do about the political future of Korea and about the unrepatriated prisoners. A provision of the armistice agreement mentioned that a political conference would be held soon after the armistice became effective to discuss the future of Korea. Since its establishment in June 1953, the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission had been working making sure that all prisoners of war had the opportunity to exercise their right to be repatriated. Its real task, after the cease-fire of July 27, was to take charge of those who had refused to go home. The Commission set up its Headquarters within the Demilitarized zone in the vicinity of Panmunjom. Representatives of the UNC and the Communist side were permitted to observe the operations of the Repatriation Commission and its subordinate bodies, including explanations and interviews. Sufficient armed forces and any other operating personnel required to assist the Commission in carrying out its functions and

responsibilities were provided exclusively by India.⁸⁹

The Armistice Agreement also set up a Committee for Repatriation of Prisoners of War which was to assist the NNRC. It was composed of six officers of field grade, three of whom were appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, UNC, and three of whom were appointed jointly by the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army and the Commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers. This Committee, under the general supervision and direction of the Military Armistice Commission, was responsible for coordinating the specific plans of repatriation and for supervising the execution by both sides of all of the provisions relating to the repatriation.⁹⁰

Between 5 August and 6 September 1953, the so-called 'Operation Big Switch' was conducted to exchange prisoners who expressed a desire for repatriation. The UN Command had repatriated 5,640 Chinese, 61,259 Korean military personnel and 8,899 Korean civilian internees, which made the total of 75,798. The Communists for their part had returned 7,848 Koreans, 3,597 Americans, 1,312 non-American UN personnel plus 3 'others' making 12,760 in all.⁹¹ This left about 23,000 non-repatriates from both sides to be transferred to the neutral (Demilitarized) zone to receive explanations and to make

⁸⁹Terms of Reference for the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, 8 June 1953. See Sydney D. Bailey, *The Korean Armistice*. p.221

⁹⁰Sydney D. Bailey, op.cit., pp.235-236 The Armistice Agreement, 27 July 1953: Arrangements relating to Prisoners of War.

⁹¹PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/1 Roger Makins, Washington to F.O., 29 August 1953. The US Army furnished slightly different figures: 75,801 prisoners were handed to the Communists, 12,773 to the UNC, NA RG319 Records of the Army Staff, Korean Armistice Negotiations, 1951-1958, 13 February 1954.

their final choices concerning their future destination.

The prisoners on both sides who refused repatriation during 'Big Switch' were handed over to the Custodian Force India (CFI) which had arrived in the Demilitarized zone between the two lines to take charge of them. By mid-September the UN Command had delivered into Indian custody 5,654 prisoners of whom 4,657 were Chinese and 997 North Koreans. While the Indian Commander, General Thimayya, was doubtful of his ability to accept all the non-repatriates into custody by September 25 as required by the Armistice Agreement,⁹² the UN Command were still checking the list of Allied prisoners supplied by the Communists but could not identify many of the names on it. They suspected some of names were pure inventions made by the Communists to swell the list.⁹³

The Communist side began to give "explanations" to anti-Communist Chinese and North Koreans in the hope of persuading them to return home. In the first few days only about three percent of those interviewed chose repatriation, and thereafter the Communist side put one obstacle after another in the way of the "explanations". For example, the Polish and Czech members of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission were attempting to insist that the UN Command provide them with detailed information pertaining to the lists of all personnel handed over to Indian custody. The UN Command refused to do so, for the UNC feared that the Communists wanted these details to use

⁹²Article III, 54: 'The repatriation of all of the prisoners of war required by subparagraph 51 shall be completed within a time limit of sixty days after this Armistice Agreement becomes effective.'

⁹³PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/8 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 18 September 1953.

against the prisoners e.g., by threatening their families. The UN Command maintained that the detailed information should be given only to the Indians.⁹⁴

Further exchanges of prisoners were requested by each side as there were lists of personnel allegedly unaccounted for by the other. The UN Command renewed their request that arrangements for the return of displaced civilians should be discussed. The Communists replied that for administrative reasons they were not yet ready for such a discussion. The only thing that they agreed on was the expenses; in principle both sides would share the expenses for the Military Armistice Commission, the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, the Repatriation Commission and subordinate bodies.⁹⁵

The Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was faced with various obstacles in conducting the explanations to the non-repatriates. The Indian members of the Commission became highly critical of what they termed the UN Command's 'illegal methods' that had been used to facilitate South Korean and Taiwanese contact with the non-repatriates. The Indians also objected to the presence of the strong anti-Communist organizations in the camps, which negated the principle of freedom of choice.⁹⁶ The UNC side, on the other hand, accused the Communists of screening prisoners using communist agents and of harsh treatment of prisoners.⁹⁷

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/13 R.Makins to F.O., 30 October 1953.

⁹⁶Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*. p.194

⁹⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54. Vol.15 p.1629, 1 December; pp.1656-57, 12 December 1953.

The Commonwealth Relations Office in London was in a state of flux with the conflicting and nasty reports concerning the repatriation. The Americans asked the British to intervene with the Government of India on the grounds that the Repatriation Commission was not holding the balance fairly, while the Indians asked them to intervene with the US Government because UNC's criticism of the Repatriation Commission was making India's task extremely difficult and the South Koreans were threatening to attack the Indian troops. It was very difficult to judge from London what was really happening. The CRO concluded that the Repatriation Commission's task was a thankless one under any circumstances, and that attacks on the Indians may have unfortunate repercussions on a political conference. Thus 'we must do all we can to calm down feelings.'⁹⁸

By the end of October, the Repatriation Commission had turned over to the UNC two more Koreans and one American. The total of prisoners returned to Communist control by the Commission was 101 Chinese and 58 Koreans. Many of the anti-Communist prisoners did not wish to go through the explaining process in the first place because they believed it was too intimidating. Further 227 Koreans received individual explanation on 16 November, but only 6 chose repatriation.⁹⁹

The ROK explainers began to interview pro-Communist prisoners on 2 December and continued for several days. Explainers were permitted to use photographs and tape recordings. The Korean prisoners appeared to be well indoctrinated and no one agreed

⁹⁸PRO FO371 105592 FK1556/86A Outward telegram from C.R.O., 8 October 1953.

⁹⁹PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/13 & 14 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 18 November 1953.

to return to the South. Individual explanations averaged about forty-five minutes and prisoners seemed to want to prolong the interviews by asking questions. It was their intention to drag on the explanations and hold up the completion of the process.¹⁰⁰

The Communists reported on 19 December that there would be no more explanations on their side, as, they claimed, former UNC personnel had refused to appear for the explanations. The Communists did not even bother to resume the process. The pro-Communist Koreans insisted on the right to debate indefinitely and to submit statements to the press. The American prisoners said that they would not appear for the explanations until the explanations to Koreans were completed.¹⁰¹

While meetings were full of charges and counter-charges about responsibility for the break-down of the explaining process, the State Department received a report that General Thimayya had approached a North Korean Communist General and suggested that the Indian Custodian Force should complete the screening of the rest of the prisoners to whom the Communists had not given explanations. The Communists objected strongly and forced the Indian General to give up his idea of interviewing all of the remaining prisoners. The Communists instead took up one theme which they repeatedly used in the meetings of emissaries and which referred to the South Korean release of prisoners in June. 'Arthur Dean was deliberately obstructing progress in order that the prisoners could

¹⁰⁰PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/15 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 7 December 1953.

¹⁰¹PRO FO371 105541 FK1079/17 R.H.Scott, Washington to F.O., 19 December 1953.

be unilaterally released.' They also maintained that a full 90 days explanations¹⁰² to be given to the anti-Communist prisoners under UNC control and that would be the essential prerequisite for the settlement of the problem.¹⁰³

When the 3-month period of the explanations ended on 24 December, only a very small number of the prisoners had been interviewed. The Armistice terms left the prisoners in Indian custody for another 30 days until a political conference was arranged. The Communists demanded that the remainder should be held until their fate could be determined by the Political Conference, but the UN side maintained that all prisoners should revert to civilian status on 23 January 1954.¹⁰⁴ The South Korean President, Rhee, reiterated that all anti-Communist prisoners at present held by the Indian troops should be automatically released on 23 January.¹⁰⁵

Holding the centre of the east-west seesaw, General Thimayya continued unswervingly on India's predetermined course of neutrality. He first agreed with the Czechs and Poles that the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (which in practice meant the Indian Government) had been unable to carry out adequate explanations. Then,

¹⁰²The Armistice Agreement set a time limit of 60 days after the Armistice becomes effective for the repatriation. After that, the NNRC promised prisoners to give them 90 days explanations beginning on 25 September. See Bailey, op. cit., p.242 Address to the prisoners of war from the NNRC.

¹⁰³NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Settlement of Prisoners of War, 9 December 1953.

¹⁰⁴PRO FO371 110531 FK1101/1 Annual Report for 1953 by W.G.Graham, British Legation, Pusan, 15 February 1954.

¹⁰⁵PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/1A Summary of events, W.G.Graham to F.O., 24 December 1953.

he agreed with the Swiss and Swedes that the NNRC would, after January 23, have no further authority to hold prisoners and would turn the prisoners over to the UNC.¹⁰⁶

The discussion between the British Minister of State, Selwyn Lloyd, and the Indian Foreign Minister, Menon, on December 17 showed that the Indian Government was extremely uneasy about the whole matter. Menon made it clear that Thimayya's remark that the Custodian Force would release all prisoners on 23 January 1954 in default of an agreement between the UNC and the Communists did not represent the Indian Government's view. He emphatically stated that the obligation on the Indian Government was to assist prisoners to get to a neutral country if they wished. There was no obligation on the Custodian Force to make enquiries of the prisoners. The Indian Government would also want an assurance from the UNC that there would be no violence on their side while prisoners were being dispersed and that the UNC would do their best to enforce law and order.¹⁰⁷

On 20-21 January 1954 the Indian Custodian Force handed back to the UNC over 14,000 Chinese and over 7,000 North Korean prisoners of war who had refused repatriation. The Chinese were taken to Formosa and the Koreans to camps in South Korea. In spite of the resolution of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission that the prisoners should be held in custody until their fate was decided by a political conference, they were all declared to be civilians and free men at midnight on 22 January. The

¹⁰⁶W.L. White, *The Captives of Korea: An unofficial white paper*. New York, 1957. p.321

¹⁰⁷PRO FO371 105597 FK1556/275 F.O. to Washington, 19 December 1953.

Communists initially declined to accept 347 pro-Communist UNC prisoners who also had refused repatriation, and insisted on more explanations for the prisoners under the UNC control. The Indian guards therefore opened the gates of the camps so that the prisoners could make their own way over to the Communist side.¹⁰⁸

While some of prisoners kept changing their minds, on 4 February, the remaining 12 Chinese and 74 Koreans sailed for India. Only 327 Koreans, 21 Americans, and the one British serviceman were converted to Communism. On 1 February 1954, the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission voted for its own dissolution. General Thimayya, the last troops of the Repatriation Commission and the Indian Custodian Force finally left Korea on 23 February 1954.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸PRO FO371 105597 FK1556/302 Washington to F.O., 12 February 1954.

¹⁰⁹PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/13 Summary of events, W.G.Graham, to F.O., 25 February 1954.

CHAPTER THREE

Internal Politics of South Korea: Anglo-American views, 1953-60.

In August 1948 when the Republic of Korea was officially launched south of the 38th parallel, the political problems of setting up the new government were almost as difficult to resolve as the military problem of defending the country. The constitution of the Republic of Korea, promulgated on 17 July 1948, provided a strong presidential system and a single legislative body. Besides being the executive head of the government and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the President was granted the considerable power of appointment to office of his cabinet, of the Supreme Court judges, of provincial governors, and of mayors of large cities.¹

The most remarkable feature of the constitution, however, was to reserve to the National Assembly the considerable power of electing the President. The latter was elected for a four-year term by a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly. Amendments to the Constitution also required a two-thirds majority.² In the debate on the ratification of the constitution these two areas proved to be the most irksome in the legislative-executive relationship. Subsequently tensions and political pressures developed

¹Robert T. Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times: 1800 to the present*. Newark, 1993. p.212

²W.D.Reeve, *The Republic of Korea*. London, 1963. p.40

over the distribution of power between the legislative and executive branches. Syngman Rhee fought to renounce the power to elect the President from the National Assembly because he knew his party was too weak to obtain a two-thirds majority of the Assembly and believed that he would have a better chance to be elected as the President through the popular vote. He succeeded in 1952 and two years later was, by an extraordinary procedure, able to pass constitutional amendments without a two-thirds majority. The triumph of presidential power was however short-lived as dissatisfaction with the corrupt nature of Rhee's regime ultimately led to its downfall much to the relief of both the British and the Americans.

South Korean political parties characteristically consisted of several hundred politicians oriented toward an individual leader or group of leaders. Parties were usually formed to enhance personal prestige, wealth, or individual power. A party usually comprised several factions, each with its dominant leader who was competing for control of the whole party. The factional alignments were based on personal ties with the leader, and constituted the basic political unit. Therefore the major variances between political parties were differences between personalities rather than differences over policies.

According to Robert Oliver, an American adviser to the ROK Government between 1942-60, there was no precedent of political party discipline.³ The administration's effectiveness in performing the normal functions of government suffered from political immaturity. US intelligence believed that this was at least partially a legacy of Japanese rule under which Koreans obtained little training or experience to fit them

³Robert T. Oliver, *op.cit.*, p.217

for responsible positions. The generally low level of administrative efficiency was accentuated by lax standards of integrity in government and business. Gravely inadequate pay scales for civil servants and the military forces constituted a powerful temptation to graft.⁴

Throughout the period from 1953 to 1960 politics in South Korea evolved around President Syngman Rhee and his political party. There was also provision for a prime minister, but the latter's duties were vaguely defined and his administrative responsibility came under presidential authority, subject to confirmation by the Assembly. In a political system orientated around individual leaders, the role of the President was paramount. He was so completely predominant in government and politics, that not only the politics of his own supporters but the tactics and activities of the opposition were focused upon his personality.

It is possible to picture Syngman Rhee as a tragic figure- disabled by the very qualities which strengthened him in the many years of heroic struggle for his country's independence. Fanaticism, single-mindedness, impatience with criticism and opposition, authoritarianism and some insensitivity to the finer aspects of liberal democracy - these were faults in a man whose ruthless determination kept alive the hope of Korean independence and unification.⁵

⁴NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research. Intelligence Report no.7654 The Republic of Korea: Present Situation and Outlook. 6 February 1958.

⁵PRO FO371 105508 FK1071/672 'The Times of India' News Service, London, 13 July 1953.

Syngman Rhee had some qualities of a successful leader, and he acquired, not unjustly, the symbol of 'father of the country.' Abroad, however, Rhee suffered the heart-breaking hostility of a world which was unconcerned about the fate of a country so little known and understood. Western leaders were often embarrassed by their 'undisciplined and ungrateful' ally. The State Department and the Foreign Office agreed that it was unlikely that the Korean scene would change 'so long as it was dominated by President Syngman Rhee.' Paradoxical as it might seem, it was this arch-enemy of the Armistice of 1953 and the advocate of a *March to the Yalu* as the sure and sole solution of the Korean problem, who was to contribute more than anybody else to the maintenance of the status quo in a divided Korea.⁶

The Liberal Party, led by Syngman Rhee, maintained absolute control of the national government. Since the Korean political system was strongly centralized, this also gave the Liberals extensive control throughout the provinces.⁷ The President had the power to block virtually all normal political opposition. The excessive power of the President was enforced by a National Security Law which was passed in 1948 in order to counter the various communist uprisings in the South.⁸ While the threat of Communism made the passage of this law explicable, it provided the government with virtually unlimited power to arrest all and every kind of opposition. The Democratic

⁶PRO FO371 150655 FK1013/12 H. Evans, Seoul to F.O., 25 January 1960.

⁷NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research. Report no.7157 Current Political Trends and Prospects in the Republic of Korea. 7 February 1956.

⁸There were country-wide guerrilla activities during 1947- 1950. See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*. Vol.II The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950. Princeton, 1990.

Nationalist Party, although conservative in its philosophy, was the main opposition party. The two parties - Liberal and Democratic Nationalist -disagreed on a basic constitutional issue, i.e., whether the government should be organized according to the presidential or the parliamentary system, but the heart of their discord was on the role of President Rhee. While the Liberal Party platform in practice was to do the bidding of President Rhee, the Democratic Nationalist Party aimed to limit Rhee's powers and eventually to remove him from power.

It is not therefore hard to imagine that politics in the Republic of Korea had been marred by political violence, acts of flagrant suppression, and certain police-state tactics. The Democratic Nationalist Party in particular was intimidated, its leaders threatened, its press restricted, and its general rights violated. The charge of 'treason' was used loosely to justify these actions, and various laws were rammed through the National Assembly over bitter opposition to give them legal sanction.

One of the questions frequently asked among diplomatic circles in South Korea was whether, or if so to what extent, the ROK was a Police State. British officials thought the answer was not quite as simple as it seemed at first glance.⁹ The Government was in a minority in the National Assembly. Although criticism of the Government in the press was restricted, demands for the resignation of individual ministers not infrequently resulted in cabinet changes. This was so different from the political pattern in totalitarian states that it was tempting to decide that South Korea was in fact a democracy. On the other hand, during the summer of 1952, the President imposed martial law in Pusan,

⁹PRO FO371 105486 FK1015/28 Walter Graham, Pusan to F.O., 30 January 1953.

detained large numbers of opposition members of the Assembly, and succeeded by such methods in forcing through the Assembly fundamental constitutional changes. The British concluded that this was after all a Police State, but one in which the dictatorial tendencies of the Administration were for the most part held under control: a state in which the powers of the police, though unchecked by any rule of law, were at least used with moderation.¹⁰

According to British officials, the system of the Government, though doubtless dictatorial in method, was far from being efficient. The 'steam' that might cause an explosion if the Government acted excessively arbitrarily was of course primarily the essential independence of the Korean political character, but its effect was greatly intensified by the presence in Korea of large numbers of foreigners, and the country's absolute dependence on them both for defence against military aggression and for financial aid. The British believed that, if South Korea existed in a vacuum, with no threats from without and no foreign observers within, it was possible that the Government might have succeeded in setting up a fully totalitarian regime. In the existing circumstances, however, while the individual Korean had little or no security from arbitrary arrest, British officials believed that the chances that the whole country would be enslaved in anything like the Iron-Curtain fashion were small.¹¹

The mandate of the first Government, according to the Constitution, was for two years. This meant that new elections were due in May 1950. The President proposed

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

amendments to the Constitution to prolong the life of the Government. Yet his scheme was not successful and, with US pressure, the election was called. During the election campaign, the Government arrested candidates and their supporters on charges of violating the National Security Law. Nevertheless, the election result revealed that the President's supporters (Liberal Party members) in the Assembly fell from 56 to 12, for most of the electorate seemed to prefer candidates not openly associated with the Liberal Party.¹² As a result Rhee and his party were isolated within the Assembly. This heralded, from the start, the conflict between the President and the National Assembly which cast a deep shadow upon the whole political scene.

In 1952 the Government and the National Police began a great round-up of Assemblymen, under the pretext of national security, who were locked in the Assembly hall on 2 July. The Assembly was later forced to adopt the constitutional amendments providing for the popular election of the President and Vice-President.¹³ Rhee adamantly announced his intention of introducing further constitutional amendments which would consolidate the President's position and the ascendancy of the Liberal Party while weakening the opposition.

The Liberal members of the Assembly gradually increased their numbers. By the summer of 1953, aided by the defection of some members of the opposition and the Independents, the Liberals had increased their membership from 12 to 64, and became for the first time a majority party. This also led the Democratic Nationalist Party to be

¹²W.D. Reeve, *op.cit.*, p.42

¹³GAOR 7th session, suppl.14, UNCURK report, 1951-52, p.34

the only organized opposition party. There were, however, still over fifty Independents, and the Liberal Party majority was far from being united.

The chief struggle inside the Liberal Party lay between what were known as the 'racial' and the 'non-racial' groups of the Taehan Youth Corps. Among the innumerable parties and organizations that had sprung up in 1945, there was a para-military youth organization formed by Lee Bum-suk with American help. Later, this organization and a number of others were united into the Taehan Youth Corps; but within the Corps the former members of the Lee organization continued to be known as the 'racial' or 'nationalist' group, while the rest of the Corps formed the 'non-racial' group. Lee Bum-suk continued to enjoy a dominant position in the Corps and to exercise very great influence in the Liberal Party as a whole. In fact the adherents of Lee Bum-suk had been growing too powerful for the President's liking.¹⁴

The decline of the 'racialists', however, came suddenly when on 25 June 1953, in a speech commemorating the Communist invasion, Sin Hyon-sik, a well-known supporter of Lee Bum-suk, called on his audience to follow the example of 'our great leader Kim Il-sung.' This inexplicable remark started an enquiry into alleged Communist affiliations of a number of 'racialists.' Shortly afterwards the President struck back. By September the Home Affairs Minister, Chin Hon-sik, and the minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Sin Chung-mok, both supporters of Lee, were dismissed. The President announced the dissolution of all youth organizations, including the Taehan Youth Corps and dismissed a number of other officials who were known or suspected supporters of

¹⁴PRO FO371 105469 FK1015/66 W.G.Graham to F.O., 25 May 1953.

Lee Bum-suk.¹⁵ Lee himself was expelled from the Liberal Party in December 1953.

The opposition Democratic Nationalist Party also suffered a considerable setback during 1953. While its leader, Shin Ik-hui, the Chairman of the National Assembly, was on a world tour, a few of its members in the National Assembly seceded because of the political intimidation of the Liberal Party, and others talked of doing so. Following his return Shin Ik-hui tried actively to revive the party and appeared to have had some success; at least no more members resigned. Shin appealed to the President not to try to set up a one-party state, and pointed out the benefits of having a loyal and constitutional opposition party.¹⁶

General elections were due in 1954.¹⁷ It soon became apparent that the main criterion in the selection of Liberal candidates was their support of further constitutional amendments which had never been made public.¹⁸ While 'the struggle between King and Parliament', that was to say between President Rhee and the National Assembly continued, the President attempted to make another constitutional amendment which would ensure his re-election to the Presidency. The members of the Assembly were constantly reminded that those who were not regarded as 'the President's friends' would

¹⁵PRO FO371 110531 FK1011/1 Annual Report for 1953 by W.G.Graham, 15 February 1954.

¹⁶PRO FO371 105470 FK1015/110 W.G.Graham to Eden, 9 December 1953.

¹⁷Between 1952 and 1960, there were three presidential elections (1952, 1956 and 1960) and two general elections (1954 and 1958).

¹⁸PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/8A British Legation, Seoul to F.O., 8 April 1954.

be unlikely to be re-elected in the forthcoming general elections.¹⁹ The mere fact that Rhee had felt it necessary to use these measures of intimidation was an indication of his lack of control of the Assembly. However, the British believed that the President's own position was growing stronger than it had been the previous year and that his prestige in the country, thanks partly to his defiance of the UN in the release of prisoners, and his subsequent successful bargaining with the State Department, was higher than ever before.²⁰

During the spring of 1954, South Korean politics were dominated by the talks on the international political conference at Geneva. After only ten days of discussion at Geneva the press in Seoul was unanimous that the talks had gone on long enough and that Korea could only be unified by force. The North Korean proposal was rejected as 'infamous and insulting.' Only the leading opposition newspaper attempted to analyze Nam Il's proposal, assessing its dangers and regretting the tendency in South Korea to 'jump to the conclusion that the Geneva Conference will fail without fail.' Other comment was summed up in the assertion by one newspaper that 'we have no obligation to accept a disguised unification plan in order to become the victim of diplomatic bickering for the sake of Britain and France'.²¹ The fall of Dien Bien Phu touched off a new round of attacks on the British and the French Governments for their 'appeasement policies' towards the Communists and renewed demands for an early end of the talks.²²

¹⁹PRO FO371 105470 FK1015/97 W.G.Graham to Eden, 14 October 1953.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/10A British Legation, Seoul, to F.O., 6 May 1954.

²²PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/12 Seoul to F.O., 27 May 1954.

Elections for the third National Assembly were held on 20 May 1954 and passed off, under the observation of the UNCURK,²³ in an atmosphere of 'orderly calm.' There had undoubtedly been several cases of pressure exerted by the National Police during the campaign, but the mechanics of the actual polling were reported to have been good. The results showed a victory for President Rhee's Liberal party, the distribution of the 203 seats being: Liberals 104; Democratic Nationalists 15; other parties 7; Independents 67. The Liberals hoped to bring their strength up to 140 by absorbing some of the Independents later, and so command the two-thirds majority in the Assembly which would enable the President to push through his Constitutional reforms.²⁴ British officials in Seoul were concerned with what they regarded as some disquieting features of the new National Assembly: as long as there was no guarantee that Liberal Party discipline would hold, the Assembly might follow the discouraging path of bickering, intrigues and boycotts.²⁵

In August 1954, a special committee of the Liberal Party completed a new draft of the Constitutional Amendment Bill: the waiving of any restriction on the right to re-election of the first President of the Republic and the abolition of the office of prime minister were the main points. Then the Liberal Party finally introduced it into the National Assembly.²⁶ On 27 November the bill was put to the vote. The number of

²³United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea was set up in 1950. See Chapter 5.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵PRO FO371 110534 FK1016/23 A.S.Halford, Seoul to Eden, 25 May 1954.

²⁶PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/17A Saving Telegram No.15, 7 August 1954.

affirmative votes was 135, one less than the number necessary for a two-thirds majority in a House of 203. It was therefore announced from the Chair that the motion had failed.

Next day, however, the Government gave its opinion, backed by some very tortuous arithmetic, that 135 constituted a two-thirds majority. On 29 November, after the Opposition had walked out in protest, the Liberal Party voted unanimously to correct the original 'mistaken' announcement, and ruled that the amendment had passed. It was immediately signed and promulgated. The Opposition deplored the damage done to the Assembly's prestige by the way in which the original decision was reversed. Members of the UNCURK were also indignant, but did not see what action they could take. The US embassy thought that they had little grounds for intervening in what was clearly a matter of domestic politics.²⁷ The British believed that the passing of this bill would remain one of the most sordid episodes in the brief, but chequered, political history of the ROK.²⁸

There were some foreign observers in Seoul who had been reflecting on the possibility of a coup against President Rhee. The circumstances most likely to provoke a coup against the President would be the launching of a major military action against North Korea or some other action considered equally likely to jeopardize US support.²⁹

²⁷NA RG59 795.00/12-554 Development of a More Responsible and Democratic System in Korea, 5 December 1954.

²⁸PRO FO371 110532 FK1013/28 W.G.Graham to F.O., 9 December 1954.

²⁹*Han-kuk Hyun-dae Sa* (Modern History of Korea) Vol.2, Seoul, 1991. pp.105-106 The Korean Army was created during the American Military Government in South Korea (AMG 1945-48) and characterised as a pro-US establishment, and most of the army officers were educated in the Military Language School which was also set up by the

William Reeve, the British adviser to the Korean Government between 1952 and 1957, thought that President Rhee's uncompromising attitude in the dispute with the Americans over US aid money was causing serious unrest amongst senior army officers, who were casting about for a possible successor to Rhee. Reeve claimed to have sensed an increased confidence and self-assertiveness on the part of the Korean generals who were likely to stage a military coup. He was convinced that, in spite of the government's attempts to saddle the Americans with the blame, the average intelligent Korean knew that Rhee was responsible for the difficulties in the ROK-US aid negotiations and were beginning to grow tired of Rhee's refusal to compromise.³⁰

The British Legation took a slightly different view. Walter Graham, the Consul-General, did not believe that the chances of a military coup were high. The military's personal loyalty to Rhee was unquestioned and, moreover, Rhee's grip on the administrative machine was greater than it had been. Graham also found it hard to believe that the average Korean, outside the ranks of the political opposition, blamed the government rather than the Americans for the deterioration in the economic situation. In short, Rhee, whose position in the country was still very strong, was in no immediate danger of being supplanted. There was, however, the possibility that, if Rhee got himself into such a situation that he could only reject outright all further American aid and insist that Korea would 'go it alone' in the economic as well as the military sphere, the army

AMG. Not all in the army supported Syngman Rhee's ambition to invade the North. See Paik Sun-yup, *Memoirs: Army and I*. Seoul, 1989.

³⁰PRO FO371 110535 FK1016/48 W.G.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 31 October 1954.

might act defiantly and find some support amongst the opposition politicians.³¹

The State Department believed that it was highly unlikely that any leader or group, including the military, in South Korea would attempt to unseat President Rhee by a coup. It was true that Rhee's predominant role in the Government had earned him many enemies and that there were several persons who had political ambitions which were frustrated by Rhee's power. To counter the opposition threat, government supporters revealed details of conspiracy plots to assassinate Rhee. Yet the State Department believed the President's control of the National Police was effectively strong and the majority of the army remained loyal. Thus the American view was that there was virtually no possibility that a forceful coup against the President would go unchallenged, and there was no conceivable combination of forces in Korea which could withstand the counteractions by either the police or loyal elements within the army.³²

The new government of Korea, its western allies and its most virulent foreign and domestic critics all were agreed that the political systems should be democratic, but according to their own differing definitions. The National Assembly, in confirming the constitution, tried to exercise its own power to check the executive. Yet it was deprived of its rights to elect the president and to override a presidential veto by the two constitutional amendments in 1952 and 1954.³³ What made the President an unusually

³¹Ibid.

³²NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research. Intelligence Report no.7157 Current Political Trends and Prospects in the Republic of Korea. 7 February 1956.

³³Robert T. Oliver, op.cit., p.252

strong executive was his power to issue orders, with legal effect, to maintain public order and security. The recurrent theme used by the executive branch was that when the country needed to give highest priority to defend itself against the North, the need for the President to exercise absolute emergency power was inevitable.

There was a grave misunderstanding among the Koreans about the American political system. In particular, Rhee and the executive team thought that the US president had limitless power. Rhee was keen to follow a system where the President had clearly defined powers independent of the legislative branch. The American system was therefore attractive to Rhee but was unlikely to be adopted successfully in Korea because Rhee was not prepared to accept the kind of constraints imposed on the executive branch by the US Congress. Walter Graham, a British official, was disturbed by the idea that Korea should endeavour 'to copy every American institution as closely as her ignorance and poverty would permit'. Graham believed that this idea based on the misunderstanding was unlikely to bring democracy to the country. Moreover, the expectations of the Korean people by far exceeded any possibility of attainment. The leaders of the country were expected to create a substructure of working democracy on a foundation of some four thousand years of hierarchy, aristocracy, and monarchy. All these seemed to be a daunting task when the governmental agenda was dominated by threats against national security.³⁴

A presidential election was due to take place in May 1956. The Liberal Party Convention unanimously nominated President Rhee as its candidate for election to a third

³⁴PRO FO371 110535 FK1016/55 W.G.Graham, Seoul to Eden, 8 December 1954.

term with Yi Ki-poong, the new Chairman of the National Assembly, for Vice-President.³⁵ Rhee turned down the nomination and it was generally believed that he did so only as a manoeuvre to gain nation-wide support. Reuter in Seoul predicted that the President would change his mind and accept the candidature,³⁶ and on 25 March the President announced that in deference to the 'People's will' he would accept the nomination and stand for a third term at the age of 81. The British Legation reluctantly admitted that, as far as the President's candidature was concerned, nobody else would stand a chance of holding the country together. However, they were not sure about Yi Ki-poong's ability. They thought that, although Yi certainly had qualities, there was no 'spark of greatness which would enable him to assume unquestioned control, should death or sickness remove the President.'³⁷

To a certain extent, however, Yi Ki-poong's apparent weaknesses constituted the basis for his successful securing of the Vice-Presidency, because President Rhee was less fearful that Yi might ultimately pose a challenge to his own power. American intelligence certainly believed that, if the President had become convinced that Yi was growing dangerous, 'Yi's days as chief lieutenant would have been numbered.' In the meantime, however, Yi appeared to carry out 'the mandate of his stewardship faithfully and effectively.'³⁸

³⁵PRO FO371 121105 FK1016/12 A.C.Stewart, British Legation, Seoul to C.T.Crowe, F.O., 2 February 1956.

³⁶PRO FO371 121105 FK1016/16A Reuter, Seoul, 23 March 1956.

³⁷PRO FO371 121105 FK1016/20 A.C.Stewart, Seoul to F.O., 31 March 1956.

³⁸NA Lot Files. Intelligence Report no.7157 Current Political Trends and Prospects in the Republic of Korea. 7 February 1956.

The opposition forces were weak and had only limited prospects of increasing their strength substantially. Since their defeat in the political crisis in 1952, members of the opposition had been kept under constant threat of a purge on the basis of their threat to national security. They found it increasingly difficult to maintain a national organization or to win popular support. Internal factional divisions further weakened the opposition forces. Nevertheless, when the coalition of the Democrats was successful in transforming the demoralized Democratic Nationalist Party into the Democratic Party in September 1955, the new Party proceeded energetically with its organisation, emphasising particularly the organisation of provincial and local chapters.³⁹

In the 1956 presidential and vice-presidential elections, the Democratic Party nominated Shin Ik-hui to oppose Rhee, with Chang Myon as its vice-presidential candidate to oppose the Liberal Party's nomination of Yi Ki-poong. Their campaign, however, was hampered by the government and the police and by a shortage of men and money. Nevertheless, their support in the capital was certainly strong. The sudden death of Shin Ik-hui, following an impassioned speech to a crowd of 300,000 in Seoul on 5 May, was only ten days before the election and a serious blow to the Democratic Party.⁴⁰

UNCURK again observed the election. Their reports indicated that it took place in a free atmosphere and they praised the progress that had been made in the art of

³⁹Ibid. pp.7-8

⁴⁰Ibid.

democracy since the election of 1952.⁴¹ By a curious provision of the electoral law the dead candidate's name (Shin Ik-hui) remained on the ballot sheet. People were allowed to vote for the dead candidate, although their votes were recorded as 'invalid'. Around two million 'invalid' ballots were cast for Shin Ik-hui. Although Rhee's own re-election for a third term was a foregone conclusion, he won only 56 percent of the valid votes and the number of his votes was less than the 'invalid' ones. The Democratic Party was successful in defeating Rhee's nominee for the vice-presidency, Yi Ki-poong (Liberal Party), and Chang Myon was elected Vice-President by a comfortable margin. The American adviser, Robert Oliver, recorded that 'Democracy, despite the limitations imposed on it, appeared to be working.' The diversity of results supported the UNCURK's conclusion that the elections in general represented the people's will.⁴²

The British drew various conclusions from this election result. The personal position of Syngman Rhee had declined remarkably from the time when he entrusted his election to the popular vote in 1952.⁴³ Secondly, the Liberal Party machine failed lamentably. Yi Ki-poong was Chairman not only of the National Assembly, but of the Liberal Party and the National Association. He was generally recognised as President Rhee's 'chief political lieutenant and representative' in party affairs. He was also the chairman of the central committee which led the five extra-Governmental organizations: the National Society, the Korean Federation of Labour Unions, the Korean Women's

⁴¹PRO FO371 121106 FK1016/39 British legation, Seoul to Selwyn Lloyd, 1 June 1956.

⁴²Robert T. Oliver, *op.cit.*, p.261

⁴³In 1952 Rhee won nearly 80 percent of the popular votes. W.D. Reeve, *op. cit.*, p.49

Association, the Korean Farmers' Association, and the Korean Fishermen's Association which were influential in large areas of Korean life.⁴⁴ Immediately after the election the Liberal Party examined the causes of its defeat and published the results. The reasons were deemed to be the people's sense of economic hopelessness and despair of any improvement; the extreme corruption of officialdom and abuses by the President's private secretaries, and the corruption in the National Police. The most telling reason of all, according to the British, was omitted from this list: 'it was simply that the country wanted a change.'⁴⁵

Political developments in Korea during 1956 had hardly drawn any attention from the Foreign Office, as 'all eyes have been turned (sic) on Suez.' Colin Crowe at the Far Eastern Department said that the British attitude towards the events in Korea 'was perhaps a dormant toothache..people devoutly hope that nothing more will happen and certainly that no visit to the dentist will be required.' Nevertheless, the Foreign Office believed that Syngman Rhee seemed 'to have out-lived his usefulness.' Whereas in the past Rhee's supreme value was that he held the country together, 'he now seemed to have lost his magic to some extent and remained an obstacle in the way of any sort of effective

⁴⁴These organizations were affiliated with the Liberal Party and had representation on the central committee. In general, they emphasized the necessity of nonpartisan Korean unity for the achievement of national aspirations and appeared to preclude normal political dissent. They continued to be valuable to Rhee and the Party for propaganda purposes, for local organizational support at election times, and for denying these special interest groups to opposition elements. In addition, they were used by Rhee as he contemplated the establishment of social and political control by the government-sponsored apparatus.

⁴⁵PRO FO371 121106 FK1016/39A H.Evans to F.O., 1 June 1956.

administration.⁴⁶

Since the election of Chang Myon as Vice-President, political activity in the ROK had been focused on the question of Rhee's successor in case of Rhee's incapacity. Much energy had been expended in maneuvers designed to amend the constitution, particularly as it applied to the vice-presidency and the order of succession to the presidency. However, the Liberal Party itself was not united on the issue, and Rhee refused to entertain any proposal which would grant substantial executive power to a vice-president.⁴⁷

In Washington, the British counsellor, Arthur de la Mare, met with David Nes, the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs in the State Department, to discuss the activities of the South Korean Vice-President, Chang Myon. On the one hand, Nes agreed with Chang Myon's view that neither the President nor his entourage appreciated the position of the Vice-President. The administration was treating him in the most petty and childish way doing all they could to keep him out of public affairs. In addition, Rhee and his Liberal Party members of the Assembly had launched another campaign to amend the Constitution. Nes said that he agreed with the British view that the sole aim of the Liberal Party in any amendment to the Constitution would be to try to prevent Chang Myon from succeeding as President in the event of Syngman Rhee's death or incapacity.⁴⁸

⁴⁶PRO FO371 121106 FK1016/47 C.T.Crowe, F.O. to Seoul, 23 August 1956.

⁴⁷NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research. Intelligence Report no.7654 The Republic of Korea: Present Situation and Outlook. 6 February 1958.

⁴⁸PRO FO371 127603 FK1016/8 A.J. de la Mare's comments on a conversation with Mr Nes, Northeast Asian Affairs, Washington, 21 August 1957.

On the other hand, Nes was rather optimistic that the Democratic Party would rally and reunite by the time of the general election in 1958. De la Mare and Nes agreed that Rhee's intransigence and unreasonableness were beginning to boomerang against him and there was no hope of any improvement as long as Rhee remained in power. The British official later minuted the fact that the State Department was thinking very closely about the succession and what steps were open to them, and this was perhaps some indication of a feeling in Washington that 'it might not be too long before Syngman Rhee was called to higher service'. The British official thought that would also be greeted in the Foreign Office 'with some relief.'⁴⁹

Vice-President Chang Myon was not notable for his courage or independence. He was described by the State Department as a 'nice man, intelligent and likable, but lacking in intestinal fortitude and other qualities necessary to be an effective political leader.' The Americans believed, however, that these weaknesses in character did not necessarily mean that if the presidency were thrust upon him Chang would be unable to perform the duties of his office adequately. Much would depend on the situation prevailing at that time and the men whom Chang would select to plan and execute his policies.⁵⁰

Chang Myon himself considered the upcoming general elections in 1958 virtually impossible for his Democratic party to win. The Liberal Party had already started to prepare for the election campaign through the *Kukmin Bun* (Neighbourhood Association) and through the network of the National Police. There was intimidation of 'suspected'

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰NA RG59 795.00/2-658 Republic of Korea: Political Parties. 6 February 1958.

Democratic Party supporters through financial bullying by refusal of trading licences etc. and the Democratic Party was powerless to do anything about it. Despite the intimidation against the Democratic Party, the British Ambassador Hubert Evans observed the growing confidence displayed by Chang Myon. The Ambassador thought it was undoubtedly due to a somewhat clearer indication by the Americans that the US would back Chang's constitutional rights in the event of Syngman Rhee's removal from the scene.⁵¹

Towards the end of 1957 South Korea was seen by the US as a country where there was a gradual lessening of the sense of military urgency, a growing desire of those who were northerners by origin to rejoin their families, a falling-off in the standards of administration and the emergence of an urban intellectual class who were too young to remember the war and who were jobless and dissatisfied. Despite the decline in President Rhee's popularity and former absolute control over governmental affairs, Rhee remained the dominant political personality. His authority was unchallenged so long as he retained his mental and physical competence. The US expected that, as long as Rhee remained in office, there would be no material change in the ROK's approach to basic problems in internal and international politics.⁵²

The US State Department assessed that some progress had been made during 1957 towards the development of a responsible two-party system centred around the National

⁵¹PRO FO371 127603 FK1016/9 H.J.Evans to P.G.F.Dalton, F.O., 4 October 1957.

⁵²NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research. Intelligence Report no.7654 The Republic of Korea: Present Situation and Outlook. 6 February 1958.

Assembly. However, it was noted that the Assembly still lacked authority and was frequently ignored or bypassed by the President. Unfortunately for Korean politics both the Liberal Party and the opposition Democratic Party were plagued by factionalism and lacked effective leadership. The leftist Progressive Party attracted a considerable following, particularly among students and intellectuals but was still a relatively minor force in Korean politics. The State Department had little doubt that despite their factionalism, the Liberals, backed by the government's financial and administrative powers and assisted by the police, would be able to retain control of the Assembly in the 1958 general election.⁵³

John Blackwell, First Secretary at the British Embassy in Seoul, met with Vice-President Chang Myon on 16 April 1958. Chang Myon said that he did not expect his Democratic party to achieve much in the coming elections. Realistically he hoped to prevent the Liberals from winning a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly which would enable them to alter the constitution so as to eliminate him as Vice-President. Chang Myon was, however, confident that once President Rhee disappeared from the scene, the Liberal Party would disintegrate and his own party would take over power without a struggle.⁵⁴

The government and police interference certainly helped the Liberal Party to win

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴PRO FO371 133670 FK1016/2 Hubert Evans, Seoul to P. Dalton, F.O., 19 April 1958.

the general election in May 1958 but with a decreased majority.⁵⁵ They failed to gain the two-thirds majority which they had sought in order to amend the Constitution in such a way as to prevent the Vice-President, the leader of the opposition Democratic Party, from assuming the Presidency in the event of Rhee's incapacity. The Liberals, in spite of this setback, adamantly declared that they were determined to strengthen their hold on the nation and pledged to ensure their victory in the 1960 presidential election.

Yet the results of the presidential election in 1956, where Rhee won only 56 percent, and the general election in 1958 certainly increased the pressure on the President and the Liberal Party. Some sections of the Liberal Party began to believe they might not win the election in 1960. In December 1958, the Liberal Party members of the Assembly introduced a series of amendments to the already draconian security laws, providing for death sentences or heavy prison terms for crimes such as 'disseminating Communist propaganda' which could obviously be adapted to the election campaign.⁵⁶

The State Department was disturbed by the Liberal Party's proposal for a new National Security Bill. The US warned the Koreans that if the Bill were passed, the international prestige of Korea would suffer a heavy blow in Asia as well as elsewhere, and notably in the United Nations. The US was all in favour of the Koreans taking all necessary measures to deal with Communist infiltration and subversion, but the

⁵⁵PRO FO371 133671 FK1017/4 Seoul to F.O., 2 May 1958. The final results were: Liberal Party 126, Democratic Party 79, Independents 27 and Unification Party 1 out of total 233.

⁵⁶W.D.Reeve, *op.cit.*, p.49

Americans believed the Bill was not the way to do so.⁵⁷ The Korean authorities replied that the Bill was an internal matter and had nothing to do with the US or the UN. To the British observers, the Bill was 'doctored in such a way as to serve the ends of a government bent on smothering a constitutional opposition.'⁵⁸ The British believed that the State Department, 'already conscious of criticism against them for their support of the reactionary regime, was obviously very much afraid of what may happen in the UN if Rhee persists with his present policy.'⁵⁹

The Opposition Party felt the Bill's aim was to bring about a 'one-party dictatorship,' as one of the direct results of the bill was the creation of a Liberal Party sponsored *anti-Communist Combat Committee*. Its alleged purpose was expressed by its name but its real objective was obviously to support the Liberal Party and to counterbalance the *Central Combat Committee* which was set up by the Democratic Party to organise all opposition elements in their fight against the Liberal Party. The British officials in Seoul were surprised by the appointment of the leading Independent, Chang Taik-sang, as the head of the *anti-Communist Combat Committee*. Chang Taik-sang, who was a graduate of Edinburgh University and the Prime Minister for a short time in 1952, was regarded by the British as 'a notorious opportunist.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷NA RG59 795.00/10-2458 A proposed National Security Bill, 24 October 1958.

⁵⁸PRO FO371 141531 FK1015/1 Annual Review for 1958, Seoul, 15 March 1959.

⁵⁹PRO FO371 133669 FK1015/220 A.J. de la Mare, Washington to Peter Dalton, F.O., 3 October 1958.

⁶⁰PRO FO371 133661 FK1013/24 H.Evans, Seoul to F.O., 12 October 1958.

In January 1959, while the Democratic Assembly members were on a six-day strike against the National Security Bill, the Liberal Party Assembly members passed it unanimously along with twenty-one other bills. The US Government and its Embassy in Seoul publicly condemned the ROK Government and made formal representations that the law would 'undo the considerable democratic progress which this country has made.'⁶¹ Graham Parsons, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, expressed the views of the State Department that it was necessary not to give the impression of interfering in the internal affairs of Korea, but it was also necessary not to appear to condone the recent activities of the Korean Government nor to appear to accept without reservation their claim that the law was aimed solely at countering communist subversion. Parsons believed that the law was 'framed with the intent to kill the Opposition.'⁶²

The Americans seemed to be pulled in two conflicting directions. They felt it necessary to support Rhee, despite his often autocratic methods of government, as almost the only rock on which the country could be built, and yet they realised, what the President seemed incapable or unwilling to realise, that he was not immortal and that if the country was to survive other than under a military dictatorship, a stable democracy must be developed. The American distress at the undemocratic happenings was not so much that they would strengthen the hand of President Rhee, or even because they would weaken the Korean case before the United Nations and thereby the justification for the

⁶¹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Memorandum for the Secretary of State, 7 February 1959.

⁶²PRO FO371 141537 FK1016/5 Sir H.Caccia, Washington to F.O., 17 January 1959.

Americans' presence in Korea, but that by undermining the democratic processes they considerably increased the chances of confusion after Rhee's passing, thus opening the door to Communism.⁶³

In Britain, the news provoked editorials in *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* which were critical of the Rhee Government. The Foreign Office took the view that the Law, although ostensibly designed to enable the State to deal adequately with Communist agents, could also be used to restrain the legitimate activities of the Parliamentary opposition and that might indeed be the Government's principal aim in introducing it.⁶⁴ Peter Dalton, the Head of the Far Eastern Department, said that, although the proceedings and undemocratic behaviour of the Liberal Party were regrettable, Britain 'should not expect too high standards from the still young political plant in Korea.'⁶⁵ Foreign criticism, particularly in the British and US press, received some publicity in Seoul, but the reaction by the Korean Government was one of 'annoyance rather than repentance, while the Democrats (Opposition) made use of the criticism.'⁶⁶

Meanwhile President Rhee expressed his wish to seek another term in 1960 'so long as the circumstances urge him to do so.' This was an indication that he would run

⁶³PRO FO371 141537 FK1016/8 Sir H.Caccia, Washington to Selwyn Lloyd, F.O., 3 February 1959.

⁶⁴PRO FO371 141550 FK1071/5 F.O. to Seoul, 15 April 1959.

⁶⁵PRO FO371 141535 FK1015/6 Minute by P.Dalton, F.O., 13 February 1959.

⁶⁶PRO FO371 141533 FK1013/22 Fortnightly Report by H.Evans, 5 May 1959.

for a fourth term for the presidency. The Democrats were far from being united behind a single presidential candidate. Since the reform of the Democratic Party in 1955 on the framework of the old Democratic Nationalist Party (DNP), former members of the DNP had occupied most of the key positions within the party. Some of the posts had passed without serious dissension to the 'new' faction led by Chang Myon, but Cho Pyung-ok, leader of the 'old' or DNP faction, had retained his position as chief party leader. Democratic Party unity which had been so far maintained without serious difficulty now faced a challenge over the presidential nomination. On 10 May 1959 both Vice-President, Chang Myon and the Chairman of the Democratic Party, Cho Pyung-ok, announced that they were prepared to run for the presidency.⁶⁷

By early November 1959, though the antagonism between the 'old' faction Democratic Nationalists and Chang Myon's 'new' faction remained a potent disruptive influence, the Democratic Party managed to avoid a split. Some of the Party's provincial conventions broke up in violent disorder, but the national convention was held in orderly fashion on 26-27 November. Cho Pyung-ok was nominated Presidential candidate, and Chang Myon got the Vice-presidential candidacy and the party leadership. According to a British observer, 'a precarious balance is now established.'⁶⁸

As the election campaign was well under way, foreign observers began to witness greater popular involvement in some provinces. The British thought that there was

⁶⁷PRO FO371 141534 FK1013/35 Fortnightly Report by H.Evans, 3 September 1959.

⁶⁶PRO FO371 141534 FK1013/36 Fortnightly Report by H.Evans, Nov.18-Dec.1, 1959.

evidence to indicate that the Korean people were participating in politics on a larger scale and with more vigour and intelligence than at any time in their history. Their participation was marked by the growing exercise of individual free will. There was no blind worship of a national hero on the one hand, nor meek obedience to the orders of the village headmen on the other. In some rural areas the influence of traditional elements remained strong, but new groups, such as the Korean War veterans and the modern educated classes, tried to vie with the old centres of rural power. Korean society was indeed 'extremely complex, and in a state of great flux and transition.'⁶⁹

The growing political awareness of the Korean people and their dissatisfaction with the Rhee regime put Syngman Rhee and his party under enormous pressure. In this circumstance, as the *Washington Post* put it, 'Syngman Rhee's forces in Korea have bulldozed another election victory.'⁷⁰ This time the Liberals secured the presidency and the vice-presidency. The methods by which they did so were outrageous. Yi Ki-poong in particular used all the powers of the incumbent administration to register voters, to control the content of broadcasts by the Korean National Broadcasting organization, and to intimidate voters on election day by stationing police at polling places. Then, adding corruption and stupidity to these advantages of incumbency, Yi's agents seized ballot boxes and grossly miscounted the votes. President Rhee received more than 92 percent of the votes. Yi claimed 8 million votes, with less than 2 million allotted to Chang

⁶⁹PRO FO371 141537 FK1016/32 British Embassy, Seoul to F.O., 13 December 1959.

⁷⁰PRO FO371 150672 FK10345/3 American reaction to the Korean Presidential Elections. A.J.de la Mare, Washington to Peter Dalton, 17 March 1960.

Myon.⁷¹ The announcement of the election result provoked disbelief and revulsion in the Assembly. The Democratic Party members walked out after declaring that they regarded the elections as null and void. The election result also produced immediate public reaction in the US. Christian Herter, the US Secretary of State, called in the Korean Ambassador on 16 March and spoke in very strong terms about America's concern and disappointment and about the damage which Korea had done to her international prestige.⁷²

On 19 April some one hundred thousand townspeople led by college students in Seoul took to the streets and broke through two police barricades protesting against the conduct of the March elections. They declared that they only intended to present a petition to President Rhee. The police tried to stop them with tear gas but the demonstrators continued on. Then the police fired into the crowd and the demonstrations turned into violent riots. It was reported that about 125 people died throughout the city.⁷³

The State Department, alarmed by the incident, issued a public statement on the same day which said:

The Korean government should, in its own best interest and in order to restore public confidence, take necessary and effective action aimed at protecting democratic rights of freedom of speech, of assembly and of the press, as well as preserving the secrecy of the ballot and preventing unfair discrimination against political opponents of a party in power.⁷⁴

⁷¹W.D.Reeve, op. cit., p.262

⁷²PRO FO371 150672 FK10345/4 J.B.Denson, Washington to N.C.C.Trench, F.O., 29 March 1960.

⁷³*Han-kuk Hyun-dae Sa* op.cit., pp.112-113

⁷⁴Robert T. Oliver, op. cit., p.263

The Washington Post, a long critic of the Rhee regime, said that Rhee was a 'thorough-going despot' and the State Department warning was 'altogether necessary and proper.' In the evening of 19 April, US Ambassador Walter P. McConnaughy went to the presidential residence to caution Rhee not to use force. The Korean Army was under American command. General Song Yo-chan, while commanding the martial law troops, informed President Rhee that he would not sanction the shooting of demonstrators.⁷⁵ The initial British reaction was to show 'a deep concern for the international standing of Korea', and they agreed with the action taken by the State Department. In view of the overriding US interest in South Korea, 'we had not thought it appropriate to take an initiative ourselves'. Besides, the events in Korea were 'primarily an internal matter and not directly our business.'⁷⁶

The demonstrations of April 18-19 were renewed on 25-26 demanding the removal of Vice-President elect, Yi Ki-poong, and a fresh election. In an effort to calm the situation, the Cabinet resigned and President Rhee formally severed his connection with the Liberal Party and expressed his willingness to hold new elections for the presidency and vice-presidency. Nevertheless, his realization of the gravity of the situation came too late and nation-wide demonstrations continued.

There was considerable speculation over whether there had been Communist instigation or participation in the demonstrations. *The New York Times* tended to deplore rather than to condemn, and, while admitting that 'most of the rioters are in no sense

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶PRO FO371 150659 FK1016/21 F.O. to Washington, 26 April 1960.

Communists', took the view that 'they were at fault for playing into Communist hands.' *The New York Times* also took a philosophical view that 'occasional election rigging has been known in countries with far older democratic rule.'⁷⁷

The demonstrators finally brought down the regime of Rhee, who resigned on 27 April, and Yi Ki-poong and his whole family committed suicide. On Rhee's departure, the general feeling was the one of respect for his past achievements, sorrow that they should end like this, but determination that he must not return to power. On 29 May the President and his wife left for Hawaii.

Meanwhile a meeting of the representatives of the sixteen nations was called by the US Government to review the events in Korea. The review was conducted by Graham Parsons of the Far Eastern Affairs. The sixteen nations expressed the hope that there should be an early resolution of the situation in a manner which would permit 'the orderly functioning of democratic government in the ROK.'⁷⁸ Later in a private talk, Parsons confided to Sir Harold Caccia, the British Ambassador to Washington, his view of the difficulties posed by the estrangement of the Korean people from his government. The problem was how to repair this estrangement without weakening the position of South Korea vis-a-vis the Communist North. To take strong action might have the temporary effect of weakening the South, but to let the internal situation go from bad to worse would also weaken the South permanently. Although Parsons did not say so at the meeting, his staff frankly admitted to British officials that 'in fact for the last few years

⁷⁷PRO FO371 150659 FK1016/22 Washington to F.O., 26 April 1960.

⁷⁸PRO FO371 150660 FK1016/33 Sir H.Caccia, New York to F.O., 26 April 1960.

US policy was to wait for Syngman Rhee's death.⁷⁹

In London, the question of British support of the US initiative concerning the developments in Korea was debated in Parliament. The British Government reiterated that the ROK was a sovereign state and neither the UN collectively nor any member states individually had any responsibility for it. It was emphasised that 'while the US has a "special relationship" with the ROK, we have only a "concern"'. 'We do not wish to take any step that might appear to challenge the US relationship with South Korea which we recognise.'⁸⁰

The caretaker government of Huh Chung was in agreement with the National Assembly to amend the Constitution to re-introduce a responsible Cabinet system and then hold a new general election.⁸¹ The new Constitution restoring the Cabinet system was passed almost unanimously on 15 June 1960, and the Government announced the general election date. On 23 June, Huh Chung formally repudiated the idea of unification by force. British officials in Seoul took great interest in that statement; 'although there still was a general tendency to view such ideas with suspicion, it was significant that airing of them is nowadays regarded as harmless, or at least not as a treasonable, activity.'⁸²

⁷⁹PRO FO371 150660 FK1016/34 Sir H. Caccia to F.O., 27 April 1960.

⁸⁰PRO FO371 150660 FK1016/52 F.O. minute by J.G.Jones, 13 May 1960.

⁸¹PRO FO371 150656 FK1013/10 Seoul to F.O., 3 May 1960.

⁸²PRO FO371 150656 FK1013/14 Seoul to F.O., 2 July 1960.

A new general election was held on 29 July 1960 and resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Democrats.⁸³ UNCURK reported that the elections were conducted in a free and fair manner.⁸⁴ On 12 August the National Assembly elected Yun Bo-sun (Democrat) as President by a sweeping majority. The State Department thought that the new government of Korea 'had a reasonable chance of being effective.'⁸⁵ The British Ambassador in Seoul was cautious and warned that the temper of the country was still overwhelmingly conservative. He believed that the election results reflected a built-in conservatism in the political structure at least as much as a conservative tendency in the Korean people.⁸⁶

The Korean political future was still obscure. The dust was yet to settle and the outlines of the immediate, let alone the long-term, future were indistinct. The feature of the case really deserving of attention was the students and their teachers who brought about the downfall of the Rhee regime. There were many pitfalls in the path of Korean progress. But it was something at least that democratic safeguards were given this new lease of life. The US and UK, with their qualified caution, certainly began to feel the Second Republic without Rhee was to be 'a somewhat less embarrassing ally of the West, and, in the international setting, a possibly more accommodating partner.'⁸⁷

⁸³PRO FO371 150657 FK1013/17 Fortnightly Report by Evans, July 26-Aug. 8, 1960

⁸⁴PRO FO371 150662 FK1016/78 UK mission, New York to F.O. Statement by Chairman of the Committee of UNCURK, 30 July 1960.

⁸⁵PRO FO371 150662 FK1016/86 State Department's view on the New Korean Government. J.B.Denson, Washington to N.C.C.Trench, F.O., 25 August 1960.

⁸⁶PRO FO371 150662 FK1016/80 E.Evans to F.O., 16 August 1960.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Korean democracy throughout the fifties was in a precarious condition. Some progress was made, and, considering the events during the first half of the century, perhaps it was a miracle that democracy made any progress in 1960. The State Department stated that, 'after the lengthy period of colonialism and authoritarianism, Korean politics were marked by surprising vigour and intensive competition, a tribute, in part, to the independent character of the Korean people.'⁸⁸

During the first Republic of Korea, the US and Britain shared the view that democracy was unlikely in Korea as long as Rhee remained in power. Although President Rhee's personal popularity, particularly among students, intellectuals and the urban population, was gradually declining, his power and control of politics was basically unimpaired until his forced resignation in 1960. The US and Britain believed this had been possible because of the undemocratic nature of the political system. The Americans carefully followed the political developments as to the movements of political parties, the role of the National Assembly and its members and the conduct of various elections, and took great care to assess the implications of various developments and the impact on US-ROK relations. This contrasted with the British attitude that largely remained indifferent; while there were plentiful reports by the British officials on Rhee's actions particularly regarding the election of 1960, there was hardly any instruction sent by the Foreign Office. Both the Americans and the British officials in Seoul maintained their hope that Syngman Rhee would soon disappear from the political scene, yet neither party was prepared to interfere in Korean affairs.

⁸⁸NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. A Brief for the Secretary of State, 27 July 1960.

Throughout the period in which Rhee attempted to manipulate and control Korean politics through intimidation, rigging elections and constitutional changes to strengthen authoritarianism, the British and the Americans were aware of the damage this would do to international perceptions of Korean democracy. The problem became more urgent with the development of greater political awareness in Korea as Rhee's difficulties in preserving his position increased. Yet as democracy struggled to emerge and was continually repressed, the Americans, not wanting to weaken the ROK relative to the North by acting against Rhee, declined to intervene. As in other aspects of Anglo-American relations in Korea, Britain accepted American initiatives believing the US had greater interests in Korea.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Geneva Conference, April to June 1954

The Geneva Conference of 1954 was one of the most dramatic international assemblies since the Second World War. Although officially concerned only with Korea, it also dealt with the problem of Indo-China, and the two meetings had different memberships. The Korean phase of the conference started first, and was followed by the discussion on Indo-China. The original purpose of the conference, which had been rather modest, widened -though this was never officially acknowledged- into a meeting to examine whether the new China could be persuaded to live on non-aggressive terms with its neighbours. It was the first encounter between revolutionary Asia and the West.¹

The Korean Conference, being devoted to a semi-quiescent issue, seemed to lose its urgency as the situation in Indo-China captured all the diplomatic attention as well as the bulk of newspaper headlines in the summer of 1954. The discussion on Korea was regarded by many of the delegations at Geneva as little more than a 'time-consuming' intrusion upon larger and more urgent matters in Asia. The Korean problem was thus dwarfed and became merely one of a series of issues. The discussions ended in continued stalemate, with little changed and nothing settled. For these reasons, the Korean

¹Guy Wint, *What happened in Korea*. London, 1954. p.132

conference, relegated to second billing in its day, has been neglected by historians.²

Anthony Eden admitted in his memoirs later that:

I did not think Korea was so urgent. After all, there was no fighting there and matters could be allowed to remain for the time being in their present state, if we could not agree on further steps. But the Indo-China situation had very dangerous possibilities.³

The conference was nonetheless a decisive and momentous event in the history of the Cold War in East Asia. The West had to face up to a new challenge. The confrontation was unveiled between the western allies and the Communists. The question was how should post-war Korea be dealt with as part of the overall balance of power in the East-West conflict. The collective efforts to solve the Korean question in such entangled surroundings also exposed a source of strain in Anglo-American relations, and the campaign drained the strength of the free western world.

The Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953 had recommended that the general problem of the future of Korea should be dealt with by a political conference. However, the form of words of article 60 was vague, and the text was extremely unclear. It did not mention who was going to be at the conference table, what specific issues were going to be discussed, and where the talks would be held. In an agreement such as the Panmunjom armistice, and in circumstances such as those under which it was drawn up, it was perhaps inevitable that many of the provisions would be drafted as imprecisely as possible. If clarity had been insisted on, the negotiations might never have ended. Article 60 stated:

²Ibid.

³Anthony Eden, *Full Circle*. London, 1960. p.117

In order to ensure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, the military Commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc.⁴

The Geneva conference came eight months after the Armistice was signed. During these eight months, the Korean question was discussed in New York, as it returned to the forum of the UN, then at Panmunjom, and then at the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Berlin in February 1954 at which Britain, the US, France and the Soviet Union finally decided to hold an international conference to discuss the post-armistice settlement of Korea.

When the Political Committee of the UN met in New York in August 1953, the composition and the scope of the conference became key issues. They were summed up as: whether the Soviet Union and India were to be included as participants, and whether the question of Chinese UN membership as well as the Korean question was going to be discussed.⁵ The Russian proposal was that the conference would include Britain, the US, the Soviet Union, France, China, India, Poland, Czechoslovakia, North and South Korea, Burma, and Sweden. Whereas the US and its thirteen western allies proposed that those who had sent their troops during the war should attend the conference if they wished.

⁴NA Security Council Official Records. S/3079. Armistice Agreement, 27 July 1953. 8th year, Supplement for July to September 1953, pp.22-35. See also Sydney D. Bailey, *The Korean Armistice*. London, 1992. pp.224-239

⁵Pyo-Wook Han, *A survey of the Korean-American relations* (Hanmi Ouekyo Yoramki). Seoul, 1984. p.197

Henry Cabot Lodge, the US ambassador to the UN, made it clear at the meeting on 14 August that the US was opposed to the participation of the Soviet Union and India. This was challenged by Britain and Canada who maintained the view that any effort to solve the problem of Korea without the support of the Soviet Union was pointless.⁶ Selwyn Lloyd, the UK delegate in New York, told Lodge that inviting the Soviet Union might be a 'desirable cold war strategy'. If the Soviets refused to participate, that would be of substantial propaganda value, and it would also help silence the clamour for Big Four or Big Five meetings, particularly on the part of the British Labour Party.⁷

Britain was also keen to support Indian participation. When Roger Makins, the British ambassador in Washington, met with Dulles and his Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, he said that the UK felt strongly that India should be present at a future conference. He said India was in a key position from the point of view of Asia, and its presence at the conference was likely to be helpful. He felt it was very important to keep India with the West and, in fact, this was a major objective of the Commonwealth and India's membership therein.⁸ It was argued that India was a major ally in Asia and a channel of communication to the Chinese Communists. The strenuous British efforts to involve India in Korean affairs had sound reasons: Britain might increase her influence in East Asia cultivating her links with India as sort of a stepping stone; she might also take advantage of India's traditionally close relations with China. Britain was certainly aware of China's demand that India should be represented at the conference.

⁶NA RG59 795.00/8-1253 Lodge to Secretary of State, 12 August 1953.

⁷Ibid.

⁸NA RG43 795.00/7-3053 Plans for the Korean Political Conference, 30 July 1953.

The US and South Korea, however, strongly opposed the idea of inviting India. The US Ambassador in New York, Henry C. Lodge, argued that his government did not think it right to put any one non-belligerent nation in the Korean war on a higher footing than any other.⁹ This also reflected the position of Dulles that 'all neutralism was immoral'.¹⁰ Robertson in the State Department, said that the conference was to deal only with Korea and that there was a feeling that India had not earned participation as she had not contributed any troops to the UN side for the fighting. Moreover, he argued, India had openly sympathized with the Communists' point of view on the important and difficult prisoner of war question.¹¹ The South Korean Foreign Minister, Young-Tai Pyun, warned that if the UN were to decide to invite India, the South Korean government would find it impossible to cooperate with her.¹² He conceded the right of the UN to make a decision in favour of India, but he pointed out that it was equally within the right of the ROK to decide whether to attend or not to attend the political conference.¹³

Roger Makins replied that the UK was not looking at the problem from the point of view of whether India had or had not earned the right to participate, but rather from the point of view that India's presence would be useful. Robert Scott, the British minister at the Washington Embassy, told Arthur Dean of the State Department that he would take

⁹NA General Assembly Official Records(GAOR) A/C.1/L.48, 21 August 1953.

¹⁰Evan Luard, *A History of the United Nations*. Vol.1: The Years of Western Domination, 1945-1955. New York, 1982. p.268

¹¹NA RG43 795.00/7-3053 Plans for the Korean Political Conference, 30 July 1953.

¹²Pyo-Wook Han, *A survey of the Korean-American relations*. p.199

¹³Pyo-Wook Han, *The Problem of Korean Unification*. Seoul, 1987. p.131

the matter up with the Foreign Office. He expressed the personal view that India was not really the issue in the mind of the Communists: the Soviet Union wished to attend the conference, but did not wish to be on the side of the Communists as a combatant, nor as the only 'non-combatant'. In other words they would like to 'fuzz up' their status at the conference by having other neutrals on their side. They therefore wanted the participation of additional 'non-combatants', and India became a convenient 'stalking horse'.¹⁴

The question of Soviet and Indian participation was resolved by the time the 7th United Nations General Assembly convened in late August 1953. The proposal to invite the Soviet Union was accepted without serious objection. The acceptance was regarded as endorsing the view, long propounded by the US, that the Soviet Union had played an active role in the Korean War. However, the proposal to include India received a small majority in the First Committee (27-21, with 11 abstentions), but since this was short of a two-thirds majority, and was regarded by many as an 'important' question, it was rejected. Eventually India withdrew her candidature voluntarily.¹⁵ The Assembly therefore proposed that the conference should include, besides North Korea and PRC, the countries having forces under the UN flag, together with South Korea and the Soviet Union. The UN Resolution of 27 August adopted the proposal by the US and the western allies, and also limited the scope of the conference to Korea only. Discussion on the UN membership of Communist China, Taiwan and other issues in East Asia was therefore ruled out.¹⁶

¹⁴NA RG59 795.00/10-753 Korean Political Conference, 7 October 1953.

¹⁵Evan Luard, *A History of the United Nations*. p.268

¹⁶*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, p.1503 Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 27 August 1954.

China and North Korea had hoped the UN would reconsider the question at its forthcoming autumn session and would then agree to include India. At the 8th General Assembly a month later, the Soviet Union put forward a resolution proposing a conference on a larger scale in an attempt to nullify the August resolution. They proposed to include a number of smaller countries which could be described as neutral: India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Syria and Mexico.¹⁷ The discussions went on for over a month and the General Committee stood firm against the proposals from the Communist side to admit neutrals to the conference. The US dismissed the Soviet proposal arguing that there was no need for debate on the composition, since the preceding Assembly had already settled the question.¹⁸ They instead announced that the US was prepared to allow the Soviet Union's participation, 'provided that Communist China and North Korea desired it'.¹⁹ The Soviet proposal was rejected.

The UN resolution in August allowed the UN Command to call for preliminary talks to make a concrete arrangement for the conference inviting the Chinese and North Koreans. The US (acting on behalf of the UN), China and North Korea, once again sent their representatives to meet at Panmunjom on 26 October 1953. After a prolonged initial exchange of messages through the Swedish government, discussions started, but soon deadlocked. The Chinese asserted that 'the Korean question was primarily a Chinese problem which did not concern the USSR' indicating that they desired the Soviets to be

¹⁷*New York Times*. 23 September 1953.

¹⁸*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, p.1514 Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Smith) to the President, 23 September 1953.

¹⁹*The Department of State Bulletin*. Texts of General Assembly Resolutions on Korea, 14 September 1953. G.P.O., p.366

present as neutrals.²⁰ The American delegation noticed that the Chinese ran the negotiations on the communist side from the very outset. Every statement made by the North Korean spokesman, Ki-Sok Bok, was written out in advance by the Chinese representative, Huang Hua, and passed to the former, although the two never spoke to each other in the conference hut.²¹

It was obvious that the Communists were attempting to have the August 28 resolution invalidated by insisting on a new discussion about the composition of the conference. The US considered this as a settled matter and maintained that the Soviets would be allowed to participate provided they were on 'the other side', and there should be 'no neutrals'. The Chinese and the North Koreans demanded the inclusion of Burma, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Soviet Union as non-voting neutrals.²² The Chinese apparently wanted to court the Asian countries by recommending their inclusion in the conference. In designating the Soviet Union as a neutral, they presumably attempted to eradicate the label put on it as the instigator of the aggression.²³ Or, as the US Ambassador Dean believed, the Communists were using the issue of 'neutrals' in the hope that it would divide India, the US and the British Commonwealth states.²⁴ It was likely

²⁰*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1666-1672 Memorandum of Conversation by Elizabeth A. Brown of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs, 21 December 1953.

²¹NA RG59 795.00/12-2153 Memorandum of Conversation, 21 December 1953.

²²*New York Times*. 29 October 1953.

²³Pyo-Wook Han, *The Problem of Korean Unification*. p.133

²⁴*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, p.1671 Memorandum of Conversation, 21 December 1953.

that by giving the Russians a 'neutral' status, the Chinese tacitly reduced the Soviet Union to a lower rank in order to enhance Chinese status and China's important role in Korean affairs. All these Chinese maneuverings were also delaying tactics in the hope that the development of disunity among the western allies might bring pressure on the Americans.

Arthur Dean insisted on his government's position that only belligerents, not neutrals, should take part in the conference, and that the USSR should be invited as full voting participant and should belong to the 'side' of the Chinese and the North Koreans. The British government was disturbed by the idea of 'side', and urged the Americans to discard the 'concept of the armistice negotiation' in which two opposing sides addressed each other across a table. Britain preferred a genuine round-table peace conference of a more 'old-fashioned type'.²⁵ This British view was repeatedly emphasised, but they were in the end unable to change the American position.²⁶

It became clear that the conference would be a two-sided talk as the UNC and the Communists agreed that the agenda would be made up by the two voting sides, and that the two sides were each to vote as a unit.²⁷ If neutral countries were ever to be included at the conference, they would only be non-voting observers. However, the Americans and the Communists did not agree on the voting procedures. The Communist position was that no proposal could be submitted to the vote unless every state present was prepared to

²⁵Guy Wint, *op.cit.*, p.125

²⁶PRO FO371 110541 FK1071/44 Draft Statements by the Far Eastern Department, 22 January 1954.

²⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, p.1669 Korean Briefing Meeting, 21 December 1953.

have it put to the vote. The US maintained that under the UN proposal each side voted as a unit in accordance with the General Assembly's resolution, but any state could announce that it did not want to be bound by a particular decision.²⁸ In addition, the Communists favoured holding the conference in New Delhi, while Dean insisted upon Geneva, and there were other differences over the date of the meeting.²⁹

By the end of 1953, the Panmunjom talks had made some progress. The Americans even believed that an early settlement would undoubtedly disappoint the Communists who 'are skilled at the hard, time-consuming bargaining'. The UN's proposal in writing on 8 December consisted of a list of fourteen procedural matters on which agreement had been reached.³⁰ The Chinese delegate Huang Hua, however, returned to a series of questions related to the proposal on voting procedure and launched into charges concerning violation of the Armistice Agreement. His charge was directed at the ROK, but Dean immediately pointed out that the ROK had not signed the agreement. Huang then said that the US knew, when they signed the prisoner agreement on 9 June, that the ROK was going to release the prisoners. He said he was bringing up this matter to show that the UN side was not dealing in good faith and could be expected to act the same way in these negotiations. He then charged the US government with 'perfidy'. Dean eventually walked out of the negotiation room. The US delegation announced the talks were recessed

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹D. Rees, *Korea* London, 1964. p.437

³⁰*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, p.1669 Korean Briefing Meeting, 21 December 1953.

indefinitely 'unless the charge of perfidy was withdrawn'.³¹ This was really the end of the Panmunjom preliminary talks.

Dean later recalled the accusation commenting that he did not think the Communists honestly wanted early progress in the negotiations. The Communists, he argued, wanted a political conference but at the same time they wanted the preliminary talks to continue well into the spring by which time the North Koreans would have their civilian economy going again and their military position completely strengthened; there were reports of increasing integration of the North Korean economy with that of China.³² Dean ventured the opinion that this was one reason why Huang had abruptly brought in the written statements and the charge of perfidy at the December 12 meeting.

There was another significant aspect of the Panmunjom talks. As the Chinese began to press more firmly for Soviet participation as a non-voting neutral, so the US was more inclined to insist on its full membership. Dean later expressed his personal view at the Korean Briefing Meeting back in Washington that 'if our(UN) side was willing to withdraw the requirement that the USSR attend the political conference, the Communists would drop their proposal that the USSR should be there as a neutral.'³³ On the other hand, Kenneth Young, the Deputy Representative for the Korean Political Conference, argued that the advantages of Soviet participation in the political conference outweighed

³¹Ibid., pp.1655-1657 The Representative for the Korean Political Conference (Dean) to the Department of State, 12 December 1953.

³²Ibid., p.1668 Memorandum of Conversation by Elizabeth A. Brown of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs, 21 December 1953.

³³Ibid.

the disadvantages, as the Soviet's full membership might insult the PRC. If the USSR was not a member of the conference nor a signatory, the bargaining power of the Chinese Communists in regard to a guarantee either of South Korea or of all Korea would seem to increase greatly. It would also greatly increase the status and prestige of Peking if it was negotiating in effect alone with the US and the Western World and would tend to justify its claims to 'act as spokesman for Asian unity, et cetera'.³⁴

The US Secretary of State Dulles was convinced by the Indian NNRC³⁵ officials' reports that the Chinese regarded themselves as the principal Communist power concerned with Korean matters and would be willing to withdraw their proposal that the USSR should be invited as neutral if the US would not insist on it being a voting participant. The question, however, still could be raised of whether the PRC, having already suggested secondary status for USSR, might in fact prefer the USSR not to attend the conference in any capacity. Speculating over the Chinese intention and the possibility of testing the Sino-Soviet relationship, the State Department was prepared to reconsider their position in view of the fact that the political conference would probably not be able to achieve any major agreement regarding Korea's future and was likely at best to do no more than arrange a *modus vivendi* to supersede or supplement the Armistice Agreement. Therefore the Soviet adherence to such arrangements was 'not essential'.³⁶

³⁴NA RG59 795.00/1-354 Young to the Department of State. Munsan-ni, 3 January 1954.

³⁵Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission which dealt with the non-repatriates during the final stage of the truce negotiations in 1953.

³⁶NA RG59 795.00/1-754 The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, 7 January 1954.

During December 1953 and January 1954 the US government explored the issue of whether they should resume the Panmunjom talks. Some UN members, particularly the UK, were pressing the Americans for early resumption of these negotiations.³⁷ Ambassador Dean and Young, however, agreed that Panmunjom in the month of January was considered to be un conducive to productive results. The final release of the POWs by the Indian Custodial Force was due on 22 January. Resumed Panmunjom talks might be exploited by the Communists as their reaction to the POW release could become exceedingly violent in propaganda and political terms, and POWs could become increasingly taut and susceptible to rumours and provocations with the development of a desire for unhindered release. The UN Command and the Indians were doing everything to prevent any possible provocation and to conduct an orderly release.³⁸ The US also feared that the early resumption of talks would create new difficulties with the ROK. In view of Rhee's New Year's statement that the suspension of talks was final, it was obvious that Rhee and his foreign minister, Pyun, would officially object to the resumption.³⁹

While the talks in Panmunjom were still in abeyance, the foreign ministers of the US, Britain, France and the Soviet Union met in Berlin, in late January 1954, to discuss the German problem. Hardly any agreement was reached regarding Germany. The only worthwhile result of the Berlin conference was incidental: it called the Geneva Conference into being. The new developments in Indo-China had encouraged the leaders in Berlin to

³⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1686-1691 The Deputy Representative for the Korean Political Conference (Young) to the Department of State, 3 January 1954.

³⁸NA RG59 795.00/1-354 Young to the Department of State, 3 January 1954.

³⁹NA RG59 795.00/12-3053 telegram 595, 30 December 1953.

believe that, even if agreement on Germany could not be reached, there was still a possibility of agreement in the Far East. The initiative came from the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov.

Molotov proposed that the conference participants should discuss the convening of a five-power conference, including China, to seek measures for reducing tensions in international relations. Dulles fiercely opposed the idea of inviting China as a big power or one of the convening powers. To America, China was not even a sovereign state and should participate in the conference only on the belligerent side. Dulles was determined that the conference should be a two-sided one. Anthony Eden had been urging favourable reflection upon the possibility of a five-power conference, but 'only if the Americans could be brought to consider it'. Eden wrote in his memoirs that 'a dominant factor in all this is the American attitude'⁴⁰

The draft resolution put forward by the British delegation in mid-February omitted any distinction between convenors and participants. All were lumped together under the 'inviting powers'. As the US was determined not to do anything which would lead to the recognition of the Chinese government, it was added in the Berlin Communique that an invitation of a government to the conference did not mean that the sponsoring powers necessarily recognised that government.⁴¹ The final Berlin Communique was issued on 18

⁴⁰Anthony Eden, *op.cit.*, pp.87-88

⁴¹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Geneva Conference, GKI Memo 5. Berlin Communique on the Geneva Conference issued February 18, 1954. Regarding the recognition of China - 'It is understood that neither the invitation to, nor the holding of, the above-mentioned conference shall be deemed to imply diplomatic recognition in any case where it has not already been accorded.'

February 1954. On this basis the Geneva Conference was to assemble on 26 April 1954.⁴² Discussion on Indo-China as well as Korea was formally proposed. Fifteen countries (sixteen who fought the Korean War minus South Africa) of the UNC side, the Soviet Union, the PRC, and the two Koreas were to participate in the conference.

When the news of the Berlin agreement reached Washington, public opinion was, in general, far from favourable. Conservative Republicans declared that it amounted to *de facto* recognition of Peking. William Knowland, the Senate Republican leader and probably the most formidable of the congressional Asia-firsters, asserted darkly that 'the American people will not consent to a Far Eastern Munich'.⁴³

Meanwhile the British government continued to express their wish to improve relations with the Chinese government. The China factor, without doubt, was the most crucial to Britain's Far Eastern policy. Although the Conservative administration was more concerned than their predecessors to present an appearance of Anglo-American unity to the outside world, the substance of British policy towards China was little changed.⁴⁴ By early 1954, the Foreign Office observed that China's policies had begun to be more conciliatory towards the western world. The military success in Korea brought the People's Republic of China considerable military prestige and enabled it to forge, with Soviet

⁴²NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. GKI D-7 Geneva Conference, April 1954. Korea and Indochina Phases. Invitation to Geneva Conference and Berlin Communique, 26 April 1954.

⁴³H.W. Brands, 'The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the "Other" Geneva Conference of 1954.' *Pacific Historical Review*. Vol.56, no.1, 1987. p.67

⁴⁴Evan Luard, *Britain and China* p.159

assistance, a modern, self-confident, and well-equipped nation which was to become a new important factor on the Asian scene.⁴⁵ There seemed, to Britain, a chance that some of the old contacts could be re-established on a new basis.

Dealing with the new China without damaging relations with the US seemed ever more complex. The British were deeply concerned about the hostile American attitude towards China. Britain understood that the problem was, to some degree, ideological: communism in China was regarded as a dangerous combination of the 'Stalinist phase of their own revolution' mixed with the internally nationalistic causes which tended to lead China to be independent from the Soviet Union. The difficulties which the British government faced with the Americans did not lie in contrary appreciations of the character of Chinese Communism, but in the way in which the two powers approached and dealt with Communism. Some British officials recalled their meeting with the US Vice-President, Nixon, in November 1953. Nixon had said that even 'fighting was better than arranging for a conference and then being forced into a compromise'.⁴⁶ Britain believed that such a stern attitude would not do much good especially when the international community desperately needed a conference to deal with the problems in the Far East. Inflexibility would only deepen the misgivings, and eventually fail to achieve the ultimate goal in the Asian Cold War - preventing communism from spreading in Asia.

Britain was also concerned about South Korea. Britain recognized that the

⁴⁵Geoffrey L. Goodwin, *Britain and the United Nations*. Oxford University Press, 1957. p.151

⁴⁶NA RG59 795.00/11-1353 Dean, Munsan-Ni to Secretary of State, 13 November 1953.

psychological as well as the political importance of Korea to the US had been a major concern for the Washington administration ever since Eisenhower took office.⁴⁷ Being aware of the nature of US-ROK relations, British officials in Washington believed that 'pushing the Americans into a corner would pave the way for the emergence of an American-South Korean association',⁴⁸ especially when the US was making great efforts to get the South Korean government's consent to the conference. On the other hand, Britain did not believe it advantageous to trust the Rhee government. The Foreign Office did not regard the government of the ROK as entitled to speak for Korea as the representative of the Korean people in international affairs, but simply regarded it as a lawful government which the temporary UN Commission was able to observe and consult.⁴⁹ Korea was, according to Colin Crowe at the Far Eastern Department, 'not a defeated enemy, but a country liberated by the Allies, from the alien rule of a defeated enemy'. Thus no one was entitled to impose any decisions on North Korea and the ROK, and the views of both Koreas must be put forward and both must be represented at the conference.

Since the Panmunjom talks were broken off, the South Koreans had been stirred by a vague optimism that the war against the Communists could be resumed, and there would be a chance to unify Korea by force. The impasse at Panmunjom had led the

⁴⁷H.W. Brands, *op.cit.*, p.64

⁴⁸PRO FO371 110547 FK1071/173 R. Scott, Washington to W. Allen, F.O., 24 March 1954.

⁴⁹PRO FO371 110542 FK1017/63(A) Minute by C.T. Crowe, 24 February 1954.

Koreans to hope that the US might be resigned to the last resort, i.e. launching a new war.⁵⁰ The Berlin decision had shattered this hope. Moreover, it was decided without the knowledge of the South Koreans, nor were they informed about it afterwards.⁵¹ Partly because of this, the South Koreans were opposed to the conference from the very beginning. They did not believe in a political conference and insisted that they would not attend even if there were a conference.

The South Korean ambassador in Washington, Yoo-Chan Yang, expressed deep disappointment that the US had not consulted with the ROK until after the matter was settled in Berlin. He warned that holding the conference on the terms discussed was one step closer to US recognition of Communist China if only because the US would be conducting diplomatic negotiations with that country. Ambassador Yang said that the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had told the East Germans that world peace would depend on Asian developments, that Communist China was most important in that respect, and that the other matters discussed at Berlin were mere flurries on which the Soviet Union did not expect results. The policy of the Soviet Union at the Berlin conference was obviously to make the Chinese Communists realize just how dependent they were on Soviet policy.⁵² Moreover, Yang claimed, the Geneva conference was not in accord with the Armistice Agreement. According to article 60, a political conference was to be held within three months. The Panmunjom talks were held on 26 October, three months after

⁵⁰Pyo-Wook Han, *Survey of Korean-American Diplomatic Relations*. p.206

⁵¹Jong-Yil Ra, 'The Geneva Political Conference: the politics of conference?' *The Korean War Studies*. Seoul, 1989.

⁵²NA RG59 795.00/2-1954 Decision at Berlin on a Geneva Conference to Discuss the Korean Problem, 19 February 1954.

the Armistice, and they had failed, and thus the basis for another round of talks had been lost.⁵³

Everett Drumright, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, told Ambassador Yang that as far as talking with the Communists was concerned, this had happened before and he did not believe it represented a step towards recognition of Communist China. He pointed out that Secretary Dulles had insisted on a specific reservation in the joint communique from Berlin - a reservation that the invitation to, or the holding of, the conference did not imply diplomatic recognition. Molotov, in failing to have this reservation removed, failed to achieve his main purpose, which was the recognition of Communist China. He said it was regrettable that the US had not been able to inform the ROK about the decision earlier, but, he added, the 'Berlin discussions had been restricted.'⁵⁴

By early March 1954, President Rhee declared that the Republic of Korea could not take part in the Geneva Conference unless they received some assurances: agreement should be reached on the communist withdrawal and unification of Korea before other problems were raised; the Soviet Union should be present with belligerent and not neutral status; the conference should be two-sided rather than round-table; a satisfactory voting procedure should be adopted.⁵⁵ The British officials did not find these demands reasonable

⁵³NA RG59 795.00/2-1954 The Korean Ambassador to the United States, 19 February 1954.

⁵⁴NA RG59 795.00/2-1954 Decision at Berlin on a Geneva Conference to Discuss the Korean Problem, 19 February 1954.

⁵⁵PRO FO371 110543 FK1071/88 Seoul to Foreign Office, 9 March 1954.

especially regarding the troops withdrawal, but they did not express their views publicly in order not to offend the ROK. They believed it important that South Korea should 'not stray from the rest of the flock'. They obviously saw an advantage in forming a homogeneous group on the UN side, instead of leaving the South Koreans isolated except for their contacts with the Americans.⁵⁶

While the questions of participation, voting procedure and status were being discussed, the British and the Americans were considering their positions on the issues likely to emerge at the Korean Conference. A copy of the tentative UK views was delivered to the State Department requesting the views of the US. In return the UK was assured that the substantive US position at the Korean conference did not differ much outwardly from that of the UK. F. Tomlinson, the British Counsellor at the Washington Embassy, was informed by E. Drumright, that 'the US position was very close to that taken by the UK government' except for three points of difference: the US preliminary paper did not include the concept of a buffer zone; the US was not prepared to accept the seating of the Chinese Communists in the UN as the price of an agreement on the Korean issue; and while the British paper had envisaged a Korean assurance of non-aggression against other powers, the US paper did not.⁵⁷ The tentative British view contained an idea of establishing an extended buffer (demilitarized) area between North and South Korea in case unification was not achieved. It also showed how concerned the British government was about President Rhee's aggressive posture which was likely to violate the

⁵⁶PRO FO371 110547 FK1071/173 R.H. Scott, Washington to W.D. Allen, F.O., 24 March 1954.

⁵⁷NA RG59 795.00/12-353 US Position on the Korean Political Conference, 3 December 1953.

Armistice Agreement.

The basic US position on the Korean political conference was drafted by the State Department. The 'most favourable results' would be the establishment of a free, independent, and representative government of all Korea friendly to the US and the free world. Ideally the US would like to have had the Korean problem settled by the integration of the North under the present government of the ROK through UN-supervised elections. This unified Korea should be preceded by the complete and effective withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces from Korea. Satisfactory security arrangements for the all-Korean government should be established to permit the withdrawal of US and other UNC forces, while leaving the Korean government free to join the free-world collective defence efforts. The tentative plan concluded that discussions on such questions as Formosa, Chinese representation in the UN, and the trade restrictions against China and North Korea should be avoided.⁵⁸

The peaceful settlement of the Korean problem, including the supersession of the Armistice Agreement and the withdrawal of foreign forces, could be achieved only through agreement by both sides on, and implementation of, acceptable plans for the unification of Korea. The above solutions, as the US officials recognized, would hardly be agreeable to the Communists especially the integration of North Korea into the South, the timing of the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, and the elections in the North under

⁵⁸NA RG59 795.00/12-353 Tentative Draft on United States Position, 3 December 1953.

UN supervision.⁵⁹

The US was aware that the allies would want them to seek a solution on some more acceptable basis. The tentative plans were carefully elaborated in more 'realistic' terms. The goal remained the establishment of a free, independent and representative government for all of Korea. The terms for the free elections were highlighted; the legislature and chief executive should be elected by secret and popular vote throughout Korea with membership apportioned on the basis of population as agreed or impartially determined. The elections should be held preferably under the supervision of an impartial commission, ideally chosen by the United Nations. In conjunction with putting into effect such a plan for unification, there was to be a total withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea. Such a withdrawal, however, could not take place until the proposed legislature had established a national government for all of Korea.⁶⁰

On the other hand, however, it was acknowledged that the likelihood of achieving such an agreement was not great. If, therefore, the conference failed to reach an agreement, it should at least be made to constitute a moral and propaganda victory for the US and the UN. The world must be convinced that the US and its allies had done their best to achieve a Korean settlement and that the onus for failure was upon the Communists. It was also made clear that the Armistice should remain in effect if agreement on unification could not be achieved.⁶¹

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., Substantive US Positions on Key Questions, pp.2-4

⁶¹Ibid.

The security arrangement in connection with the withdrawal of forces was one of the key concerns in the US mind. If the complete and effective withdrawal of Chinese forces from Korea before the elections was to be impossible to achieve, the US might have to be prepared to accept a Korea friendly to the US, but without American or other foreign forces or their bases in Korea, and to give up all rights granted under the Mutual Defence Treaty except the provision by the US of economic and military assistance to Korea. In such a situation, the security of the new unified Korea should be supported by US and Communist assurances of the political and territorial integrity of Korea.⁶²

It was important from the tactical point of view that the US should take a position which was more likely to command the support of public opinion in the US and in the free world. The difficulties lay in the fact that the US also wanted to maintain the closest possible cooperation with the ROK who supported tough measures against the Communists, and accommodate the different degrees of moderation required by other free world governments. At the same time, there was pressure for the US to seek a prior agreement of the UN side to the positions to be presented vis-a-vis the Communists in order to speak 'with one voice at the Conference table'.⁶³

There was an agreed view in the Foreign Office that, as in the case of Germany, they must put forward reasonable proposals for unification which would be accepted by world public opinion, and show that it was Communist intransigence which was

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

responsible for failure to reach agreement if the unification could not be brought about.⁶⁴ In Germany everyone had been bound to recognize, particularly since the Berlin Conference, that the division of the country would have to continue for the time being, and 'similar considerations could surely apply in Korea'.⁶⁵ The Foreign Office hoped to put forward proposals, based on the model of its plan for Germany. Eden's initial idea was a modified form of the German model: free elections as the basis for reuniting the two divided parts of Korea under a single central government; gradual withdrawal of all foreign troops over a period of several years; the security of a reunited independent state of Korea to be guaranteed by Communist China and members of the UN (especially the Soviet Union, the US, Britain and France). Eden's plan implicitly furnished an idea for a neutral Korea whose security was guaranteed by the great powers. The idea, however, did not incite an immediate response within the US. The tone of the New York Herald Tribune, in particular, was rather bleak; 'however reasonable these proposals may appear, they were expected to suffer the same fate as those advanced at Berlin'.⁶⁶

A Foreign Office official, however, made a distinction between the situations of Korea and Germany. In Germany, according to Allen, 'we had a clear choice between unification in accordance with our fundamental principles and the maintenance of the status quo', and neutralization was not considered as an option. So long as Germany

⁶⁴PRO FO371 110551 FK1071/264 Minute by C.T. Crowe, American Plans for Korea at Geneva, 15 April 1954.

⁶⁵PRO FO371 110542 FK1071/65 Conversation between W.D. Allen and the Korean Minister, Lee, 25 February 1954

⁶⁶PRO FO371 110542 FK1071/56 Text from The New York Herald Tribune, 24 February 1954.

remained divided 'we must maintain and if possible increase our strength in West Germany.' In Korea, on the other hand, Britain wanted to reduce her forces and the neutralization of Korea, unlike Germany, was not unthinkable.⁶⁷ The removal of all foreign forces from Korea and the establishment of Korean neutrality was indeed an acceptable solution from the British point of view, provided Britain could be sure that a reasonably secure base was available for the US forces in Japan.⁶⁸

In March 1954 the British government's draft plan for Korea was circulated in the Commonwealth Relations Office. The declared object of the UN - a unified, independent and democratic Korea - was also the general aim of the UK government and it was to be achieved in four stages. Firstly, free elections throughout Korea to form a National Assembly; secondly, the drafting of a new constitution by the National Assembly and the establishment of an all-Korean Government; thirdly, agreement between the unified Korea and the interested Powers on the arrangements for the final withdrawal of remaining foreign forces and Korea's future security; lastly, the completion of withdrawal of foreign forces. The unified Korea would be free to accept or reject any international agreements or treaties to which either of the two predecessor governments were parties. Thus Korea would be able to choose freely whether it would aim to live in neutrality or continue to adhere to any of its existing alliances. It would also be necessary for international guarantees of the Korean frontiers to be subscribed to by all states having close

⁶⁷PRO FO371 110542 FK1071/67 Draft Plan for Korea, W.D. Allen to R.H. Scott, Washington, 25 February 1954.

⁶⁸Ibid.

connections with Korea and East Asian affairs.⁶⁹

The British plan provided for the possibility that a unified Korea might be a neutral one free to choose its political direction with its security guaranteed by the interested powers. The idea of a neutral Korea, however, was never formally proposed. The State Department rejected the British idea of neutralization for two reasons. Firstly, the US military authorities were bound to oppose it, for they thought that a great power guarantee of the historic frontiers of Korea would have exactly the same effect as the Korean-US Mutual Defence Treaty which had been in force since the armistice. It would mean the heavier burden on the US military side with no concrete provision for unification. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Syngman Rhee was not a neutralist by nature and would never agree to neutralization even if it were plain that this was the price which had to be paid for unification.⁷⁰ Apart from these official reasons given to the British, the US had other concerns: they did not believe in a neutralized Korea secured by any Communist power. It was against their Cold War principles. It was also doubtful if the US could trust Rhee to govern a unified Korea in the way the US wished.

In the event that the UK's first aim - an agreed Western Plan for the permanent unification of Korea - failed, the government prepared for an interim arrangement for Korea. This second-best plan was to be built on the basis of continued division. It meant an improvement on the Armistice and a reaffirmation of guarantees for the existing situation. It included the extension of the demilitarised zone, the provision for the

⁶⁹PRO FO371 110546 FK1071/146 The Geneva Conference, 19 March 1954.

⁷⁰PRO FO371 110543 FK1071/84 Washington to Foreign Office, 5 March 1954.

withdrawal of foreign troops on both sides to specified areas, the limitation of Korean forces on both sides, the continuance of some form of international supervision and measures relaxing the restrictions on freedom of movement between the two Koreas. The second stage of the plan was admittedly weakened by the fact that any plan short of unification was not acceptable either to the North or the South Koreans. It also contradicted their frequently expressed principles. However, the Foreign Office thought it could be justified, and might even be 'sold to the Koreans, as a temporary expedient', particularly if it were for a defined period and if provisions were made for another review of the problem at a separate conference.⁷¹

Rhee's ideas on a buffer zone and the international guarantees for a unified Korea (neutral Korea) were completely different from the British ones. He proposed a buffer zone, if it was necessary at all, on the Chinese Communist side of the Yalu which was the border between North Korea and China, and saw no need for a buffer zone on the South Korean side. He looked upon the international guarantees for a unified Korea with 'distrust and distaste as worthless paper guarantees'. He associated them with past treaties or undertakings which he believed the US and other great powers ignored, as they had disregarded Japan's annexation of Korea.⁷²

In a joint declaration issued by Dulles and Rhee on 7 August 1953 the US had agreed that it should 'prepare to make a concurrent withdrawal from the conference at the

⁷¹PRO FO371 110542 FK1071/67 JMA 25/2 Plan for the Geneva Conference on Korea in two main stages, 25 February 1954.

⁷²NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 U.A. Johnson to the Acting Secretary, 12 April 1954.

end of ninety days if it appeared to be making no progress and was being exploited by the communists for propaganda purposes'.⁷³ Also it had acknowledged the inherent right of sovereignty of the ROK, and, in return, the ROK had agreed to take 'no unilateral action to unite Korea by military means for the agreed duration of the political conference'.⁷⁴ With the assurance regarding the threat to take unilateral action, the US was able to proceed with the UN's consideration of the political conference. However, despite his pledge in the declaration Rhee did not give up his wish to unify the country by war and thought that the last paragraph in the joint Rhee-Dulles declaration - for the agreed duration of the political conference - left room for the ROK to reassert its right to unilateral action once 'the agreed duration' ended. It was clear that Rhee used the threat as a bargaining chip.

In early March 1954 Rhee's foreign minister, Pyun, sent a letter to Dulles, indicating that the ROK would be willing to attend the conference in exchange for preconditional support for an offensive against North Korea in the event that the conference failed to achieve the peaceful reunification of the peninsula.⁷⁵ The Eisenhower administration could not accept this scheme. The Rhee government later came up with modified proposals asking for a substantial increase in the fighting capability of its armed forces including immediate training and equipping of up to twenty new ROK divisions.⁷⁶

⁷³PRO FO371 110544 FK1071/112(A) Seoul to F.O., 16 March 1954.

⁷⁴*New York Times*. 8 August 1953. Cited in Pyo-Wook Han, *The Problem of Korean Unification*. pp.124-125

⁷⁵*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.16, pp.31-32 Ambassador Briggs, Seoul, to the Department of State, 6 March 1954.

⁷⁶PRO FO371 110544 FK1071/112(B) Reuter, Seoul, 6 April 1954.

This time, with the opening of the conference only two weeks away, the Eisenhower administration realized they would have to deliver some kind of a carrot in order to get Rhee to the conference. The US believed that the South Koreans would eventually come to the conference but 'were just deferring any announcement in order to extract maximum concessions from us and to avoid consulting with us prior to the Conference in order to retain a free hand at the Conference'.⁷⁷ The State Department told the ROK that in view of the very short time before the Conference they could no longer delay consulting with other members of the Allied side. The ROK expressed no objection and merely asked to be kept informed of the results.

At the preliminary consultations with the UK, the Commonwealth and France, the US pressed the allied governments with somewhat hard line proposals. The Washington administration made it clear that they were not going to permit their Allies to bargain them down prior to Geneva 'so that they had no give' by the time they started negotiations with the Communists. They argued that at least the opening Allied position at Geneva should be support of the ROK position which provided for the extension of ROK sovereignty over North Korea and the holding of elections under UN observation for the seats in the ROK Assembly provided for North Korea under the ROK constitution. US officials justified their position by saying that it would be 'a logical completion of the UN plans for the unification of Korea interrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War'.⁷⁸ This hardline position in fact was a move away from their 'realistic plans' drafted in early December, since it discarded the terms for the all-Korean free elections. It reflected a

⁷⁷NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 U.A. Johnson to the Acting Secretary, 12 April 1954.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Republican backlash and the increasing pressure that, as it was getting close to the opening of the conference, the US should come up with something to persuade Rhee to attend the conference. The Washington administration also began to study the ROK's request for increasing the South Korean army divisions.

The US proposal which Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State, circulated on 7 April, immediately provoked a reaction from the Foreign Office.⁷⁹ The proposal for integrating North into South Korea was intensely disliked by the British. Britain believed that, as a matter of principle, the unification must be achieved by the establishment of a new National Assembly and an all-Korean government.⁸⁰ Even from the tactical point of view, the US proposal was generally considered unreasonable; it would play into Communist hands, and it would make it difficult to secure a moral victory at Geneva which was one of their agreed objectives because it would not be justifiable before the world. Britain feared that the US proposal would be no good for reducing tensions, increasing the security of the area and providing additional safeguards against renewal of the hostilities by either side in Korea.⁸¹

Britain was deeply disturbed by the US being 'too lenient' on Rhee. Although the US effort to persuade South Korea to be at the Conference table was appreciated, the UK thought that the effort should be made within 'reasonableness', and not just be a 'give-away'. The kind of attitude which the US and South Korea had seemingly taken was

⁷⁹NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 Korean Phase of Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

⁸⁰PRO FO371 110546 FK1071/146 (2)Second stage plan for Korea, 19 March 1954.

⁸¹NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 Korean Phase of Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

regarded as highly dangerous. The Foreign Office thought that it would be absurd to take the view that there was more profit to be gained at the conference table by making concessions to the Communists. It would be better for Dulles to adopt a reasonable position and not have to retreat very far than to take an extreme position and be driven off it by the Communists.⁸² At the outset, the UK maintained, the allies should present a plan that was firm and reasonable for the solution to the Korean problem. It was not clear whether Britain realized that this would increase the danger of Rhee not attending the Conference.

Unlike the British, the French response was one of somewhat grudging support, or at least not opposition, in the hope of obtaining US support for French positions with respect to Indo-China.⁸³ The Commonwealth, on the other hand, took the same view as the British: a plan for all-Korean elections to a constituent Assembly should be put forward at Geneva, similar to the Allied plan put forward at Berlin for Germany. Alexis Johnson, the US ambassador to Czechoslovakia and coordinator of the Geneva Conference, criticised the views of the Commonwealth. He argued that while having a superficial plausibility, such a plan ignored the great differences between the Korean and the German situation. In effect it would place the ROK and the North Korean regimes on the same basis and 'start from scratch' in Korea. He also put his view to the Acting Secretary, Bedell Smith, that although Rhee and his supporters could be expected to win overwhelmingly any such all-Korean election, the ROK could be expected violently to

⁸²PRO FO371 110547 FK1071/187 Foreign Office to Washington, no.1415, 6 April 1954.

⁸³NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 Position on Korean Unification for Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

oppose the plan as it would countervail the 1947 election. It would also ignore 'the basic US position of the maintenance of the integrity of the ROK'.⁸⁴

There was a growing concern in the Foreign Office that the unyielding US mood might have resulted from a misunderstanding between the US and UK governments. Britain decided to assure the Americans that the differences between the US and the UK rested only in the approach and the emphasis of their policy. The Foreign Office made it clear that they agreed in general with the US position. Minister Scott at the Washington embassy pointed out that the Americans had misunderstood the British plan. With regard to the 'disappearance' of the ROK government in terms of an all-Korean election, it should be part of a general plan for the unification of Korea. Since the ROK would undoubtedly win the elections, Syngman Rhee should realize that it was in his interests to accept such a plan. Even the second-stage plan, Scott argued, did not mean compromises in the sense of concessions but only arrangements to increase the security of the area and to provide additional safeguards to prevent the renewal of hostilities.⁸⁵

Alexis Johnson, one of the hardliners in the State Department, expressed appreciation for the UK minister's information but pointed out that when the US talked about the disappearance or the liquidation of the ROK government, it meant the whole constitutional structure and framework, whereas the British and Commonwealth might have been thinking in terms of a cabinet system or an administration. He went on to make three fundamental points: the US could not accept the liquidation of the basic

⁸⁴NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 U.A. Johnson to The Acting Secretary, 12 April 1954.

⁸⁵NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 Korean Phase of Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

constitutional structure of the ROK without the consent of the ROK; the US could not put the ROK on a par with the North Korean authorities; and that the US would be unlikely to get Rhee to agree to a plan for generalized elections in Korea involving total departure from the present framework.⁸⁶

It was suggested among officials at the State Department and the British embassy that the State Department might be able to convince the Foreign Office by giving it more information on US relations with the ROK and with President Rhee. In that way, it would be easier for London to realize what that relationship was and why the US took the position they did on unification.⁸⁷ Kenneth Young, Director of Northeast Asian Affairs, described the basic points of the South Korean position as follows: President Rhee was, temperamentally and intellectually, opposed to a political conference; while he had said that he would go along with it if the Americans wanted it, he did not believe that it would accomplish anything; he was afraid that a political conference would result in concessions and bargains at the expense of Korea's fundamental interests. Kenneth Young pointed out frankly that Rhee mistrusted the influence of the Allies over the US; Rhee had an abiding fear that the British, the French and the Commonwealth governments would be able to whittle away US support for a position and to influence the Americans into making concessions which otherwise they would not do.⁸⁸

Kenneth Young explained the South Korean position on the question of unification

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, 12 April 1954.

⁸⁸Ibid.

and withdrawal of foreign forces as follows: the withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces from Korea had to be the initial step before anything else was discussed or done; the establishment of ROK administrative authority over North Korea; and elections in North Korea under ROK control for filling the absent seats in the ROK National Assembly which had already been set up by the election under UN supervision in 1947.⁸⁹

Therefore the US efforts to work out some understanding with the ROK had to be assessed in the above context. Alexis Johnson emphasized that the British government should take into account the basic attitudes that Rhee and many Koreans had in this regard, and fully appreciate the position of the US. In recapitulation, Johnson said they were seeking to devise a formula whereby there would be elections in North and possibly South Korea within the framework of the ROK constitution under international supervision, possibly coupled with a simultaneous election for a President. He felt that this was a proposal to which they might eventually obtain Rhee's agreement.⁹⁰

UK minister Scott commented after the meeting that he found it 'extremely interesting that the State Department described some of these difficulties in more detail and with candidness for the benefit of his government'.⁹¹ Scott suggested that, in order to increase the Conference's flexibility, it might be possible to go back and forth among the subjects on the agenda. He thought that, after discussing unification for a while, it was

⁸⁹Ibid., p.3

⁹⁰NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 U.A. Johnson to the Acting Secretary, Position on Korean Unification for Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

⁹¹NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 Korean Phase of Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

feasible to move on to discuss withdrawal of foreign forces first and a coalition government after, to be followed at some indefinite future date with so-called elections. Scott argued that such a procedure might increase the flexibility of the Allied position, as it would provide a 'fall-back position' in case either of the subjects did not reach an agreement. The US, however, believed that they should discuss the question of unification and withdrawal of forces together and not divorce these two major subjects. The British minister's suggestion could not convince the State Department officials.⁹²

Candid and detailed discussions to narrow the differences between the officials of the US and UK governments did not always produce an agreement. Against the opposition of the UK and the Commonwealth, the State Department reiterated its policy that they would support the South Korean government's position and proposed that a UN Commission should now proceed to supervise elections in North Korea only.⁹³ While Dulles had said in a broadcast report that he did not wholly exclude the idea that the Soviet Union might in fact want peace in Asia, some government officials nevertheless remained sceptical that the Communists would resort to the conference table 'not to abandon aggression but to pursue it by the cheaper routes of diplomacy and propaganda'.⁹⁴

Dulles' visit to London on 12 April was of a 'milder' sort than Britain had feared.⁹⁵

⁹²ibid., p.4

⁹³NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 U.A. Johnson to the Acting Secretary, 12 April 1954.

⁹⁴NA RG59 795.00/4-1454 GKI D-7 US Propaganda Policy for the Geneva Conference, 14 April 1954.

⁹⁵Evelyn Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez. Diaries 1951-56*. London, 1986. p.164

The discussions between Dulles and Eden largely concerned the situation in Indo-China. There was little evidence that the British government successfully persuaded its counterpart to consider the 'fall-back position' and withdraw from its basic position at the Korean conference, i.e. incorporation of North Korea into the existing ROK. Dulles was accompanied by the Assistant Secretary of the Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, who was one of the hardliners and described by Eden's private secretary as 'a dreadful man for his inelastic attitude'.⁹⁶

Dulles carried with him a plan for a South East Asian Security Pact. Although the impending outcome of the situation in Indo-China was entirely foreseeable, those who hoped that the Communists would at last come and negotiate, feared that Dulles, by proposing the pact at that moment, might endanger the Korean conference in advance.⁹⁷ Meanwhile Eden assured Dulles of Britain's readiness, 'without committing us(Britain) to fight in Indo-China and to take part, with other countries concerned, in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defence...'⁹⁸

Pending the Geneva Conference, the British government was anxiously seeking a common position on Korea with the US. This effort was seen in the broad perspective that British interests in Asia lay in their cooperation with the Americans. Relaxation of international tension through 'collective defence' was the UK's prime objective. Subject to the primary consideration of security in the region, the British aim was to work for the

⁹⁶Ibid., p.163

⁹⁷Guy Wint, op.cit., p.136

⁹⁸Evelyn Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.164

restoration and maintenance of peace and for the re-establishment of normal political and trading relations.⁹⁹ The so-called 'special relationship' was the determinant of this aim. It was believed that by allowing the US to take a decisive role in an area to which Britain attached little strategic importance, Britain would be able to focus her attention in on other more significant areas, such as Europe and the Middle East. At the same time it was necessary for Britain to cooperate with the US outside Europe in order to secure American help in Europe: Europe was too dependent upon American power to risk separation.

In all our foreign policy, the American alliance is paramount. We are at one with the US in the broad aims of resistance to Communism and the restoration of peace and stability. We must do what we can do to persuade the Americans to our views, but the overriding necessity is to preserve our unity.¹⁰⁰

The question was how to coordinate British and American policies. The two countries adopted different approaches to communism. The British wished to moderate and control East-West tensions by avoiding direct confrontation, whereas the Americans believed that appeasement would not work because the Communists had no ultimate wish for peace. The US claimed that in Geneva the Communists would doubtless attempt to elevate the PRC's prestige in the hope of convincing the free world to legitimize its conquest of China, particularly through admission to the UN and diplomatic recognition.¹⁰¹ Therefore the Chinese Communists should be dealt with - just as at Panmunjom - on a *de facto* basis as an aggressor, and there was no room for negotiation with them. This attitude together with their determination to control the situation in Korea led the

⁹⁹PRO FO371 110556 FK1071/361 Minute by W. Allen, 10 April 1954.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹NA RG59 795.00/4-1454 Geneva Conference, April 1954. Korean and Indochina Phases, by Walter Trulock, 14 April 1954.

Americans to become much less conciliatory than the British. As the situation in Indo-China was getting serious, the Americans became convinced that they could easily secure British support for the US position on Korea.

While the predominant British views with respect to Red China are well known, there is reason to believe that in the forthcoming conference it may not be so difficult to keep the British position in line with our own. This is largely because in the British view any agreement on Indo-China which could lead to a Communist take-over would infinitely complicate their problem in Malaya and imperil their whole Pacific position and their ties with Australia and New Zealand. The Commonwealth nations will most probably support this view.¹⁰²

Yet Britain believed they should meet the Communists at Geneva with a more accommodating spirit, not necessarily because they believed they might actually achieve something by being benevolent to the Communists, but because the US attitude that the west had the right to impose terms upon the Communists because the Communists had been the aggressors in the war, was futile and undesirable. The British believed that the western powers must take the initiative and come forward with comprehensive proposals for unification through free elections, neutralization and withdrawal of foreign troops. Nevertheless, it was clear that the British did not expect much from the conference; they were well aware of the difficulties inherent in putting forward a proposal which Rhee might veto. Britain also thought it was extremely unlikely that the Communists might be prepared, in order to secure the withdrawal of UN and particularly US troops, to agree to an acceptable plan of unification.¹⁰³

¹⁰²NA RG59 GKI D-7 Geneva Conference, April 1954. Korean and Indochina Phases. US Propaganda Policy for the Geneva Conference, 14 April 1954.

¹⁰³PRO FO371 110546 FK1071/152 Comments on United Kingdom Paper by the Australian External Affairs Office, 22 March 1954.

The Foreign Office admitted that it was often difficult to assess the intentions of the US government, and it was frequently held that the South Koreans were the guilty party to be blamed for these difficulties. In some quarters of Whitehall, there had been complaints that the South Koreans were 'being very difficult to deal with and they were simply trying to extort the maximum concessions out of the Americans'.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, President Rhee's claims over the North were seen as impractical and unacceptable not only to the governments concerned but to world opinion at large. The Legation report from Seoul seemed to confirm the Foreign Office's concerns:

The South Koreans know quite well that they cannot "go it alone" with any hope of success as long as the Chinese army remains in North Korea; but once all foreign forces were withdrawn the South Korean army, now up to twenty divisions, might well expect to over-run the North. And I feel sure they would try before long...the feeling that North Korea is being rapidly incorporated into China - racially as well as politically- makes many Koreans beside the President feel that time is running out, and that unification must be achieved soon or never...I am afraid therefore that I still think we can hope for nothing better than maintenance of the present deadlock.¹⁰⁵

It is nevertheless doubtful whether the British government was prepared to differ significantly to an extent where they might estrange the Americans over what seemed to be, and undoubtedly was, the less important issue at Geneva.¹⁰⁶ The Canadians, the New Zealanders and, to a lesser degree, the Australians expressed their opposition to the US-ROK position. On the other hand, in view of the widespread impression of possible differences with Britain on certain questions at Geneva and Communist eagerness to

¹⁰⁴PRO FO371 110551 FK1071/264 Minute by C.T. Crowe, 15 April 1954.

¹⁰⁵PRO FO371 110544 FK1071/111 W.G. Graham, Seoul to W. Allen, F.O., 6 March 1954.

¹⁰⁶John W. Holmes, 'Geneva:1954' *International Journal* Vol.22, no.3, Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Summer 1987. p.463

exploit such situations, it was also vital for the US to maintain the same kind of solid front which had been displayed at Berlin. Yet there was little evidence that the American stance was in any way modified under the British pressure, although the secret deliberations of the Eisenhower administration show that allied (and especially British) advice and thinking received more attention than was realized at the time.¹⁰⁷

On 16 April, Eisenhower informed President Rhee that he was dispatching James Van Fleet, a US General and a personal friend of Rhee, to Korea, and he announced a sizeable reinforcement programme for the ROK military. Rhee expressed warm satisfaction with the contents of Eisenhower's letter, and said, 'Please tell President that by that alone he has assured us happy Easter in Korea.'¹⁰⁸ Delighted, Rhee announced on 19 April his decision to send his delegation to Geneva, and that his Foreign Minister Pyun would head the delegation and would leave within 48 hours. Rhee still doubted whether any good would come of the conference but noted that President Eisenhower himself had stated in his letter that he was under no illusions about dealings with Communists.

The preliminary talks on the Conference which had been going on since the Berlin decision in February, were given a new momentum by South Korea's decision to attend the Conference. The nineteen governments -the fifteen countries which had sent their forces under the UN flag during the war, North and South Korea, the USSR, and Communist China- gathered in Geneva at the former headquarters of the League of

¹⁰⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.2, pt.1, pp.461-462 and 499 Cited in C.J. Bartlett, *op.cit.*, p.62

¹⁰⁸NA RG69 795.00/4-1854 Seoul to Secretary of State, 18 April 1954.

Nations on 26 April. It was not clear what the seating arrangement was, but it was certainly a bilateral negotiation between the Russians, North Koreans and Chinese on the one side and the UN and South Koreans on the other. There were no neutrals and the Indians did not participate. No voting procedure was established, and all proposals were merely recorded.¹⁰⁹

It was an unusual conference. Chinese Communists, for instance, had not previously been seen in the West. Now some 200 had arrived and, to the surprise of the Swiss, refused to share a hotel with the Russians.¹¹⁰ The Russians, so soon after Stalin's death, attracted almost as much attention as the Chinese. Casey, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, recorded in his diary on 27 April: 'The entry and exit of the Russian, Chinese and North Korean delegations to and from the Palais des Nations building in Geneva has to be seen to be believed. They form up in a solid phalanx with strong-arm men in front, behind and on the flanks- fellows like gorillas with their right hands menacingly in their coat pockets.'¹¹¹ John Holmes, a member of the Canadian delegation, recalled that the most interesting spectacle at Geneva was provided by the Chinese. It was especially intriguing to watch the relationship between Molotov and Chou En-lai. There were no public indications of disagreement, but it was clear that the Chinese representatives would not accept a position in any way inferior to that of the Soviets. In

¹⁰⁹*The Korean Problem at the Geneva Conference*. State Department Pamphlet No.5609 Released in October 1954.

¹¹⁰James Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina*. Macmillan, 1986. p.66

¹¹¹T.B. Millar (ed.), *Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R.G. Casey 1951-60*. Collins, 1972. p.141

public, however, their 'team-work seemed good'.¹¹²

The American determination to reduce China's prestige was shown by an exhaustive review of China's aggressive and unprincipled record in its foreign relations, with particular emphasis on its aggression in Korea. The US view of China's subordinate position in its alliance with the USSR was revealed by the Americans emphasising the fact that Geneva was not conceived in a Five-Power framework. It was also the US thesis that Moscow, as the centre of the Communist conspiracy, bore the ultimate responsibility for the hostilities in the Far East and that Soviet efforts to play the role of benign bystanders were deceitful.¹¹³

There are few sources available on Sino-Soviet relations in Korea. US intelligence materials are sketchy and conflicting. By virtue of its military effort in Korea, Communist China apparently gained overt leadership in the late stages of the armistice negotiations and in the Panmunjom talks and became the public guarantor of North Korea's security. It was believed that Communist China had a major role in what before the hostilities had been almost wholly a Soviet sphere. Nevertheless, according to an official in the State Department, there were no reliable indications that the Sino-Soviet balance of power in Korean affairs represented a major source of friction between the two powers.¹¹⁴

¹¹²John W. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p.465

¹¹³NA RG59 795.00/4-1254 GKI D-7 Geneva Conference, 12 April 1954.

¹¹⁴NA RG59 795.00/3-254 Memorandum by W.P. Armstrong, Jr. to The Deputy Under Secretary, 25 March 1954.

Both the USSR and Communist China had given large grants in aid to North Korea: although the Communist Chinese grant was slightly larger, the Soviet grant came first and appeared to be the basis for industrial reconstruction.¹¹⁵ A few intelligence reports had been received that Communist China was establishing permanent settlers in North Korea, but this was not accepted by the UN Command. Allegations that Communist China was integrating North Korea into the Manchurian economy were not supported by available evidence. On the contrary, the announced reconstruction plan emphasized the re-establishment of the heavy industry sector originally geared to Japan's industry and after the Second World War tied to the Soviet Far East. In the North Korean regime, Koreans of Chinese Communist background - whose potential for leadership in any event was very limited - apparently did not challenge the predominant position of Soviet Koreans, and were not an important channel of Chinese Communist influence.¹¹⁶

The discussions on Korea - which eventually comprised 15 plenary meetings and one restricted meeting - were arranged by rotating the chairmanship among Prince Wan of Thailand, Molotov and Eden.¹¹⁷ The opening session of the conference was confined to platitudes declaimed in the full glare of publicity. Then it progressed to plenary sessions, during which each delegate stated his propaganda position at great length and the press officers related everything in detail, on the record, to the assembled

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶NA RG59 Intelligence Note: Sino-Soviet Relationship in North Korea, 23 March 1954.

¹¹⁷State Department Pamphlet No.5609 op.cit., Foreword p.iv The list of participants, the schedule of meetings, and the documents.

correspondents.¹¹⁸ Once the plenary session started, delegations addressed the conference. The ROK opening speech was moderate in tone and well received by the other 15 allied nations. It contained a general proposal for holding free elections in North Korea observed by the United Nations. While there was no mention of troop withdrawal, the speech emphasised that 'making an issue of holding free elections in South Korea, as if discrediting the previous ones as devised and observed by the UN, cannot but constitute a serious reflection upon the prestige and authority of the international organization'.¹¹⁹

The first specific proposal presented to the Conference was introduced by the North Korean delegate, Nam Il, on 27 April. This was that general elections should be held for an all-Korean national assembly, which would have the task of electing a unified Korean government. For this purpose, the Supreme People's Committee (of North Korea) and the National Assembly (of South Korea) should select representatives to an all-Korean Commission. This body should include representatives of the largest democratic social organizations in South and North Korea. The Commission would arrange for the drafting of an electoral law to ensure that the general election was truly democratic and 'free from all foreign interference or internal pressure'. 'All foreign troops should be withdrawn from Korean territory within six months before the election'. All countries most interested in the maintenance of peace in the Far East should guarantee the peaceful development of

¹¹⁸Humphrey Trevelyan, *Worlds Apart*. Macmillan, 1971. p.79

¹¹⁹NA RG 795.00/5-154 Memorandum for the Under Secretary, Status of Korean Political Conference, 1 May 1954. See also State Department Pamphlet no.5609 op.cit., Document no.5 Statement by Mr Pyun, ROK, 27 April 1954.

Korea.¹²⁰

Next day, Dulles declared that the North Korean scheme bore striking similarity to both the Soviet proposal on Germany at Berlin and the North Korean proposal of 19 June 1950.¹²¹ He also strongly defended the moral authority of the UN and the Charter undertakings of its members, and argued that the UN should assume the prime responsibility for establishing Korea as a free and independent nation. 'A workable programme for unifying Korea did not have to be invented', because it was 'already at hand'¹²²; the resolution of 7 October 1950 which established a Commission (United Nations Commission for Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea) to complete the unification of Korea by observing elections in that part of Korea where observed elections had not yet been held - North Korea. The interrupted work of the Commission should proceed. This would require 'the Chinese Communist regime to withdraw their forces of aggression and occupation from North Korea so that the UN could complete its task in an atmosphere free of menace'.¹²³

Chou En-lai's speech was a strong propaganda attack on the US, criticising the Americans for regarding the Nationalists as the rightful government of China and

¹²⁰Cmd.9186 Great Britain, Foreign Office. Documents relating to the discussion of Korea and Indo-China at the Geneva Conference, 29 April - 15 June 1954. HMSO, 1954. pp.4-5

¹²¹*Survey of International Affairs*. 1954: The Geneva Conference. R.I.I.A. p.273 See also Cmd.9186 op.cit., pp.9-14

¹²²State Department Pamphlet no.5609 op.cit., Document no.8 Statement by Mr Dulles, US, 28 April 1954.

¹²³Ibid., pp.51-52

protecting them in Taiwan and the coastal islands. The following statement and proposal on 3 May accused the US of 'unleashing the war of armed intervention in Korea', and stated that in the course of the Korean Armistice negotiations, the US 'dragged out the negotiations under the cloak of the United Nations and obstructed the convening of the Political Conference', and that was why 'the Conference had nothing to do with the United Nations'.¹²⁴ Chou said his government fully supported the proposals by General Nam Il which called for the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea and the holding of free all-Korean elections. He denounced the South Korean delegation for suggesting that American troops should remain, because the presence of American troops in Korea affected the security of the PRC. In order to rule out the possibility of a recurrence of fighting in Korea, Chou argued that 'the appropriate states most interested in the preservation of peace in the Far East should undertake not to interfere in the internal affairs of Korea and guarantee its peaceful development'¹²⁵

Molotov, although his speech was somewhat softer, followed a similar line. It was an important fact, he said, that all the great powers, including China, were taking part in the conference, though he regretted the absence of India and other Asian states. The Korean War had been 'forced upon the country from abroad, followed by the brutal military intervention of the United States'. The Soviet Union sympathized with the liberation movements, and had also established lasting friendly relations with China. US hostility to China was shown in the seizure of Taiwan, the denial to China of its rightful place in the UN, the accusation that China had committed aggression in Korea, the

¹²⁴Ibid., Document no.14 Statement and Proposal by Chou En-lai, PRC, 3 May 1954.

¹²⁵*Survey of International Affairs*. 1954: The Geneva Conference. R.I.I.A. pp.273-274.

rearming of Japan, and the creation of military bases near China. The Soviet Union considered that 'the North Korean proposals could serve as a basis for an appropriate decision'.¹²⁶

Thus, from the start, although there was general agreement that Korea should be reunited, there was a vast difference of opinion between the US-ROK representatives and those of the Communist states on how the reunion should be effected. The terms for troop withdrawals in relation to free and democratic elections were the key questions. The Communists demanded the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, and then unification through an all-Korean election supervised by an 'appropriate' commission. The US and South Korea advocated the withdrawal of the Chinese troops before the election, and maintained that the elections in North Korea should be supervised by the UN. The UK government, at least outwardly, supported the US position, but inclined to accept the simultaneous and gradual withdrawal before the elections. They believed it was a more flexible and reasonable view as long as the election was to be truly free. Nevertheless, they did not press their views. Unlike the preliminary discussions, Britain was anxious not to show disunity among the UN side and to keep itself in line with the US.

There was a marked reluctance to speak on the part of most countries, particularly the European ones, coupled with a tendency to let the US and the ROK carry the brunt of the battle.¹²⁷ The 14 countries other than the US and the ROK, had, with varying

¹²⁶PRO FO371 110559 FK1071/419 11th Plenary Session, 22 May 1954. For Molotov's speeches, see also *F.R. U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.16, pp.159-161, 29 April; pp.249-251, 11 May; pp.348-354, 5 June; pp.376-385, 15 June 1954.

¹²⁷PRO FO371 110559 FK1071/419 11th Plenary Session, 22 May 1954.

degrees of reluctance, accepted the idea of initially presenting a proposal incorporating the twin principles of completion of the UN programme for unification and the preservation of the ROK constitutional structure. It was also notable that more proposals were made by the Communist side than the UN side.¹²⁸

There was pressure to present a proposal which would go further to meet the Communist position. The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Richard G. Casey, declared that there was 'undoubtedly a strong case, for the holding of elections only in North Korea'. Yet he expressed the hope that the ROK government would agree to elections throughout Korea if this were necessary in the interests of a final settlement. He said that this would be a gesture in keeping with the ROK's support of democratic principles and should, if the other side is sincere in its approach, lead to a peaceful solution to the Korean problem.¹²⁹

Eden was thoroughly at home in Geneva and drew much attention.¹³⁰ Humphrey Trevelyan, the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking and delegate to Geneva, recalled that Eden was a 'superb negotiator' and took great trouble over the way in which his talks were

¹²⁸State Department Pamphlet No.5609, op.cit., Annex C. 1
Proposals made by:

Nam Il(N.Korea)	April 27 & June 15
Chou En-lai(China)	May 3,22 & June 15
Molotov(Soviet Union)	June 5 & 15
Pyun (S.Korea)	May 22
Spaak (Belgium)	June 11

¹²⁹Ibid., Document no.9 Statement by Mr Casey, Australia, 29 April 1954.

¹³⁰James Cable, op.cit., p.66 See also John W. Holmes, op.cit., p.463

conducted. Once the pretence of negotiation in the conference was given up, a serious possibility of a private diplomatic negotiation emerged. The principal delegates began to visit each other's villas at all hours of the day and night.¹³¹ Eden enjoyed a relatively good relationship with Chou En-lai and Molotov. When Molotov said that he gathered 'the American people were in a very nervous state and the atmosphere seemed to be dangerously tense', Eden defended the US saying that it would be wrong to believe the Americans did not want peace. When Chou En-lai said that he thought the Americans were bitterly hostile to, and jealous of, China, Eden replied flatteringly that 'the American people had been very fond of China'.¹³²

Dulles left the conference on 3 May, only a week after it had opened, and was succeeded by Bedell Smith. By this time Dulles' relations with Eden could hardly have been worse.¹³³ The tragic difference between the two was not only a clash of personalities; it was a basic difference in their approach to the security of East Asia, and their attitude towards Communist China. Dulles had compared the Korean situation with Germany's seizure of the Rhineland. Eden did not accept the analogy.¹³⁴ It was always hard for Dulles and Eden to talk straightforwardly with each other. Their differences lay at the bottom of much of the bitterness and the lack of faith which became so tragic at the time of the Suez Crisis. The American Under Secretary, Walter Robertson, regarded by the British officials as the 'most fanatical member of the State Department', was present in

¹³¹Humphrey Trevelyan, *op.cit.*, p.78

¹³²PRO FO371 110556 FK1071/363 Eden, Geneva to Foreign Office, 30 April 1954.

¹³³John W. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p.464

¹³⁴Humphrey Trevelyan, *op.cit.*, p.76

Geneva most of the time to make sure there was no whispering behind his back.¹³⁵ Bedell Smith, however, was better respected and trusted. He told Eden, on 1 May, 'not to pay too much attention to some of the stupid things being said in the USA'.¹³⁶ Among those who trusted him in one of the darkest hours of Anglo-American relations was Churchill.¹³⁷

The American delegation soon found itself confronted with what appeared to be a nearly insurmountable problem. The US felt that there was 'little harmony' among their allies, as opposed to the unity among the Communists. Dulles and the American delegation felt frustrated when they were accused by the Chinese and Russians of being both a main instigator of the Korean War and a colonial power, and complained that Eden's reticence appeared to suggest a lack of support for the Americans. Eden said that 'so far as the speech-making at this conference was concerned, Mr Dulles knew why I had kept silent...'¹³⁸ Eden supported the US position, although he believed that the US should come forward to find a compromise solution.

On 11 May Eden made a speech which displayed support for the US position by criticising the North Korean proposal of 27 April. Eden's criticism was based mainly on the fact that the formation of an all-Korean Commission, as proposed by the North Koreans, ignored the great numerical disparity between the two populations and

¹³⁵John W. Holmes, *op.cit.*, pp.466-468

¹³⁶Evelyn Shuckburgh, *op.cit.*, p.186

¹³⁷John W. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p.464

¹³⁸PRO FO371 110556 FK1071/359 Eden, Geneva to Foreign Office, no.86, 30 April 1954.

overlooked the wide and bitter differences which divided them. Also the withdrawal of the foreign forces, including the UN troops, would leave behind them a country still divided. These proposals imposed 'conditions which would enable the elections to be held only after a long and complicated series of delays'. They made no provision for international supervision; they contemplated a packed and nominated commission, not a genuinely elected and representative assembly. 'In other words, elections come first on paper, but last in practice'.¹³⁹

Eden put forward five principles which any solution must contain. First, elections should be held for the formation of an all-Korean Government. Second, these elections should truly reflect the people's will, that is they should take account of the distribution of the population between North and South. Third, they should be based on universal adult suffrage and the secret ballot. Fourth, they must be conducted under the auspices of the UN. The countries selected need not necessarily be those who had taken part in the Korean War: there could be a panel of countries acceptable to this Conference. Fifth, any plan for a settlement of the Korean question must provide conditions under which foreign troops could be withdrawn.¹⁴⁰

It was an attempt to produce a compromise: Eden's idea was clearly different from the US-ROK position that elections must be held in North Korea after the Chinese troops were withdrawn; yet it did not meet the Communists' argument that all foreign forces

¹³⁹State Department Pamphlet No.5609 op.cit., Document no.23 Statement by Eden, UK, 13 May 1954.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p.116

should be withdrawn before the elections. The five principles in effect carefully avoided the key issues: the specific terms for free elections in connection with the timing of force withdrawals were not addressed. Eden believed that by suggesting these principles Britain and the Allies were, at least, in a position which they could defend before the world.

The opposition to the principles came from both sides. The South Korean Foreign Minister, Pyun, was enraged by Eden's proposal, especially the item on the all-Korean elections under UN supervision. He also insisted on a Chinese withdrawal before any elections. Chou En-lai had said that there should be all-Korean elections without 'foreign interference' and without 'pressure from any terroristic groups' and remarked, 'this only correct solution was not to the liking of the Syngman Rhee government'. He demanded an all-Korean election in accordance with the all-Korean electoral law, as Nam Il had suggested, under free conditions precluding foreign intervention. While he denied the UN's authority for supervision, he proposed that a neutral nations supervisory commission should be established to supervise the elections.¹⁴¹

While the importance of effective supervision of the elections carried out by the UN was stressed by the Allied governments, the authority of the UN was repeatedly denounced by the Communists. Chou En-lai had vigorously accused the US of seriously impairing the prestige of the UN in relation to Taiwan. He argued that the UN was 'incapable of dealing with the Korean question'.¹⁴² Nam Il's proposal mentioned nothing

¹⁴¹Ibid., Document no.24 Statement and Proposal by Mr Chou En-lai, People's Republic of China, 22 May 1954.

¹⁴²Ibid., Document no.14 Statement and Proposal by Mr Chou En-lai, People's Republic of China, 3 May 1954.

about the UN. Molotov argued that, although the Soviet Union was defending the honour and authority of the Organization, the US was 'exercising brutal pressure on that international Organization'. He claimed that there occurred scandalous violations of the basic provisions of the UN Charter as, for instance, in the Korean question, or with regard to the rights of the People's Republic of China. It was precisely for this reason that the Soviet Union was fighting against all attempts to turn the UN into an instrument of the aggressive policy of certain circles in the USA or other countries - against attempts which took the form of the adoption by the UN of illegal resolutions sanctioning the American aggression in Korea.¹⁴³

The new proposal put forward to the Allies on 22 May by the South Korean Foreign Minister, Pyun, was a significant step to bringing a solution to the Korean problem. The plan provided for elections under UN supervision in both North and South Korea within six months, on the basis of a secret ballot and universal adult suffrage; full freedom of movement, speech, etc. for UN supervisory personnel; complete withdrawal of Chinese forces one month before the election. Withdrawal of the UN forces 'may start before the elections, but must not be completed until complete control over the whole of Korea has been achieved by the unified government of Korea'.¹⁴⁴ Not all the Allies could support Pyun's proposal, especially the parts of the plan relating to withdrawal of forces. Yet, the representatives of Colombia, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Turkey, Thailand and the US were willing to welcome it. They praised the action of the ROK in

¹⁴³Ibid., Document no.33 Statement and Proposal by Mr Molotov, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 5 June 1954.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., Document no.26 Proposal by Mr Pyun, Republic of Korea, 22 May 1954.

accepting elections in both North and South Korea despite its feeling that new elections were required only in North Korea. The US Assistant Secretary, Robertson, was active in soliciting support for the proposal.¹⁴⁵

On 5 June the North Korean and Chinese communist delegates categorically rejected the ROK's proposal, objecting specifically to granting the UN a role in supervising the all-Korean elections. On the same day, Chou En-lai again presented a proposal which he had first made on 22 May and which Nam Il had supported, that a neutral nations supervisory commission be established to observe all-Korean elections. The Commission would have consisted of an equal number of communist and non-communist governments and would function only on the basis of unanimity. The US Under Secretary Smith contended that, although the newly proposed supervisory commission would supposedly provide international supervision, such a body could do absolutely nothing, so long as the control of the entire election procedure was left with the all-Korean Commission, in which the Communists had their built-in veto.¹⁴⁶

On the same day, the Soviet delegate summed up and restated the communist position which superficially looked promising, but was left for later discussion and therefore was open to unlimited obstruction. The Soviet resolution called for free elections throughout Korea within six months after the conclusion of the present agreement, based on a secret ballot and universal suffrage, with representation in the all-Korean legislature in proportion to the population of Korea; setting up an all-Korean body composed of

¹⁴⁵Sydney D. Bailey, op.cit., p.166

¹⁴⁶State Department Pamphlet No.5609 op.cit., p.14

representatives of the DPRK and the ROK, and the duties of this body were to be the subject of further examination; withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea within periods to be specified, the phasing of such withdrawal prior to the holding of free all-Korean elections to be examined further; setting up an appropriate international commission to supervise the holding of the elections and the composition of this commission to be examined further; and assigning to the powers most directly concerned in the maintenance of peace in the Far East obligations to insure Korea's peaceful development, with the question of which powers were to assume such obligations to be the subject of further examination.¹⁴⁷

It was notable that several delegates from the UNC side, including Eden, Ronning(Canada), Bidault(France), McIntosh(New Zealand) and Spaak(Belgium), ostentatiously refrained from endorsing the South Korean proposal of May 22. Instead, they criticized the Communist proposals, defended the UN, and asserted the need for free elections.¹⁴⁸ The Korean part of the Conference continued without any agreement. Only accusations and propaganda statements were made by both sides. It seemed futile to carry on the talks. Officials in the State Department agreed that the US delayed too long in making the decision to break off, and that a clean break was desirable.¹⁴⁹ The question was how the discussions could be terminated and how the decision should be presented to the public so as to maximize the propaganda advantage.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., Document no.33 Statement and Proposal by Molotov, USSR, 5 June 1954.

¹⁴⁸Sydney D. Bailey, op.cit., p.166

¹⁴⁹NA RG59 795.00/6-154 Memorandum for Under Secretary Smith. Termination of Korean Phase, 1 June 1954.

Britain and America had different ideas about the tactics regarding the break-off of the conference. Eden recognized that, since the armistice had been concluded under its authority, the UN was more closely concerned than ever with the peaceful solution to the Korean question. Thus the Chinese claim that the UN had lost its moral authority and its competence to deal with the Korean problem, and that the conference had nothing to do with the UN was totally unacceptable.¹⁵⁰ The British and the US were therefore in agreement about the importance of the UN's role in Korea. However, the US wanted to emphasize the importance of the UN in supervising the elections whereas the UK and the Commonwealth governments wished to stress only the principle of free elections. The UK thought that this would have a better impact on Free World public opinion.¹⁵¹ The British had hoped that the delegates would find some way of reconciling and perhaps linking these two aspects of the Korean problem by a neutral commission operating under UN auspices.

Eden believed that the thrust of the arguments for solving the Korean problem was whether free elections could be achieved. Elections must be supervised by an impartial commission. Eden had stated earlier that the countries of a supervisory commission were to be 'under auspices of the UN' and not necessarily the participants of the Korean War. Eden had accepted the concept of a neutral commission. Yet the Communists' idea of a mixed commission of equal number of communist and non-communist governments would not be effective. If the mixed commission could not work effectively, the elections would

¹⁵⁰PRO FO371 110563 FK1071/496 Eden, Geneva to F.O., no.706 14 June 1954.

¹⁵¹NA RG59 795.00/6-554 Tactics on Korean Phase at Geneva, 5 June 1954.

never be held or there would not be a free election.¹⁵²

The US insisted that the UN's authority should be the point of breaking up the conference. The UN was responsible for establishing a free and independent Korea and should complete its task by supervising the elections. The US delegate made a final effort to press this principle during the last session of the conference, but it was turned down by the Communists. Ironically, the Communist rejection of the UN's authority came as a relief for the Washington administration. If the Communists had shown a certain degree of acceptance of the UN's authority, it would have put the US 'in a very difficult position',¹⁵³ because there was an ulterior motive behind US insistence on the UN's authority. The UN was used as a convenient way out of the American predicament. Although South Korea had finally accepted the all-Korean elections, Rhee would not compromise over the early Chinese withdrawal. It would be difficult to win international support for such a position. Besides, Rhee's provocative gesture claiming South Korea's sovereignty over the North was so alarming that he might actually initiate a war, which could not be tolerated by the US: Rhee needed to be restrained. On the other hand, the deteriorating situation in Indo-China certainly boosted the political and psychological importance of the ROK to the Washington administration and made it harder to break with Rhee. The US could not abandon Rhee. In these circumstances, the US decided to maintain the status quo by using the UN's authority as a sticking point to break with the Communists and to end the Conference.

¹⁵²PRO FO371 110563 FK1071/496 Eden to F.O., 14 June 1954.

¹⁵³*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.16, pp.347-354 US delegation (Smith) to the Department of State, 5 June 1954.

For the Allies, the Communist rejection offered them a diplomatically and politically tenable means for avoiding the alienation of the Americans, who, after all, were no less their benefactors than Rhee's.¹⁵⁴ Although all delegates in Geneva agreed that Korea should be unified by means of free elections, no consensus was reached on the methods and procedures for holding the election. 'This was not a superficial difference but a difference of principle', declared Eden in his concluding speech.¹⁵⁵ If agreement could not be reached on the principle of free elections and the authority of the UN, then the conference must admit failure and should so report to the UN.¹⁵⁶

The fifteen allied nations and South Korea issued a declaration. They said that they had been guided by two fundamental principles and the Communists had rejected both: the Communists had repudiated and rejected the authority and competence of the United Nations and labelled it as a tool of aggression; they had also insisted on procedures which would make genuinely free elections impossible. After recapitulating the differences which divided the Communist and non-Communist nations, the sixteen nations declared that 'it was better to face the fact of disagreement than to arouse false hopes'.¹⁵⁷ The Communist delegations denounced this termination of the Korean discussions. Instead, they put forward proposals which indicated that they did not desire any resumption of hostilities.¹⁵⁸ With respect to Korea, the talks ended on 15 June 1954. The conference, however,

¹⁵⁴H.W.Brands, op.cit., p.80

¹⁵⁵PRO FO371 110563 FK1071/496 Eden to the F.O., no.706 14 June 1954.

¹⁵⁶*Survey of International Affairs*. 1954: The Geneva Conference. R.I.I.A. p.277

¹⁵⁷Ibid. See also Cmd.9186 op.cit., pp.100-101

¹⁵⁸Cmd.9186 op.cit., pp.90-96

remained in session in order to discuss Indo-China. Meanwhile the armistice remained in effect and Korea's fate became tied up inextricably with other problems in Asia.

The Geneva Conference of 1954 was the first and, so far, the last international conference where both North and South Korea participated as equal members. It also opened a new era in great power relations. The Chinese entry into the international community became a source of strain on Anglo-American relations. Britain believed that the western countries should present a proposal acceptable to world opinion by trying to reach an agreement with the Communists in order to establish a united Korea with a freely elected government. The US, preoccupied with its Cold War strategy of supporting Rhee, found it difficult to generate consensus on the UN side. The US could not accept the ROK's position without risking the alienation of the western Allies and world opinion, and realized that there was little hope of finding a solution to the Korean question in Geneva. Upholding the UN's authority became a pretence for avoiding a situation where open division appeared between the allied countries, and this ensured that there was no change in the status quo in Korea. The British effort to moderate the US had a negligible effect, as the US was determined not to allow any power to undermine its Cold War strategy by changing the equilibrium in Korea: the ROK should remain under US control and the disunity among the western Allies should not be exploited by the Communists. Britain, who believed her national interest lay in the harmonious relationship with America, had to accept the way in which the US wanted to conduct the Korean phase of the Cold War.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ninth UN General Assembly and UNCURK

As the Geneva Conference ended with major issues unsettled, the governments concerned began to consider how the 'Geneva diplomacy' could be applied to the reality of the post-Geneva period. During the summer of 1954 the US was occupied by what would be the next step in dealing with the Korean question,¹ while the British government watched the developments in US-ROK relations.² It was then that the United Nations, as the supreme international body, again became involved in the Korean problem.

The efforts to solve the Korean problem by political means during the fifties were made mainly in two ways. One was the discussions at the UN General Assembly and the other was through the UN agency, namely, the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) which was created in October 1950 and was to be the executive arm of the General Assembly in Korea until 1973.

¹PRO FO371 110575 FK10710/2 Extract from President Eisenhower's Press Conference, 17 June 1954.

²PRO FO371 110575 FK10710/1 M.G.L. Joy, Washington to C.T. Crowe, F.O., 16 June 1954.

I. The Ninth General Assembly of the United Nations

The sixteen nations from Geneva decided to submit a report to the UN General Assembly along with their declaration from the Geneva Conference, as it was believed that the UN should take some action. The declaration had already made it clear that although the non-Communist side would report developments at Geneva to the UN, 'further efforts to achieve the peaceful unification of Korea would be futile unless the Communists yielded on the two major issues'- the authority of the United Nations and the terms of free elections in Korea. In accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations of August 28, 1953, the member states parties to this declaration will inform the United Nations concerning the proceedings of this conference.³

In a press conference on 16 June 1954 South Korean Foreign Minister, Young-Tai Pyun, took a position not entirely consistent with that contained in the 16-nations declaration. He declared that 'our side is free to take action'. His government did not propose to subscribe to the idea that the UN had the right to decide matters for Korea.⁴ While disturbed by Pyun's remarks, the other 15 delegates did not alter their common public position, or disrupt the implementation of the declaration.

The report of the sixteen was drafted by a small committee of six in Washington. It was expected to cover much the same ground as the declaration of 15 June, recalling

³PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/4 Copy of a State Department Policy Guidance for the US Information Agency, 23 June 1954.

⁴Ibid.

the effort by the allies to obtain a settlement at Geneva and explaining why they failed. A working draft was sent to the six respective governments for comment, and the representatives of the six nations agreed to meet to finish preparing the report.⁵

The sixteen countries, however, did not wish for another full debate at the United Nations on the meagre outcome of the Geneva Conference. The result of the Geneva Conference marked by the 16 countries' declaration was only narrowly achieved. Disunity among the non-Communist nations would undermine the strength of the UN before the world. The 16 countries had no wish to go through another major attempt to unify Korea that would risk revealing Western divisions. As an active writer of the 16-nations declaration, the British government made it clear that Britain was at one with the other fifteen nations in not wanting the report of the sixteen nations to lead to a thorough discussion of the substance of the whole Korean problem at the General Assembly. A full debate would be certain to reveal cracks in the unity of the sixteen which were papered over in the declaration itself. 'An anodyne resolution is all we want', minuted Colin Crowe, the Head of the Far Eastern Department. The new resolution might take note of the sixteen nation report and express regret that no settlement was reached at Geneva. It would reaffirm that the Armistice remained in force, repeat that the objective of the UN remained as the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea, and express the hope that conditions might come about in which the attainment of this end would be possible.⁶

⁵PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/16 Note for the Minister of State, 27 July 1954.

⁶PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/16 F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 27 July 1954.

Realistically however, the Foreign Office observed that the Communists would not accept this idea. The Communists' slogan at that moment was 'Korea cannot be struck off the international agenda'.⁷ It was predictable that the Russians would almost certainly press for Communist China and North Korea to be invited to take part in the discussion in New York, and they might well produce plans to pick up the discussion of Korea where it was left off at Geneva. Until then the Communists might argue that there should be no resolution whatsoever decided by only one side. It would be a nightmare if everything at Geneva had to be repeated as it was likely that neither side would be prepared to compromise. A procedural dispute might develop again between the 16 nations and the Communists, and it might also become a source of disunity in the UNC side. The likely attitude of the Arab-Asian bloc and of other neutrals might well be important.⁸ The Arab-Asian countries which were emerging from their recent history of colonial repression and identifying their ideas with the Communists' promises of independence, equality, and self-respect, might turn out to be supporters of the Soviet-Chinese bloc.

The British officials thought it would be useful if they could discover the views of the Indian government. Britain valued the Indian government's role as an intermediary between the free world and the Communists. The Prime Minister of India, Nehru, had said in May that 'it may be that you may not have a united Korea yet. For a while North and South Korea might function separately, and when the passion of the present day passed they might come together'. The Indians did not regard the Geneva Conference as a failure

⁷Ibid.

⁸PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/16 F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 27 July 1954.

and thought that the discussions to deal with Korea should continue. It was not clear, as far as many in the UK were concerned, whether the Indian government wanted to take the opportunity of re-opening a discussion to bring out the old issue of the repatriation of prisoners. The British government certainly did not want to re-open the repatriation issue because the Geneva experience showed that the Communists had made only a perfunctory attempt to raise it. However, Britain felt that they should support the Indian desire to continue the discussions on the Korean problem as an opportunity to thank the Indian government for their services, although the moment then was not ideal for resuming the talks.⁹

When Selwyn Lloyd met with Krishna Menon in July, Lloyd was assured by the Indian foreign minister that India would not want the issues surrounding POWs to be raised, provided there was some indication of a desire on the part of the 16 countries for further negotiations to deal with the general problem of Korea. Menon stressed that it would be a mistake to represent the Geneva Conference on Korea as a permanent failure, and that it should be left as open as possible. However, Lloyd realised that the Indian proposal for a Korean discussion to be dealt with at a special session outside the General Assembly was not acceptable to the US, for the Americans would not accept anything other than the annual meeting at the UN.¹⁰ In the end, Eden and his officials persuaded Menon to withdraw his tentative proposal calling for a special session of the UN.

⁹PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/16A Korea: Discussion at the Ninth Session of the General Assembly, 27 July 1954.

¹⁰PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/20 F.O. minute by P Lloyd, 28 July 1954.

Pierson Dixon, who became Permanent Representative of the UK to the UN in March 1954, was inclined to argue that if the US government remained strongly in favour of deferring Korea until the regular Assembly, the UK should agree to support them in the interests of avoiding further Anglo-American differences at the UN.¹¹ On the main issue, Dixon argued that the British delegation should praise the efforts of the Sixteen at Geneva while regretting that the Chinese and North Koreans were not ready to accept the authority of the UN and the conditions for free elections which would have resulted in a unified, independent and democratic Korea. On the other hand, he observed, it would be difficult to leave it at that. The real source of the problems was the fact that there was bound to be strong pressure to include in any resolution a statement that the Assembly regarded the Armistice as still in force and that the UN should stand ready to negotiate further for free elections in Korea. These points obviously would be quite unacceptable to President Rhee and the Americans, who were 'after all the prime movers in this affair', and they would be reluctant to include anything on these lines.

Pierson Dixon at this point made the suggestion of 'using UNCURK as a way out of difficulties' in handling the Korean debate in the General Assembly. UNCURK (United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea) had been dealing with the Korean problem since 1950. Unfortunately, however, it did not work effectively because of its functional and administrative problems. Nevertheless, Dixon believed that by introducing UNCURK to the General Assembly the Allied countries could argue that further attempts to settle the Korean question should be UNCURK's main task. Dixon, however, was not successful in persuading the Americans who believed that referring to

¹¹PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/2 Sir P. Dixon to F.O., 4 July 1954.

UNCURK would not prevent further debates on the future of Korea at the General Assembly.¹²

The Committee of Six in Washington which was engaged in drafting a report on the Geneva Conference for the UN continued its discussion during the summer months of 1954. By the beginning of November the text of the report was agreed except for one phrase. The question at issue was whether or not it should be stated in the report that the 16 nations supported 'genuinely free elections under UN supervision', as the Americans wanted it, or 'under supervision acceptable to the UN', as the Canadians wanted it. The Canadians had made an oral reservation to this effect, in the presence of the 16 nations, when signing the Declaration, and their Prime Minister Pearson took the same line publicly in the Canadian Parliament.¹³ Several other delegations were also prepared to agree to elections under supervisory arrangements outside the UN but acceptable to it. The Communists had argued at Geneva that the UN was not impartial and had no moral authority to deal with the Korean problem. Thus the difference among the UN side was important: the Canadian reservation might have offered room for the Communists to agree on the issue of free elections in Korea. If it was to be a commission outside the UN to supervise the election, the Communists' opposition to the election might not have been so fierce. However, US hardliners were able to silence the Canadians, and declared that the possibility of such an election was ruled out.

¹²PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/38 P. Dixon, N.Y. to W.D. Allen, F.O., 20 August 1954. UNCURK is discussed in the second part of the chapter.

¹³PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/67 F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, Report on the Geneva Conference to the United Nations, 2 November 1954.

The Foreign Office expressed every sympathy with the Canadian view which 'corresponded exactly with our own ideas'. However, officials did not think it worth making a serious issue of the point since the Americans would not admit any questioning the moral authority of the UN in the Korean problem and would insist the Korean election should be conducted under the UN's supervision. As long as the US maintained that position, Britain found it hard to go against it. Moreover, unanimity among the 16 was essential. The Communists would be presented with a wonderful opportunity to exploit the differences of the 16 if there were reservations. Colin Crowe concluded that 'we therefore were prepared reluctantly to accept the American version, while making it clear that we preferred the Canadian.'¹⁴

Meanwhile the failure of the political conference evidently prompted South Korea to revert back to a militant posture once again. Apparently the ROK believed that the failure of the Geneva Conference freed the ROK from its commitment to the Armistice. This caused great concern to the British. President Rhee looked as irrational and self-contradictory as ever. The leaders of South Korea, including Rhee's foreign minister, had proposed grandiose schemes for driving the Chinese out of North Korea, and even out of certain Chinese provinces, and claimed that they should be allowed to advance to the Yalu without American assistance. On the other hand, they protested bitterly against the withdrawal of part of the American forces which they thought would leave Korea defenceless against the Chinese and North Korean armies. The South Koreans, according to a British official in Seoul, 'had become desperate amounting to schizophrenia from

¹⁴Ibid.

which the leaders of Korea were suffering.¹⁵

Walter Graham, the Charge d'Affaires in Seoul, observed that President Rhee's plea to be allowed to 'go it alone' to the North was probably mere propaganda since there was no way for South Korea to attack North Korea without America's help. The protests against the withdrawal of American troops were nevertheless seen as genuine. Firstly because there would be an economic loss to the country, as the troops had been heavy spenders. Secondly, there was, among ordinary Koreans, a real fear of Communist aggression. It was also likely that Rhee would attempt to start a general war by provoking the North in the area in which American troops would before long inevitably be involved, and that might result in the reconquest of the whole country. The fewer American troops there were, the less chance that such a manoeuvre would be effective.¹⁶

On the US side, there was considerable interest in the matter of the withdrawal of some US divisions from Korea. This had been the subject of an on-going discussion in the Department of Defence since late 1953. In January 1954, the issue was formally raised and the basic question was whether this was a premature weakening of the US overall military forces in the Korean area at a time when strengthening was required to bolster their position pending the Geneva Conference.¹⁷ Contrary to this apprehension, the Defence officials such as the Secretary of the Army, Stevens, and General Ridgway passed on the view of the Secretary of Defence before the Senate Foreign Relations

¹⁵PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/54 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 7 September 1954.

¹⁶Ibid., pp.2-3

¹⁷NA RG59 Department of State. E.F.Drumright to the Secretary, 15 January 1954.

Committee on 14 January, that the action was first of all only 'in the planning stage' then, and that they felt the move would actually improve the mobility and flexibility of US forces by some modest re-distributions, here and there, within or even without the theatre. They emphasized that on balance, the bargaining position would not be decreased.¹⁸ By 1955, four of the six US divisions were to depart from the ROK and there were parallel reductions in the forces of many of the countries which joined the UN Command.¹⁹

The Mutual Defence Treaty between the US and the ROK had been signed on 1 October, 1953, and ratified by the ROK on 29 January and on 5 February, 1954, by the US. However, the formal exchange of ratification putting the treaty into effect did not take place until November 1954.²⁰ Such a ratification ceremony was scheduled just prior to the holding of the Geneva Conference but was postponed by the US government. The US had reservations about its commitments and a reaction to the ROK's proposed amendments regarding 'unilateral action against North'. The Department of Defence made it clear that the treaty would not bind the US to participate and that the US would be faced with a decision to be made 'in the light of the situation then existing.' Secretary Stevens declined to state what he thought that decision would be.²¹

¹⁸NA RG59 Summary of US-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty Hearing, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 14 January 1954.

¹⁹Reduction of forces in Korea is discussed in Chapter Five.

²⁰NA J.C.S. File 137 Treaties and Other International Acts Series 3097, Mutual Defence Treaty, 383.L1 Korea.

²¹NA RG59 Summary of US-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty Hearing, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 14 January 1954.

After the Geneva Conference, it was the ROK who declined to exchange ratification of the Defence Treaty. The ROK rejected it on the grounds that they wished to amend the Mutual Defence Treaty in two respects: add an **aggressor clause** which would commit the US to support the ROK in driving the Chinese out of North Korea; and a **termination clause** similar to that contained in the Security Treaty between the US and Japan which would require the mutual consent of both parties before the Treaty could be terminated.²² E.F. Drumright, the US Acting Assistant Secretary of Far Eastern Affairs, explained to the South Korean Minister at the Washington Embassy, Pyo-Wook Han, that it was impossible to give serious consideration to an **aggressor clause**. Even if the Department of State could find it possible to support such an amendment, it was inconceivable that the Senate would ever agree. With respect to the second proposed amendment, he pointed out that it must be read in conjunction with the substantive content of the Treaty with Japan. Drumright argued that the US had never bound itself and would never consider binding itself to indefinite continuation of a treaty under which it had obligations. The treaty with Korea did impose obligations on the US as well as Korea and consequently was modelled along the lines of the treaties with the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand.²³ The two agreements were therefore not comparable, and it was to US advantage to have termination by mutual agreement in the one case but unilaterally, by either side, in the case of the US-ROK pact.²⁴

²²PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/4 Problems relating to the Republic of Korea following the break-off of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference, USIA, 23 June 1954.

²³NA RG59 Bureau of the Far Eastern Affairs. US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, 2 June 1954.

²⁴PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/4 Problems relating to the ROK following the break-off the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference, 23 June 1954.

The difficulty in ROK-US relations lay largely in the apparent tendency of the ROK to remain oblivious to international opinion, being absorbed chiefly in the pursuit of its narrow national interests and refusing to face up to reality. The ROK's posture on unification during the post-Geneva period was expressed in the phrase 'March North'.²⁵ The ROK forces in 1954, however, were simply incapable of making such a move unless they were helped with massive supplies by the US. Moreover, following the signing of the armistice in 1953, the ROK had pledged to seek Korean unification by peaceful means. The firm American position of not tolerating any ROK action of a military nature against the North was also clearly indicated at the time when President Rhee visited Washington in July 1954.

Rhee's visit to Washington was regarded as an opportunity to make a supreme effort to appeal to the anti-Communist sentiment in the US. Rhee was accompanied by Paek Tu Chin, the Economic Coordinator, and Admiral Sohn Won Il, the Defence Minister. At a joint session of the US Congress, Rhee stated:

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.²⁶

Pursuing his argument further, he suggested that there should be a massive counter-attack on Communist China, preceded by a blockade of the China Coast by the US Navy, supported by the US Air Force. On the subject of the unification of Korea, Rhee argued that the settlement reached in Indo-China was evidence of great weakness on the part of the free world and that with the passage of time, the Communist powers would grow

²⁵Pyo-Wook Han, *The Problem of Korean Unification*. Seoul, 1987. p.155

²⁶Hongkee Karl, *President Syngman Rhee's Journey to America*. Seoul:Office of Public Information, 1955. p.17

relatively stronger. In his opinion the sooner action was taken, by force of arms if necessary, to liberate North Korea, the better.²⁷

A hint of this renewed militant posture had already been made by the ROK Foreign Minister at Geneva immediately after the conclusion of the conference. A similar position was voiced again in July 1954, at a meeting with the members of the UNCURK when he had said that the ROK had merely promised not to hamper the armistice up to a certain deadline and that his government no longer regarded it as binding.²⁸ In addition to his desire to appeal to the American public, Rhee wanted to invoke the agreement he had reached with the Secretary of State when Dulles had visited Seoul in August, 1953.²⁹ The agreement signed on 7 August, recognized that the ROK's exercise of its right to take unilateral action would be postponed for the duration of the political conference.³⁰ Both had agreed that the two governments were to consult about the ways to unify Korea if the political conference were to fail. Rhee's proposal before the American Congress was presumably conceived in this context.

However, Rhee's proposal was based on false assumptions and on a misjudgement

²⁷Ibid., p.21

²⁸General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), Ninth Session, Doc.A/2711 p.3 See also Pyo-Wook Han, op.cit., p.149

²⁹The Mutual Defence Treaty was initialled on August 8 by the ROK Foreign Minister and Secretary of State Dulles in Seoul.

³⁰In a joint statement issued by President Rhee and Secretary of State Dulles on 7 August 1953, they said:"...We recognize that the ROK possesses the inherent right of sovereignty to deal with its problems, but it has agreed to take no unilateral action to unite Korea by military means for the agreed duration of the political conference." The full text is in the *New York Times*, 8 August 1953.

of the true temper of the US. It was a time when the US government had decided against American intervention in the French Indo-China war.³¹ Rhee's speech before the US Congress on the 28th of July was only met with 'stunned silence', as the *New York Times* put it. The general condemnation expressed afterwards both by congressmen and the press, showed how badly he had miscalculated his audience. Rhee claimed some days later, while speaking to the press, that what he had meant at the Congress was to suggest the US should decide whether 'it was necessary to save the Republic of China'.

Once the intention of the Korean President's trip to the US was known, the State Department soon realized that there was little use in trying to do business during the trip, although the net effect of the visit might be useful in terms of creating an image that the US and South Korean governments were 'in consultation'.³² All the principal personalities on the American side who took part in the discussion were anxious to make it clear to Rhee that while they intended to work for the unification of Korea by peaceful means, this was a far cry from plunging the world into a third world war. At the end of their meeting the two presidents issued a statement and Rhee had to acknowledge the 'principle' set by the US government, i.e. their intention to move forward in accordance with the Charter of the UN and the resolutions of the General Assembly on Korea to achieve peacefully a unified, democratic and independent Korea.³³

To the British officials in the Washington Embassy, the visit was seen 'more as

³¹Pyo-Wook Han, op.cit., p.149

³²PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/26 R.H.Scott, Washington to F.O., 10 August 1954.

³³Ibid.

a speaking tour than an occasion for the discussion of diplomatic business'.³⁴ Rhee's statement before Congress and the response from the American public merely showed the difficult relations between the US and ROK governments, and Rhee's subsequent explanation at the press conference failed to affect Rhee's reputation for being irrational and irresponsible. Robert Scott concluded that the 'misconduct' of the Korean president was due largely to the misleading advice from the Korean Embassy in Washington which maintained contact only with the extreme right wing of the Republican party and one or two Americans of extreme views. His assessment was that:

It served a useful purpose in demonstrating publicly President Rhee's irresponsibility and that it has had a sobering effect upon the more extreme elements in the country. The hope has also been widely expressed that the reception given Mr Rhee's speech should help to prove to the rest of the world that the US is not governed by irresponsible leaders who are only seeking the right moment to start a preventive war...³⁵

It was clear that the Washington Administration was firm with South Korea and would not tolerate any kind of irrationality. Yet it seemed hard to overlook the difficulties the Americans were faced with, especially regarding the public opinion of the western allies. The position taken by South Korea, an all-Korean election under UN supervision and without the Chinese forces in North Korea, was regarded by many allied countries as extreme. It became obvious after the Geneva Conference that even if the Communists had agreed on the terms for free elections, Rhee would not have given up his demand for early Chinese withdrawal. As long as Rhee's threat to attack the North remained, the UNC was

³⁴PRO FO371 110576 FK10711/26A R.H. Scott, Washington to A. Eden, 10 August 1954.

³⁵PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/26 R.H. Scott, Washington to A. Eden, 10 August 1954.

not prepared to withdraw. The US failed to see any sign of conciliation by Rhee when he visited Washington. On the other hand, it seemed groundless to believe that South Korea's sovereignty and pro-US stance would be secured after an election: the US doubted whether the ROK would win in an all-Korean election. The US could not reconcile the ROK's position with that of the Western Allies. Nor could they allow the ROK to fall into the communists' hands. In this circumstance, the US concluded that a divided Korea was better than a unified one concocted beyond US control. This also led the Americans in New York to take a stance based solely on reiterating 'the principles of Geneva'.

During the summer months in 1954 the Americans continued to maintain that any action by the General Assembly should be confined merely to endorsing the fundamental principle on which the non-Communists at Geneva based their position: there should be genuinely free elections under UN supervision, and the Armistice Agreement should continue in force and constitute a formal and definite guarantee of peace in Korea.³⁶ The State Department insisted that they should make it clear to other delegations in New York that, unless and until the North Koreans and the Chinese accepted the two principles laid down by the sixteen at Geneva, a substantive debate might merely serve to undermine the unity of the Free World and embarrass the ROK. 'The Americans preferred to avoid a substantive debate in the Assembly as they believed a solution to the problem must await a general improvement in international relations'. The US also urged that 'the UK government should not put forward an early resolution'.³⁷

³⁶PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/47 Washington to F.O., 2 September 1954.

³⁷PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/50 UKDEL, N.Y. to F.O., 13 September 1954.

The US message was clear. Britain was convinced that, preoccupied with their dilemma - the responsibilities in Korea and the need to satisfy President Rhee, the Americans could only support a resolution which upheld the UN's authority without giving the General Assembly the right to control the resumption of negotiations with the Communists. The Geneva Conference was, for the Americans, a failure and 'there was no reason to give new life to the Conference because it would only serve to crystallise the two opposing positions'. Britain had to accept the American thesis as being that any chance of further negotiations 'would require an entirely new approach and a new forum' but not in the General Assembly.³⁸

The US insistence on the status quo was interpreted as their reluctance to run any risk. The US might well want to keep Korea divided, at least for the time being. If Korea were to be unified, it had to be a stronghold of anti-communism and not a neutral state. Any conditions for an election other than the ones set at the Geneva Conference would not be acceptable to Rhee. The various ideas about election procedure carefully suggested by the western allies did not convince the US that the likely result of the election would be satisfactory to the US let alone South Korea. As long as there was no hope of reconciling these conflicting views, it would be safer to try not to spoil what they had managed to secure at Geneva.

Pierson Dixon, the permanent representative to the UN, personally opposed the American idea of not putting forward a resolution at the beginning of the debate. He recalled that early American and South Korean speeches at the Geneva Conference had

³⁸PRO FO371 110579 FK10711/85 P.Dixon, N.Y. to F.O., 26 November 1954.

alienated many members of the Assembly and, in the end, the members had not been able to come up with a unified resolution, and he now feared a similar situation might happen again. On the other hand, he was concerned that the Indians this time might put forward a resolution which the US could not accept.³⁹ Dixon believed that the UK should try to get the Americans to agree to work out a resolution to be tabled at the beginning of the debate. This resolution would not need to go as far to meet the views of the neutrals as 'we shall probably be prepared to go in the end'. His view was supported by the Foreign Office which believed it was necessary to have some form of draft agreement beforehand. A draft resolution would have the effect of canalising and to some extent limiting the scope of the discussion.⁴⁰ Thus it was suggested that the British government should refuse to agree with the Americans on this point, and Dixon was instructed to argue the matter further with the Americans.⁴¹

It became clear, from the Indian foreign minister Menon's conversation with Eden, that the Indians intended to play a leading part in the coming General Assembly. The Foreign Office was concerned because they believed that the Indians had ideas diametrically opposed to those of the Americans, and thought that 'once again we shall be bound to try to act as mediators'.⁴² The Foreign Office made it plain that their policy was guided by the following considerations which Eden had approved: Britain wished to avoid discussion of the substantive problem of the future of Korea; they did not favour

³⁹PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/51 P.Dixon, N.Y. to F.O., 13 September 1954.

⁴⁰PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/52A F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 15 September 1954.

⁴¹PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/52 C.T.Crowe to UKDEL, N.Y., 15 September 1954.

⁴²PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/70A F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 13 November 1954.

any proposal for a resumption of the Geneva Conference (as Nehru proposed), or for further discussions on Korea at a specific date (as Menon suggested). Nevertheless, the UK wished to put forward an anodyne resolution, and preferred to have it tabled in the UN at the outset of the debate (contrary to the Americans who hoped to avoid any resolution at all).

The UK believed a draft resolution proposed by the Australians in August was generally on the right lines. It stated that the General Assembly had little scope at that stage for advancing its task of unifying Korea, and any proposals for action to this end might only 'point up the impotence of UN'(sic). The best course therefore would seem to be for the General Assembly to recognise publicly that it could do very little at the moment to unify Korea in view of the attitude shown by the Communist delegations at Geneva. The General Assembly should provide for a period of cooling off for the tensions to relax. The Australians would sponsor a resolution which would note the report of the sixteen delegations on the Geneva Conference.⁴³ The Foreign Office thought that 'it seemed to be a profitable exercise to try and amend it so that it would be acceptable to the Americans, and so that Menon could acquiesce if he could not support it'.⁴⁴

The State Department was finally persuaded to draft an outline which they might, as a last resort, be prepared to accept. The US draft, not surprisingly, put the full blame

⁴³PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/70B C.R.O. to UK High Commissioner in India, 16 November 1954. Australian suggestions sent in August to Australian Ambassador in Washington for discussion with the State Department and with Canadian, New Zealand and UK representatives.

⁴⁴PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/70A F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 13 November 1954.

for failure at Geneva on the Communists, endorsed the two principles put forward by the sixteen, reaffirmed that the objective of the Assembly was the unification of Korea through the application of these principles, and expressed the hope that the Communist governments would cooperate in the attainment of this objective.⁴⁵

The British officials in New York thought that a draft on this line was clearly unacceptable, not only to the Indians, but to several members of the fifteen. Pierson Dixon thought the tone of such a draft could only irritate the nerves of the other side. However, when he met with his American colleague, Wadsworth, he did not find the latter's reaction too adverse to the suggestion that the draft should be more moderate. Wadsworth believed that the State Department might agree to a resolution expressing 'general hopes' for the future provided that it did not commit the US to early renewal of negotiations or retreat from the principles laid down at Geneva. Then Dixon put forward another possible line of action, suggesting a resolution in line with the Australian views that the UN 'decides that it would be inopportune to make recommendations regarding the Korean question at its ninth session'.⁴⁶ Dixon argued that the objective of such a resolution should be to allow all delegations to make speeches setting out their positions, but to avoid the great difficulties involved in trying to reach agreement on a substantive draft.

Given the divergent views of the US, Canadian and Indian governments in particular, the British delegation feared that any attempt to devise a resolution making recommendations for future negotiations would run into great difficulties and would

⁴⁵PRO FO371 110579 FK10711/75 P.Dixon, N.Y. to F.O., 19 November 1954.

⁴⁶ibid.

highlight differences in the committee thus giving the Russians a chance to cause confusion.⁴⁷ This was the danger that the British government wished to avoid. What they wanted was that, under the suggested procedure, each delegation would be able to put its views on record and maintain the general agreement outside the Communist bloc. Thus the idea that no progress could be expected at present should be emphasized rather than the differences between the fifteen. Such a procedure would shorten the debate and thus 'fit in very well with the general need to press on with the Assembly's work'.⁴⁸ The British believed that the best way to preserve the unity among the western allies was to adopt a resolution based on the Australian suggestions as a unified 15 countries' resolution. In that way the allied position would be defended before the world by presenting themselves as united in their opposition to the Communists. To try and persuade the Americans to agree on this point seemed to be the crucial task.

Although India had withdrawn from its initial position and was prepared to accept the idea that no progress could be expected at the ninth General Assembly, it insisted on calling for a new set of negotiations on Korea. Menon even wanted to bring in the three Geneva presidents and also secure a Soviet vote for a resolution which would hold out hope of renewed discussions as the international climate improved, but soon realized this was not possible since the Soviets refused to recognise the authority of the UN in Korea.⁴⁹

⁴⁷PRO FO371 110579 FK10711/76 Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, N.Y. to F.O., 19 November 1954.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹PRO FO371 110578 FK10711/70B C.R.O. to UK High Commissioner in India, 16 November 1954.

The British delegation in New York found it difficult to engineer a compromise between the American and the Indian positions. It seemed that the Americans and the Indians 'approach the problems from diametrically opposite ends.'⁵⁰ Although the British were not opposed to the Indian idea of future negotiations on Korea, they did not wish to ignore the feelings of the Americans. The British delegation made it clear to the Indians that the US would not accept 'any resolution which gives new life to the Geneva Conference'. Britain believed that it would be 'most unwise to champion proposals which the Americans could not accept and at the same time possibly galvanise the South Koreans into rash actions'.⁵¹

It was almost certain that India was not prepared to put forward any resolution which did not express the view that the negotiations undertaken in accordance with Article 60 of the Armistice Agreement (and pursued at Geneva), which called for a political conference within three months after the Armistice was signed and became effective, should at some time in the future be continued.⁵² Indian Prime Minister Nehru clearly pointed out to Middleton, UK High Commissioner in India, that the resolution would be strengthened by some reference to Article 60.⁵³

⁵⁰PRO FO371 110579 FK10711/85 P.Dixon to F.O., Following from the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 26 November 1954.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/97 P.Dixon, N.Y. to F.O., from the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 November 1954.

⁵³PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/100 UK High Commissioner in India to C.R.O., 30 November 1954.

The Foreign Office at first thought the difference over the reference to Article 60 was merely 'academic', and was convinced that they could somehow find a compromise without too much difficulty. They soon realized the difference was wider than first appeared. Moreover, the Americans were not prepared to see reference either to Geneva or to Article 60 in any draft. The British Foreign Minister thus decided to support the Americans on this and told his Indian counterpart, Menon, that the Geneva Political Conference was not adjourned. 'It took place and failed. This meant that Article 60 was no longer relevant'. The Minister, however, added that this was not to close the door to any future negotiations, but merely to make it clear that they would have to be arranged afresh in a new forum at a propitious time. Believing that Indian insistence on Article 60 was unreasonable, the Minister sent a telegram to the Foreign Office that if Menon nevertheless insisted on bringing Article 60 into his resolution, 'that would get us off the hook with him and I propose to tell him that this is quite unacceptable and that I must therefore join with members of the fifteen.'⁵⁴

However, the Foreign Office became alarmed when Dulles had declared that he could not accept the Indian draft resolution and insisted on going back to the US draft resolution rather than join with the fifteen in accepting the draft in the lines proposed by Australia. It was only the fact that the British were able to convince the Americans that there was no chance of a revival of the Geneva Conference that brought the Americans round.⁵⁵ By the end of November, the US reluctantly accepted the draft resolution of the

⁵⁴PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/97 Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 November 1954.

⁵⁵PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/105 P.Dixon, N.Y. to F.O., 2 December 1954.

15-countries as a unified position which was based on the Australian draft in August.

The general debate on Korea began on 1 December, and 27 delegations and the representative of the ROK took the floor during the nine meetings. Two days later, four draft resolutions (two by the Russians, one by the Indians and the one by the 15-countries) were submitted before the First Committee of the General Assembly.⁵⁶ The first Soviet draft resolution⁵⁷ called for an early convening of a Korean political conference; the second Soviet resolution⁵⁸ was for discontinuing the UN Korean Commission (UNCURK). The Indian draft resolution,⁵⁹ which reaffirmed the UN objectives in Korea, expressed the hope that progress for the settlement of the Korean question would be made, and requested the governments concerned to take **NOTE** of the report on the Geneva Conference. It is significant that India withdrew from her insistence on the reference to Article 60 of the Armistice Agreement. The draft resolution of the 15-powers -Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, the UK and the US⁶⁰ - was outwardly identical with the Indian draft except that it asked the General Assembly to **APPROVE** the report of the 16 member states on the Korean Conference in Geneva.⁶¹ Thus the difference between the Indian and 15-power resolutions was over whether the General Assembly

⁵⁶PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/110B United Nations Department of Public Information, Ninth General Assembly, First Committee, 8 December 1954.

⁵⁷General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), Ninth Session, Doc.A/C.1/L.116

⁵⁸Ibid., Doc.A/C.1/L.117

⁵⁹Ibid., Doc.A/C.1/L.118

⁶⁰Ibid., Doc.A/C.1/L.119

⁶¹Ibid., Doc.A/2786

should 'note' or 'approve' of the 16-power report on Geneva. Given that the Americans insisted on 'with approval' and this approval was in fact meant to highlight the two main principles on which the 16 took their stand at Geneva, the difference between the Indian and the 15-power resolutions was in fact more significant than it appeared.

The meeting was chaired by the Colombian representative, Dr Urrutia, and each delegation was invited to make speeches. The Russian delegate, Malik, was the first speaker, and followed by Menon of India. It was almost reminiscent of Geneva with each side charging the other with aggression. Malik argued that the USSR, North Korea and the People's Republic of China fully supported the principle of a unified, independent and democratic Korea. There were no differences on this principle, as on the principle of free all-Korean elections. He went on saying that for the holding of such elections the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea was of great importance. It was all too obvious, he continued, that supervision of elections by one side could not ensure impartial and effective supervision. He concluded that it would be too naive to expect impartiality in supervising elections from countries which had never treated North Korea and China impartially. These countries disposed of a majority in the UN, and this had led to the 'one-sided' attitude of the United Nations.⁶²

The Indian representative, Krishna Menon, joined in the Communist criticism of the UN's impartiality in the Korean affair. He argued that the irregularities of the Korean election of May 1954 were an example of the UN's failure to supervise the development

⁶²PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/110B United Nations Ninth General Assembly, 8 December 1954. First Committee - Take 3

of democracy in Korea.⁶³ Then the ROK asked for permission to make a brief reply. The Korean representative Pyun said he did not doubt India's internal resistance to Communist domination but could not understand India's unlimited degree of appeasement toward Communism at an international level. Pyun emphasized that the Indian allegation about Korea as a 'police state' was false. Then he defended the UN's authority, arguing that it was the collective security action, not police action, which was working in Korea. He felt, however, that there was a drift towards a position where collective security action was banned. That would mean 'the end of human freedom and peace to which the UN stands dedicated, and consequently the end of the United Nations'. The Korean delegation felt that the Communists should be informed that the UN 'is as ready now for collective security action as it was in 1950 when the ROK was attacked'.⁶⁴

The US delegate, Senator H. Smith, said the debate had shown a wide understanding of the falsity of Communist distortions. It had led to the conclusion that the Communist attitude was unchanged since the Geneva Conference and, consequently, that further negotiations would serve no purpose. His delegation therefore opposed the Soviet draft resolution calling for a conference on Korea. He also opposed the second Soviet proposal to discontinue the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea and urged cooperation to permit that body to function effectively in North Korea. As to the Indian draft resolution, he commended the sincerity in which it had been offered. However, he noted, adoption of the Indian resolution would be taken as indicating that the UN was ready to consider the Korean problem on some basis other

⁶³Ibid., First Committee - Take 5

⁶⁴Ibid., First Committee - Take 6

than the two basic principles stated in the 16-power report on the Conference.⁶⁵

The British delegate, Sir Anthony Nutting, spoke extremely cautiously. He firstly said that his government highly appreciated India's contribution throughout the long history of the Korean problem. He was sure that the objectives of the Indian draft were the same as those of the 15-power proposal, but there was a fundamental difference which 'no amount of marring could eliminate'.⁶⁶ He was referring to the principles embodied in the report of the sixteen. As they had been challenged, he argued that the General Assembly could not avoid the duty of taking a position on them. He also pointed out that he was not proposing that every word of the report should be underwritten, but only that its underlying principles should be endorsed. It would be 'misleading and deceptive to call for a new conference until the Communists put an end to their defiance to the United Nations and accepted these principles'.⁶⁷

Approval of the 16-power Report was supported by delegations from Colombia and El Salvador who argued that the 15-power resolution was 'more complete' than the Indian proposal, and without the approval of the Report, the General Assembly 'would seem to be ignoring the efforts of the nations which had represented the United Nations at Geneva'.⁶⁸ Burma, on the other hand, thought the Indian resolution was the most appropriate. Barrington, the representative of Burma, argued that 'it was not wise to put

⁶⁵Ibid., First Committee - Take 8

⁶⁶Ibid., First Committee - Take 9

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., First Committee - Take 10

too much emphasis on a challenge to United Nations authority by a state which was denied its seat in the United Nations' - a seat to which Burma felt that state was legally entitled. Sweden, although it felt the Indian proposal was the 'most statesmanlike and the most businesslike', still supported the 15-power resolution to show that 'the free nations stand united'. The Swedish delegate, however, had doubts regarding the implications of approving the report of the sixteen as to whether this approval would 'tie the hands of the United Nations'. The Swedish government interpreted the approval of the report as approval of the two principles stated in Geneva. The Swedes worried that too much emphasis on the approval of these two principles might narrow further the possibility of finding a solution to the Korean problem by limiting the Communists' approach.⁶⁹

Krishna Menon said that he did not wish to cast aspersions on the 16-power report, but he felt that it had introduced an element not found in the UN resolutions. He contended that it was not necessary to insist on UN supervision of elections in Korea. He claimed that his delegation would not object to the approval of the fundamental principles. However, the report went into detail on the procedure considered necessary for Korean elections. Thus it did not deal with principles alone. Menon maintained that his delegation had struggled to obtain a draft that would bring unanimity. He referred to the suggestions that a merger of the Indian and the 15-power proposals might be possible.⁷⁰

The Soviet representative Malik asserted that 'the United States and its friends believed that free elections could be held in Korea under American machineguns', whereas

⁶⁹Ibid., First Committee - Take 11

⁷⁰Ibid., First Committee - Take 12

the Russians did not believe this was possible. The Russians labelled the UN-supervised election as a US-sponsored one. The draft resolution of the 15 was unacceptable as 'it crudely attempted to make it appear that the views of one group were the views of the United Nations'. The Indian draft on the other hand, could form the basis for an agreement. On a point of order, Malik said he did not insist on a vote on the Soviet proposal and would support the Indian draft with 'some amendments'.⁷¹ He did not, however, clarify what some amendments might be. Henri Hoppenot, the French representative, also expressed appreciation for the role played by India throughout the debate, and thanked Menon. Yet he asked the representative of India 'whether he would agree not to press his resolution to the vote, which would only embarrass his friends'.⁷²

Menon later announced that he would not press his resolution to the vote as it would be a mockery of the Committee because the resolution virtually contained word for word what already had been adopted.⁷³ His government, Menon stated, would pursue the task of conciliation and agreement. A promise was also made by the Indians that they would not raise the issue of prisoners of war. Once the Indian resolution was withdrawn, Malik said he did not wish to press his main resolution (Doc.A/C.1/L.116), although the other resolution (Doc.A/C.1/L.117) on the discontinuation of the UN Korean Commission still remained to be put to the vote.⁷⁴

⁷¹Ibid., First Committee - Take 14 and 15

⁷²Ibid., First Committee - Take 15 and 16

⁷³PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/110B United Nations Ninth General Assembly, 8 December 1954. First Committee - Take 15 and 16

⁷⁴Ibid., First Committee - Take 16

India's withdrawal certainly relieved Britain who had been worried about a split among the 15 allied countries. The Foreign Office later noted on Menon's action:

He(Menon) may possibly complain that we let him down: he will almost certainly complain that the Americans did. The Secretary of State may therefore think it worthwhile trying to forestall him to some extent... Menon did in fact display reasonableness in withdrawing the draft resolution he had sponsored, thus leaving the field clear for the very similar resolution of the fifteen governments. We are all the more grateful to Mr Menon that he withdrew so gracefully.⁷⁵

As the Indian resolution and the Soviet one were not pressed to the vote by their authors, on 8 December 1954, the First Committee completed its consideration of the Korean question by adopting the 15-power resolution (Doc.A/C.1/L.119) by 50 votes in favour, 5 against (Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Ukraine and the USSR), with 4 abstentions (Burma, India, Saudi Arabia and Syria). The resolution was first passed in a series of paragraph-by-paragraph votes. The 15-country resolution reaffirmed the United Nations objectives in Korea, recognized that these objectives should be achieved by peaceful methods and constructive efforts on the part of the governments concerned, and expressed the hope that 'it will soon be possible to make progress toward these objectives'.⁷⁶ The Soviet proposal to discontinue the United Nations Commission was rejected (5 in favour, 50 against, with 1 abstention).⁷⁷

The massive American contribution to the UN effort in Korea, and the fact that

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/110A United Nations, Department of Public Information Press and Publications Bureau, Press Release GA/PS/668, 8 December 1954.

⁷⁷PRO FO371 110580 FK10711/109 Ninth General Assembly, First Committee, 62nd Meeting Summary, 8 December 1954.

the US alone had some kind of leverage over the ROK government, proved that the US was the single dominant power leading the Korean affair. Nevertheless, since the Geneva Conference, the US was under enormous pressure which left the Washington Administration with little choice. It was faced with the views of its Western Allies, which were more acceptable before world opinion, and with the extremely unpopular position of South Korea and Syngman Rhee. Unable to reconcile the one with the other, the US decided to minimise the differences by preventing negotiations on Korea at the General Assembly. The Americans declared that they did not want to repeat the rhetoric of the Geneva talks unless the Communists were prepared to accept the two principles from Geneva. Trying to achieve an eventual solution to the Korean question - unification- was only secondary to the US Cold War strategy; this required Western unity at the UN in order to win a propaganda battle against Communism.

Britain sympathized with India's proposal and had hoped to find a compromise between the Americans and the Indians. But it soon realized that the US was determined to preserve the status quo in Korea, and that Britain could do nothing but accept the US position. Britain's paramount interest was in preserving good Anglo-American relations. As far as the Korean question was concerned, the British were prepared to accept the US as the key player. India's withdrawal of their proposal at the UN therefore made it easy for Britain to stand by the Americans. It would have been embarrassing for the British if the fundamental differences over Article 60 and the firm endorsement of the principles of the Geneva Conference had been exposed before the world. Western unity was preserved by bypassing the different allied interpretations of the UN's role and authority in the Korean question.

The principles of Geneva were reaffirmed by upholding the UN's authority. The initial wrangle over the procedure of the Assembly was smothered quietly once the Session began. The Anglo-American solidarity behind the facade of the collective action of the United Nations was also preserved. The question of how the governments concerned should present the post-Geneva Korean question before the Free World was tentatively resolved by producing an agreed resolution proposed by the fifteen countries. It had a symbolic importance at the height of the Asian Cold War that the UN General Assembly was led by the US who insisted that there should be no substantial debate on Korea as there was no improvement in the international situation.

II. UNCURK (The United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea)

The United Nations had been involved with Korea since its independence from Japanese rule at the end of the Second World War. When, in September 1947, the US Government brought the Korean question before the General Assembly, Britain subsequently supported the General Assembly resolution of 14 November 1947 which, inter alia, established a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK). The resolution of February 1948 authorized UNTCOK to proceed with its work in such parts of Korea as were accessible to it, which meant in effect the holding of elections in South Korea only. Both Canada and Australia, which were represented on the Commission, opposed this decision, but Britain was content to follow the American lead. On 12 December 1948 the Temporary Commission was replaced by the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK).⁷⁸

When the Korean war broke out Britain remained a strong supporter of the US in the United Nations and was the joint sponsor with France of the Security Council's resolution of 7 July 1950 providing for the Unified Command in Korea. On 7 October 1950 Britain was also among the sponsors of the General Assembly's resolution⁷⁹ to establish a seven-Power Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) consisting of Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines,

⁷⁸G.L. Goodwin, *Britain and the United Nations*. Oxford University Press, 1957. p.126

⁷⁹General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), Fifth Session, Supplement No.20, Resolution 376(V).

Thailand and Turkey.⁸⁰ The principal task of the Commission was clearly stated in the UN resolution: to represent the UN in bringing about the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government of all Korea. The task included economic as well as political rehabilitation of Korea. In December, the Commission entrusted its responsibility for economic matters to other agencies, UNKRA (United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency), and KCAC (Korea Civil Assistance Command) which operated under US army control.⁸¹

In Resolution 410(V) on 1 December 1950, UNCURK was referred to as the principal representative of the UN in Korea and hence in theory assumed prime responsibility for the work undertaken by the UN.⁸² While these provisions were useful and even essential at the time when the Commission was established, it was clear that UNCURK had very limited and peripheral functions in relation to UNKRA in particular, hardly commensurate with the inclusion of the word 'Rehabilitation' in its title.⁸³ Nevertheless, UNCURK kept its image of representing the UN as a whole, and the annual report of UNCURK to the UN was indeed something of an overall assessment of the work of all the UN agencies and commissions operating in Korea.

⁸⁰*Korea's Foreign Policy towards the United Nations*. Official Paper, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK, 1991.

⁸¹UNKRA was responsible for long-term economic rehabilitation whereas KCAC was responsible for the more immediate and temporary relief of destitution. These are discussed in chapter six.

⁸²*Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United Nations*. Official Paper, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK, 1991.

⁸³PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/14 UN Secretary General Hammarskjold's Memorandum on UNCURK, 17 September 1954.

Until the Armistice Agreement signed in July 1953, the main effort of the UN in Korea remained military in nature. When the Commission arrived in Korea after the war ended, they found no immediate action could be taken in the direction of unification. The UN resolution itself was too remote from the reality of the war-devastated country. Pending the outcome of a political conference at a higher level, the Commission became isolated, and its main role in promoting the unification of Korea was in practice suspended.⁸⁴ It only maintained nominal responsibility for official UN action in Korea.

During the Geneva Conference, UNCURK was marginalized in so much as the Commission was not on the agenda and therefore excluded from the Conference discussions. However, the unsuccessful outcome of the Conference resulted in bringing attention back to UNCURK as it continued to be the sole agency available to consult with and assist the Korean government. This became more apparent as political developments rendered the military's role in Korea obsolete. The Commission returned to its original task of following the development of democratic government in the ROK by observing elections, consulting with officials in the government, and offering advice on certain aspects of internal policy. Among the broad areas of responsibility assigned to UNCURK, this was the one in which it did most of its work.⁸⁵ The annual report on the activities of UNCURK was made and signed by the member governments' representatives and presented to the ninth UN General Assembly, but again the discussions at the Assembly tended to relegate the report to the background.

⁸⁴General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), Ninth Session, Supplement No.15 (A/2711), 1954.

⁸⁵PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/14A UNCURK, 17 September 1954.

Although it was not one of the seven member nations, the British government supported, at least in principle, the UNCURK mission in Korea as it was bound by the UN resolution. The Foreign Office gathered information about UNCURK's activities mainly through its legation in Pusan (later it moved to Seoul). By mid-1954 the Foreign Office was increasingly disturbed to find out that the mission was 'hopelessly inefficient'. The problem was, as Walter Graham, the British Charge d'Affaires in Korea, pointed out, that the member governments were not enthusiastic nor financially supportive. Graham personally believed that the governments represented 'should take the job more seriously'. If possible, he argued, the seven governments should appoint much better representatives and show some signs of activity. Otherwise, he went on, if the Russians or anyone else should attack the Commission at the coming General Assembly it would be impossible to defend it with conviction.⁸⁶

It was known that the Australian and Dutch delegates were the only ones of the seven who had done any really useful work. Pakistan had only a part-time representative, and Turkey had no representative at all.⁸⁷ Above all the Commission seemed to 'achieve so little and spend so much'.⁸⁸ The Foreign Office's main concern was financial. They believed that putting life into UNCURK by improving its administration was needed, and that this would reduce the budget too. They thought that the number of UNCURK's staff should be minimized but given full responsibility to do the task in the most efficient way.

⁸⁶PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/8 W. Graham, Seoul to C.T. Crowe, F.O., 31 July 1954.

⁸⁷PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/5 W. Graham, Seoul to C.T. Crowe, F.O., 10 February 1954.

⁸⁸PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/2 F.O. to P. Ramsbotham, N.Y., 11 January 1954.

The British officials welcomed the UNCURK's financial estimate for 1954 which was substantially less than the previous year's figure. They believed this was partly the result of the UK delegation's efforts in New York. C.T. Crowe, Head of the Far Eastern Department, went further by commenting that 'he was interested to know whether there was still scope for pruning'.⁸⁹

The UNCURK report of 1954, produced later that year, was in fact moderately noncommittal on the May election, though possibly insufficiently so to escape Korean criticism. Although the Report referred to numerous allegations of improper interference in the elections which appeared to have some basis, it cautiously mentioned that 'a general atmosphere of freedom was prevalent during the balloting'.⁹⁰ The Commission found that on polling day it was clear that facilities for a secret ballot had been provided.⁹¹ It was likely that the UNCURK report was intended to avoid controversy which would invite not only the Koreans but the Communists to challenge the authority of the UN. To keep the image that the UN was working in Korea was all that was needed in terms of propaganda.

Although it was the fourth report since the Commission was set up in 1950, the report of 1954 was the first which could be described as comprehensive and thorough in terms of the scope and depth of its coverage. On 17 August the report was signed by all the members of the Commission except Chile. This showed that there was internal dissension within the Commission. Colonel Montt, the Chilean delegate, insisted he would

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/11 W. Graham, Seoul to F.O., 9 September 1954.

⁹¹PRO FO371 110534 FK1016/14 White Paper on Internal Political Affairs, 1954.

produce his own separate report to the UN, and refused to sign the general report of the seven. His 'minority' report obviously caused considerable concern to the other members of the Commission. The procedure was not entirely contrary to that adopted by UN Commissions, since any member had the right not to sign the majority report and to submit a minority report. Yet there was criticism that the minority report had not been discussed in formal meetings of the Commission, to which it should then have been annexed for transmission to the Secretary General.⁹² As the final text of Colonel Montt's report was not shown to his colleagues, it had no official status and was not printed or circulated in New York. However, it was known within diplomatic circles in New York that the report was sent unofficially to the General Secretary of the UN. Thus it was only possible for others to guess its content from earlier drafts.

Colonel Montt was known as a outspoken critic of the ineffectiveness of UNCURK. He had resented the transfer of the recaptured areas north of the 38th parallel to ROK control. He had protested against the UN Command as he believed that the arrangement for the transfer was forced and involved some kind of 'bullying' of the Commission. This resentment was, in fact, shared by some of the other members of the Commission, yet they decided not to speak out. Instead they hoped that they could persuade the Colonel that it would be impolitic to bring out the matter because it would produce a noisy reaction at the UN General Assembly.⁹³

Colonel Montt's minority report also condemned the ROK government arguing that

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

it was impossible to achieve economic stability while the ROK maintained an army of such a size. The report disapproved of the UN's approach to the Korean problem because 'a peaceful unification of Korea was improbable'. The Colonel was in favour of replacing the UN Commission by a single outstanding personality. He condemned what he called the 'nationalistic and even commercial attitude' of some of the delegates, who were admittedly acting to a great extent as diplomatic and commercial officers of their governments.⁹⁴ Other members of the Commission were deeply disturbed by Colonel Montt's adamant claims, although they admitted his criticism was not entirely inappropriate. The British official in Seoul, Walter Graham, commented that 'some of the Colonel's criticisms were true but better unsaid'.⁹⁵

The Foreign Office considered the minority report as 'most unfortunate' as it suggested a serious disagreement within the Commission. As far as the Commission's annual report was concerned, the Foreign Office believed that it should be made as uncontroversial as possible. Any sign of internal discord would be an embarrassment to the countries who voted for UNCURK's establishment and reflect badly on the UN. Dissension among member governments and any controversy might lead to open discussion on such matters as the UN's authority in Korea. The Foreign Office was aware that this was the situation which the US was keen to avoid because the US would not accept any challenge to the principles of Geneva.

From a realistic point of view, it was admitted that the Commission was most

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/12 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 15 September 1954.

unlikely to carry out its proper function in the future, and that to keep it in being meanwhile would be a waste of the UN's money. On the other hand, the western allies had made so much of the authority of the UN at Geneva and emphasized so many times that the machinery for unification was ready to hand if only the Communists would allow them to set it in motion. If they were to suspend or abolish UNCURK, the Communists could point to this as evidence that the UN never had any serious desire to unify Korea and that they were only seeking to perpetuate the division. Therefore, the Foreign Office concluded, UNCURK would have to remain.⁹⁶

Walter Graham in Seoul was able to obtain first-hand knowledge of the Commission's work. Although he was basically a supporter of the Commission, he found it frustrating on many occasions to report to the Foreign Office how unproductive and unsuccessful the Commission was. The arrival of a new Principal Secretary of the Commission, John P. Gaillard, an American, in early July 1954, gave Graham some optimism that this change would bring life to the Commission, as he believed that the changes of representatives and better instruction from member governments could revitalize its work.

In spite of this fresh encouragement, the morale of the Commission was falling steadily, due largely to inadequate financial arrangements. Some delegates received no pay from their governments and had to subsist on the \$20 a day granted by the United Nations. The situation was aggravated by the fact that, even after the office was moved

⁹⁶PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/25 C.T.Crowe to P.M.Crosthwaite, N.Y., 16 August 1954.

to Seoul, the members were often absent and divided their time between Pusan and Seoul, because of inadequate housing facilities for members of the Commission in Seoul.⁹⁷ The inadequate financial support discouraged some of the delegates from moving to Seoul. Graham, however, complained that 'those who did not bother to move back to Seoul were not even trying to work', and was convinced of the need for a thorough overhaul of the Commission's membership.⁹⁸

Meanwhile the Foreign Office had been preoccupied with the forthcoming UN General Assembly. Since the end of the Geneva Conference in June, there was increasing pressure to deal with the Korean question at the UN. The Indian government wished to open a new set of negotiations on Korea outside the General Assembly. The Americans firmly ruled out any possibilities of re-negotiations. Moreover, the ROK denounced the Armistice Agreement and would reject any further talks on a negotiated settlement. The Communists were anxiously looking for a chance to take advantage of the situation which was far from being harmonious on the UN side. Surrounded by all these conflicting interests, British officials saw themselves 'in serious difficulties'. This was when Person Dixon, Permanent Representative to the UN, introduced his idea of utilizing UNCURK at the General Assembly. He said that it might be advantageous to bring the issue of UNCURK onto the agenda and to use it as a channel for discussion of the more difficult issues which were most likely to be raised at the General Assembly.⁹⁹

⁹⁷PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/18 F.O. minute, 29 November 1954.

⁹⁸PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/10 W. Graham, Seoul to Eden, 9 September 1954.

⁹⁹PRO FO371 110577 FK10711/38 P. Dixon, N.Y. to W.D. Allen, F.O., 20 August 1954.

Pierson Dixon believed that a galvanised and revitalised UNCURK would be very useful, if the UN General Assembly could charge it with the additional duty of considering any new proposals for free elections put forward possibly by the Chinese and North Koreans and, if they appeared to offer hope of progress, carrying out the negotiations for elections in concert with the South Korean government. 'This would take the sting out of any proposals for new negotiations.' A resolution on these lines would certainly bring them more votes than a purely negative one, although India and other like-minded countries might abstain if the Russians came out against it. If, however, the resolution was passed, then 'it would dispose of the Korean problem for some time to come (provided the South Koreans could be kept quiet), and they could resist all other new proposals calling for free elections on the grounds that machinery was already dealing with the problem'.¹⁰⁰

If the British government was to take such a line, it would be essential that UNCURK be made into a responsible body. The UK delegation in New York believed that something must be done to improve UNCURK if it was to be continued. The Australian delegation also brought their ideas which were mulled over in the Secretariat. One idea which was mentioned was to reconstitute UNCURK under another name out of countries having diplomatic relations with the ROK, but this idea did not gather much support. Pierson Dixon pointed out that they should not try to set up a new body but 'to breathe some life into the old'. The Secretary General told the British delegate that he was thinking of calling a meeting of the UK, US and French delegations close to the opening of the ninth session to consider if there were any practical steps that could be taken in

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

connection with UNCURK. In the mean time the Foreign Office tried to talk to the Americans early in September with a view to working out an agreed line. 'Until then, we might not be in a position to do other things fully'.¹⁰¹

It is notable that an initiative for the reform of UNCURK's activity came from the UN headquarters. It was not clear whether the UN Secretary General was moved by the minority report submitted by the Chilean delegate in August. It was, however, certain that Hammarskjold had been aware of the problems regarding the Commission. He called a meeting just before the General Assembly and expressed his views in a memorandum suggesting that UNCURK's terms of reference should be altered, because the present ones were not practical enough to implement. The terms were too general advocating the principal aim of UNCURK- establishment of an independent, unified and democratic Korea- without an agreement on detailed means of achieving that aim. Moreover, the commitments of the member governments were so weak that the terms of reference had not been properly reviewed nor enhanced. Hammarskjold suggested the UK and US governments should study the recommendations in his memorandum.¹⁰²

Hammarskjold's memorandum on 17 September 1954 clearly identified the Commission's tasks. The major task, among others, was to 'assume the functions exercised by the former United Nations Commission in Korea' which was to observe the progress of the development of a democratic government in the ROK. The Commission was to

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/14 P.E. Ramsbotham, UKDEL N.Y., to M.T. Walker, F.O., 29 September 1954.

observe elections, consult with officials and offer advice to the Korean government on certain aspects of internal policy. This was the area under which the Commission did most of its work. However, the Secretary General admitted that the most important of its tasks, emphasized in its title, the establishment of a unified Korea could not be implemented. It was true that UNCURK found itself in the invidious position of offering advice and observations on the application of democratic principles. Nevertheless, 'good advice'- meaning mere verbal help- was hardly welcomed by the ROK government especially when all other international and US agencies operating in Korea were giving supplies, immediate relief and military assistance.¹⁰³

Besides these functional problems, UNCURK was also confronted with some specific administrative difficulties. The location of the Commission's headquarters, housing problems, questions of prestige, absenteeism among Commission members, the level of representation, size of Secretariat, etc. tended at times to hamper the work of the commission. The lack of support from the member governments was certainly detrimental: some of the Commission's members frequently felt isolated from their own governments, and occasionally individual members wondered whether they represented the United Nations as a whole or their individual states.¹⁰⁴

Hammaraskjold's memorandum included some suggestions which were put specifically under two headings: redefinition of the terms of reference of a future UN

¹⁰³PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/14 UN Secretary General Hammaraskjold's Memorandum on UNCURK, 17 September 1954.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p.5

organ and the composition of it. He suggested that a new resolution on its terms of reference be adopted. As regards the composition, he argued that experience showed a Commission of seven was unnecessarily large. The work performed by UNCURK had been accomplished by three or at most four members of the Commission and by the Secretariat. Hammarskjold believed that a large number tended to have a discouraging effect, as members of the Commission found themselves 'somewhat underemployed'. He considered the alternative of a UN Commissioner in Korea, appointed by the Secretary General.¹⁰⁵

The confidential memorandum of the Secretary General was put forward privately to the Americans, British, French and Australians. However, it did not induce positive responses from any of the governments. The British government generally agreed with Hammarskjold's criticism of UNCURK, but did not feel enthusiastic over the suggestion that UNCURK's terms of reference should be altered. 'It was by no means easy to see how they could be broadened or improved'. As regards the composition, Britain certainly saw advantages in reducing the size of the Commission. A single UN Commissioner would be quite sufficient and would probably be best. Alternatively, a reduced Commission of three, instead of seven permanent representatives, would be quite acceptable. However, Colin Crowe at the Far Eastern Department concluded that, considering the Americans would not agree to change its original form and terms of reference, 'it would be best to leave UNCURK as it is and give up the idea of trying to revitalize it for the present'. The British delegation in New York was instructed not to support the Secretary General's

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p.6

proposal.¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile the US had decided to oppose anything which might lead to a substantial debate or a new resolution on Korea at the General Assembly. A new resolution would surely undermine the unity of the Western Allies. Besides, it was doubtful if a new resolution would be more satisfactory than the existing one. It would only spur on the Rhee government to express overtly its discontent with the results of the Geneva Conference. The Americans believed therefore that the Secretary General's proposal on UNCURK should not be brought to the scene. The US was even disturbed to learn that a copy of the memorandum had also been sent to the Thai delegation because it might provoke a controversial discussion about UNCURK. Then the debates would inevitably bring up the question of the UN's role in Korea.¹⁰⁷

The Foreign Office later realized that the Americans had approached the Chilean government with a request that their delegate should be instructed not to raise the question of UNCURK during the Korean debate. While the US tried to influence the other UN members by lobbying for its position, the majority of delegations began to believe that 'no constructive proposals on Korea could be made' this session, and that nothing should be done to raise the question of UNCURK's future. The British delegation thought that there might be something to be said for some of the suggestions in the Secretary General's memorandum, but 'for wider political reasons we were not in favour of discussing these

¹⁰⁶PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/15 F.O. minute by C.T. Crowe, 6 October 1954.

¹⁰⁷PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/18 F.O. minute, 1 December 1954.

suggestions at the present time'.¹⁰⁸ The Secretary General himself indicated that he would certainly not wish to press his proposals if it might give rise to an awkward political debate, although some administrative action must be taken soon to prevent UNCURK from deteriorating to a point where it might discredit the UN itself. The US delegation asserted that the Washington administration did not want to give UNCURK additional power.¹⁰⁹

The Americans took little interest in improving UNCURK's work and it became an issue of annoyance to the Washington administration. The Commission was given only a symbolic importance because it represented the UN in Korea, and there was little expectation that UNCURK's aim -an independent, unified and democratic Korea - could be achieved. It seems ironical that, while the authority of the UN had been emphasized so much, the UN Commission which was supposed to carry out the UN mandate was not given proper consideration let alone a high priority.

The public emphasis on the UN contrasts with the lack of private discussions in the National Security Council during the summer of 1954. NSC 5422 and 5429 dealt broadly with the developing conflict between the Communist camp and the free world. NSC 5422, according to Ogburn of the Far Eastern Affairs, 'completely glosses over the basic problems of getting and keeping the Far East on our side (sic)'.¹¹⁰ Some officials

¹⁰⁸PRO FO371 110638 FK1712/18B Ramsbotham, N.Y., to F.O., 29 November 1954.

¹⁰⁹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Memorandum of Conversation between P.E.Ramsbotham, UK delegation and S.DePalma, US delegation, 29 November 1954.

¹¹⁰NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. US Relations with the Free World, 17 June 1954.

were unhappy with this and believed too much emphasis was placed upon American relations with its European allies. Kenneth Young of North Asian Affairs regarded NSC 5429 as the 'worst hodge-podge'. Young pointed out that it was 'extraordinary or even incredible because the review of US policy in the Far East did not once mention the United Nations in any manner whatsoever'.¹¹¹

The Korean question in the year 1954 became a subject of interest at the United Nations. A comprehensive assessment of the UN's task in Korea was made by UNCURK and its report was presented to the General Assembly. The UN's role, however, was severely undermined by the US who insisted on the UN's authority only to limit the divisions between its allies: to keep a balance between the extreme position of the ROK and the western allies became an enormous problem. Rhee would not accept any terms of elections proposed by either the allied nations or the Communists. Therefore the plea for a new set of negotiations for elections and a review of the UN's role was a constant problem for the US. The US decided to do nothing but defend the pre-Geneva status quo insisting that there would be no progress until the Communists accepted the two principles.

The US was more concerned about UNCURK becoming a source of difficulties and less concerned about how its work could be improved, as they wished to avoid a substantive debate and new negotiations with the Communists at the General Assembly. The Americans could not accept new and 'more flexible' proposals which could never be

¹¹¹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Comments on NSC 5429, Review of US Policy in the Far East, 6 August 1954.

reconciled with the views of South Korea. While Rhee's threat to sabotage the peace process and unify the country by force continued, the US was not convinced that the regime could survive and remain as a bulwark against Communism after an all-Korean election. The US could not afford to take that risk.

The British effort to keep in line with the Americans became more apparent after the Geneva Conference: there was much less disagreement in Anglo-American relations than the pre-Geneva period. At the General Assembly the UK supported the US by trying to reconcile the different views and maintain unity among the western allies. Britain, like the US, was keen to avoid new proposals for free elections, as they realized that, given the undemocratic nature of the regime in the ROK, it was virtually impossible to expect truly free elections in Korea. Even if there were new elections based on more 'acceptable' terms, a unified Korea under Rhee was not appealing. Britain initially wished to utilize UNCURK as a matter of UN tactics, but decided not to pursue it because of the American opposition. By late 1954 the UK realized that they could not push the US further to accept more moderate terms, as they had a better understanding about the predicament as well as the pressure the US was faced with. It was crucial for Britain not to fall out with the Americans over Korea where British interests were relatively small.

CHAPTER SIX

Military Settlement:

Reduction and Withdrawal of UN Forces, 1953-1960

When the Korean War broke out, the United Nations resolution of 27 June 1950 had urged member nations to furnish assistance to the Republic of Korea. Contributing nations provided military forces to a unified command under the United States. The commander was to be an American, and Truman designated the Joint Chiefs of Staff his agents for Korea. The JCS recommended MacArthur as a commander and the recommendation was accepted by Truman. As the Korean War was basically a ground war, the Department of the Army was responsible to the JCS for planning and directing the military operations of US forces. MacArthur established the UN Command on 24 July to cope with a broadly representative UN force. The General Headquarters was located in Japan, for in effect, MacArthur merely converted his Far East Command into the UN Command. Within a month of the North Korean invasion, the higher command relationships and overwhelmingly American character of the UN Command were established, and these were not changed during the course of the Korean War.¹

Seventeen countries contributed a total of four infantry brigades, nine infantry

¹J. Grey, *The Commonwealth armies and the Korean War*. Manchester University Press, 1988. p.27

battalions, one medical ambulance company, one evacuation hospital, and one mobile surgical hospital to Korea. By 9 July 1951 military forces from other member countries of the UN constituted 6.3 per cent of the total forces opposing the North Koreans and Chinese. American forces comprised 70.4 per cent, with the ROK army accounting for the remaining 23.3 per cent. There was some criticism of this in the US Congress and the press, but this was not shared by the Truman administration which recognised that the UN contingents made an important strategic and diplomatic contribution to the American cause in Korea.²

The Commonwealth contributed a Division to the UN forces. The UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand provided combat units, India contributed a Field Ambulance and South Africa a few staff officers. The Headquarters of the British Commonwealth Forces was located in Kure, Japan. As regards operational matters, the force was under command of an American field force commander. The Australian Department of Defence in Melbourne was responsible for coordinating the views of the other participating Commonwealth countries concerned on all questions of policy.

The other UN forces in Korea were smaller than the Commonwealth formations, and were absorbed more readily by the Americans both because often they were generally patterned on American models and because they were more dependent upon US resources. In practice, therefore, there were two major military systems within the UNC, one American and the other essentially British as the British contribution was the biggest amongst Commonwealth countries. The British were not, however, eager to get involved

²Ibid., p.30

in the war, and initially at least the Chiefs of Staff did not contemplate providing forces for Korea since, in their view, three to four American divisions were sufficient to drive North Korean forces out of South Korea.³ The lack of British military enthusiasm was soon overridden by political considerations. By having a token force in Korea, Britain was able to claim that its interests were served by protecting the empire in Malaya and Singapore, and its prestige as a world power was maintained by participating in UN operations along with the US. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the inability or unwillingness to provide military equipment highlighted the risks in dependence upon the American forces.

The UK and US governments had discussed the commitments to post-war military deployment in Korea long before the Armistice. General Mark Clark, Commander-in-Chief, UNC, proposed that the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth countries with contingents in Korea might make a statement similar to that made by President Eisenhower on 8 April 1953 to the effect that 'should an armistice be obtained the men of our forces will have to stay in Korea quite a while after fighting ceases.'⁴ The British Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, generally agreed with the proposal. However, Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State, was not sure whether producing such a statement would be wise because it would make the Chinese think that the Commonwealth planned a permanent UN garrison in South Korea, and add another difficulty to the truce talks. Churchill was cautious, and wanted there to be 'no hurry' in acting on General Mark

³Ibid., p.32 Cipher message, Canadian Joint Staff, London, to Chiefs of Staff Committee, Ottawa, 7 July 1950. Historical Section, Department of External Affairs(DEA)

⁴PRO FO371 105563 FK1195/25 Minute to Prime Minister by Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State, 22 May 1953.

Clark's suggestion that Ministerial statements should be made emphasising the need for UN forces to stay in Korea after an armistice. Churchill also dismissed the Foreign Office proposal on reinforcement, involving the transfer of forces from Hong Kong to Korea, as unnecessary.⁵

In June 1953 the British Chiefs of Staff produced a report on the provision of security forces in Korea after an armistice and sent it to the Cabinet Defence Committee for their approval. In the event of an armistice in Korea, the report suggested, there would be strong political pressure to maintain some Commonwealth forces in Korea in support of the residual UN commitments. It was clear that the general policy for the size and composition of any security forces remaining in Korea must largely be decided by the Americans as the major contributor to the UN forces.⁶ The report also pointed out that, although there were no military reasons for retaining forces in Korea after an armistice, there were strong political reasons: 'we are morally bound to maintain some forces in Korea until the UN mandate to restore international peace and security in the area has been achieved; the US would react most unfavourably to any suggestion that we should remove all our forces before other nations.' A gradual withdrawal was thus recommended. All the Commonwealth forces would have to remain until it became clear that the Communists did not intend to reopen hostilities. A token security force would remain for a period of run-down. Then the total withdrawal would follow.⁷

⁵Ibid.

⁶PRO FO371 110564 FK1195/40 Provision of Security Forces in Korea after an Armistice, C.O.S., 30 June 1953.

⁷Ibid.

The US Joint Chiefs of Staff had been warning of a military vacuum in Korea after the Armistice. A political settlement designed to create a *neutralized* Korea - by the entire withdrawal of the Chinese forces beyond the Yalu and the US-UN forces from South Korea - and conditioned upon a material reduction in the size of ROK forces would greatly lessen the US ability to fulfil military commitments, and US military prestige in the Far East at least would suffer irreparably.⁸ The theory of a unified, neutralized Korea under substantially reduced ROK forces was dismissed as 'completely unrealistic'. As long as there were no intelligence indications that there would be any change in Communist military capabilities or objectives, redeployment of US-UN forces would be neither desirable nor feasible from the military point of view. As there was no hope for an immediate unification of Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that they had no other alternative but to maintain a strong military posture in Korea including adequate ROK armed forces, while pursuing their long-standing objective of a united, independent, democratic Korea oriented to the West.⁹ There was no doubt that agreement as to the withdrawal of foreign forces and agreement as to the unification of Korea were interrelated and essential elements of a satisfactory Korean political settlement. US policy makers thought that there was little chance of agreement between the Communists and the ROK as long as President Rhee wanted an early Chinese withdrawal from the North. On the other hand, the ROK's intention to liberate the country by military means seemed to provide enough reason for the UNC to stay in South Korea. The UNC was not prepared to leave Korea.

⁸NA JCS 853/168 Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee, 25 June 1953.

⁹Ibid.

The US maintained as one of its basic policies that the presence of the UN forces in Korea must be regarded as a collective security measure against Communism in the region even after the Armistice. There was also wide recognition among Commonwealth countries that, although they wished to terminate their military involvement as quickly as possible, there could be no immediate running-down of forces. Therefore, apart from the South Africans who withdrew their fighter squadron during October 1953, the other Commonwealth countries maintained their forces in Korea. The Commonwealth governments also agreed that they should keep the character of the forces as 'Commonwealth forces in Korea', thus precluding any unilateral withdrawal of ground forces.¹⁰

The Commonwealth Relations Office in London was keen to stress unity among its members, and wished to avoid any impression that they were seeking to dictate to other Commonwealth governments what their contribution should be. The UK and other Commonwealth contributions were 'so interlocked on land and sea that it would clearly be preferable for a UK contribution to be assessed in the context of Commonwealth forces as a whole of which they would form part'. The CRO made it clear at Prime Ministers' meetings that 'it is our strong hope that any forces withdrawn from Korea will be used by Commonwealth governments to make a corresponding increase in their contributions to the Cold War elsewhere'. The CRO assumed that if the Australian and New Zealand forces in Korea were to be released by the UNC, they might be used to help the Far East

¹⁰Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950-1953*. Vol.I: Strategy and Diplomacy. Canberra, 1981. p.389

Strategic Reserve in Malaya.¹¹

By November 1953 the Washington Administration began to seek to reduce its defence budget as the hostilities ended and new nuclear weapons were available. The use of nuclear weapons certainly was an idea in the minds of the military as an alternative to the massive and expensive military involvement if hostilities resumed. General Hull, the new Commander-in-Chief, UNC, suggested that a withdrawal with a sufficient period to provide for an orderly transfer of equipment to South Korean forces would involve no risk to the UNC, if proper safeguards were provided. Moreover, retention of UN forces in Korea, he argued, would not necessarily restrain Rhee, because he might take the presence of UN forces as implied support for unilateral action.¹² Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff thought that there should be no premature reduction of forces, they had been advocating the use of nuclear weapons as a last resort if the situation required it. The State Department, however, was cautious and commented that the idea of using atomic weapons would provoke adverse reaction from allied countries, especially from Britain and France.¹³

The Foreign Office thought it was necessary to remind the new American administration of Britain's long-standing reservation about their commitments to courses of military action in Korea. The reservation was that the British government was not

¹¹PRO FO371 105564 FK1195/46 C.R.O. telegram no.50, 10 August 1953.

¹²*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1588-1589 Hull to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 4 November 1953.

¹³NA JCS 1776/408 Conclusions of the JCS resulting from an examination of the military aspects of the current situation in Korea, 17 November 1953.

committed to any precise courses of action in the event of a breach of the armistice in Korea. This was, in effect, made in a formal memorandum for the first time on 11 December 1951.¹⁴ The statement issued from Downing Street on 15 August 1953 referred to this reservation, and explicitly stated that its validity remained. Any agreement on the course of action would be dependent upon circumstances, and it would be 'an act between the two governments, and independent of changes of government of either side'.¹⁵ The argument was that one should have freedom of action in any hypothetical situation.

As Dulles expected, Churchill, at the Bermuda Conference in December 1953, opposed the use of atomic weapons, 'unless it were agreed to by the UN allies in advance'. If there were to be an extended war against China employing atomic bombs, it could bring a counterattack by the Soviet Union in Europe. Churchill expressed great concern that Britain would suffer most if the Soviets were to retaliate. Eisenhower assured Churchill that he would not act rashly and that 'the US just wanted their friends to know that past limitations on their actions, in the event of heavy attacks on the allies, would not necessarily be observed'.¹⁶

In any case, there was an urgent need to find ways to meet a possible renewal of

¹⁴The memorandum stated: Her Majesty's Government consider that there should be no commitment now to any precise course of action in hypothetical circumstances, and that decisions which might lead to global war, should be taken only at the time and in the full knowledge of the circumstances.

¹⁵PRO FO371 105546 FK1093/55 C.T.Crowe, to F.R.MacGinnis, Washington, UK Commitments to courses of military action in Korea, 23 September 1953.

¹⁶D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*. p.248 See also *F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1653-1655 174th Meeting of the NSC, 10 December 1953.

hostilities before considering the issue of force reduction. The National Security Council meeting in early January 1954 produced an agreed version, between the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the courses of possible action if there was a renewed attack by the Communists. It approved the nuclear option of the JCS, but it emphasized securing UN approval before its use.¹⁷ Having the nuclear option available, the US administration felt increasing pressure, especially from the Congress, to pull out the US forces. The concern for the health of the American economy led to a decision to cut back on dollar-swallowing conventional forces and place greater reliance on comparatively cheap nuclear weapons. Despite the opposition of the Europeans, especially the British and French who feared the possible use of nuclear bombs, Eisenhower decided to cut the defence budget and accepted General Hull's proposal.

The announcement on 29 December 1953 of the proposed withdrawal of two divisions of American troops -about 35,000 men- from Korea, was, as the *New York Herald Tribune* put it, a 'step fraught with possible consequences of the gravest character.'¹⁸ It was argued that since there had been no peace treaty signed or some pledge given against new aggression by the enemy, the withdrawal might be rationalised as a concession to the Communists. Another article in the same paper a few days later was of a different tone supporting Eisenhower's decision; the greatly increased firepower of small atomic arms would justify a gradual reduction of troops, and fewer soldiers would have

¹⁷*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.15, pt.2, pp.1704-1710 179th Meeting of NSC, 8 January 1954.

¹⁸*New York Herald Tribune*. by David Lawrence, 31 December 1953.

greater fighting power in their hands.¹⁹

Eisenhower's decision provoked anger and despair in Korea. The South Korean President Rhee issued a statement to the International News Service on 10 January 1954. He complained that he was not consulted in advance, but was merely informed of the decision by Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 24 December 1953. He stated that this withdrawal showed that the US did not want to renew the war. Some Korean newspapers, on the other hand, found a gleam of hope in the decision to reduce American ground forces in Korea, and argued that this indicated that if the war was renewed the US would use atomic and hydrogen bombs.²⁰

The American decision called for immediate responses from the British Commonwealth countries. Before the Armistice, Britain had agreed with the Americans in maintaining forces in Korea after the cease-fire. The British Chiefs of Staff had been content to leave the decision largely to the Americans. Now it seemed that the US had changed its plan: the British military detected in the Pentagon substantial planned reductions of US military commitments. Part of the US forces were to leave, and this in turn called into question the necessity for the British Commonwealth countries to keep their forces at the same level as in the pre-Armistice days. The Ministry of Defence in London began to seek to withdraw its own troops. The military factors which could justify American reductions would seem to apply equally to the Commonwealth contribution.²¹

¹⁹PRO FO371 105564 FK1195/74D N.Y. Herald Tribune, by Roscoe Drummond, 1 January 1954.

²⁰PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/14 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 12 January 1954.

²¹PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/4 Chiefs of Staff Committee, 2 January 1954. DEFE4/68 COS(54)3, Chiefs of Staff 77th meeting, minute 1, 5 January 1954.

Improved military capability in general would allow the Commonwealth forces to reduce their numbers. This reasoning led the Chiefs of Staff to suggest that the Commonwealth Division should be reduced by one brigade group. It was worked out that withdrawal of two US divisions amounted to a 25% reduction of their fighting troops. The reduction of the Commonwealth Division by a Brigade Group would represent a slightly larger percentage reduction. It could be made by withdrawing two British, one Australian and one Canadian battalion together with one New Zealand Field Regiment.²²

The Foreign Office took a slightly different view on reduction. Although the military and financial considerations were acknowledged, political considerations had greater priority. Britain should keep forces in Korea in order to carry out the United Nations mandate to 'restore international peace and security in the area', and the fact that they had forces in Korea did put them in a stronger position to influence and restrain the Americans.²³ W. Allen in the Foreign Office argued:

...from the general political point of view the larger the UK contribution to the United Nations Command the greater was our chance of influencing United States diplomacy in Korea. In fact our right to intervene was based on the size of our contribution.²⁴

More importantly, there was a grave danger in a hasty reduction of forces. It was believed in the Foreign Office that the US decision to reduce their forces was based upon increased American striking power in the area, and that the Americans possessed atomic

²²PRO DEFE4/68 COS(54)3 Chiefs of Staff 77th meeting, minute 1, 5 January 1954.

²³PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/6 Minute by C.T.Crowe, F.O., 12 January 1954.

²⁴PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/4B Minute by W.D.Allen, F.O., 5 January 1954. DEFE4/68 COS(54)3 Chiefs of Staff 77th meeting, minute 1, 5 January 1954.

weapons in the Far East and intended to use them against China if the Chinese started to attack.²⁵ The US use of nuclear weapons in the Far East would upset the Soviet Union, and its subsequent retaliation in Europe, against Britain among others, was too dreadful to contemplate. The British reduction might be taken to imply that Britain would support what was understood to be American policy. The public presentation of the reduction would need the most careful consideration.²⁶

In as much as the withdrawal of the US forces represented a small percentage of the US over-all strength in the Far East, the US believed that they should resist any attempt by other UN nations for a corresponding reduction in their forces which might affect the degree of US participation in the UN collective measures programme.²⁷ According to the American Embassy in London, the US government had instructed their missions in the countries concerned to try to dissuade their governments from taking such action.²⁸ Their principal arguments were that the Korean operation was a collective UN undertaking and a demonstration of the will of the free world to resist aggression. The Communists might think the determination of the free world to resist had weakened if all nations reduced their forces. Moreover, the US had borne a disproportionately large share of the costs and casualties during the Korean War. The US regarded their proposed action as 'a modest redressing of the previous imbalance' and they did not wish it to start a chain

²⁵PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/6 Minute by C.T.Crowe, F.O., 12 January 1954.

²⁶PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/4B F.O. minute by W.D.Allen, 5 January 1954.

²⁷NA RG218 JCS1776/351 Memorandum for the Secretary of Defence, 3 February 1953.

²⁸PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/8 Minute by C.T. Crowe, F.O., 19 January 1954.

reaction. Thus if the Defence Committee proposal - reduction of the Commonwealth Forces by a Brigade group - was to obtain a favourable reception from the US government, Britain 'must present it as tactfully as possible'. In the meantime officials in the Foreign Office resolved to keep all this strictly confidential until they had consulted the old Commonwealth governments, and on no account give the Americans any hint of what they had in mind.²⁹

The New Zealand government decided to reduce its naval contribution to UN forces from two frigates to one and transfer the remaining frigate from the UN Command to that of the Command in Singapore.³⁰ The New Zealand contingent in Korea consisted entirely of volunteers, and volunteering had naturally dropped off since the Armistice. The Commonwealth Relations Office felt rather annoyed as the New Zealand government took the decision without prior discussion with them. For the CRO it was important to maintain every appearance of allied solidarity in Korea, and it would be undesirable to suggest withdrawals to the Americans especially when they were sensitive about the issue.³¹

In January 1954 the British Embassy in Washington was alarmed by the State Department's 'hasty move' concerning the US-ROK defence treaty which had been initialised at the time of the Armistice in 1953. The Senate's probable approval of the US-ROK Mutual Defence Treaty meant that Britain had little time to consider her comments

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/16 UK High Commissioner in New Zealand, no.21, 20 January 1954.

³¹PRO FO371 110599 FK1192/21 C.R.O. to UK High Commissioner in New Zealand, 26 January 1954.

before the treaty was ratified. M.G.L. Joy, at the Washington Embassy, reminded Robert McClurkin, the Director of Northeast Asian Affairs, that the British government 'would certainly wish to have the opportunity to comment on such a draft of the treaty before anything was said to the Koreans.'³² The Foreign Office also instructed its Embassy in Washington to press the State Department to agree to 'slow things up to a more reasonable pace'. Colin Crowe at the Far Eastern Department added that 'it would really be very unreasonable if, in spite of that, they went ahead without us.'³³ Britain was concerned that any US-ROK secret accord might endanger the whole situation, especially prior to a political conference, by irritating Communists and therefore reducing the possibility of a peaceful solution to the Korean problem. Given the ROK President Rhee's vehement desire to 'march north' to unify the country, the Defence Treaty might well be taken by the Rhee government as in part an approval of its unilateral policy. The British government was disturbed by the ROK's militant posture which was bound to have an adverse effect on international opinion.

The status of the UNC forces also became an important issue. The Dulles-Rhee Joint Statement of August 7, 1953 included an undertaking by the ROK that for a limited period the status of UNC forces in Korea and the availability to them of facilities would continue. Pending the ratification of the Mutual Defence Treaty, the US government was preparing to enter into negotiations to formalize arrangements. At the meeting with the British ambassador, Roger Makins, the State Department emphasized that all UN forces

³²PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/4 M.G.L. Joy to C.T. Crowe, 26 January 1954.

³³PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/4A C.T. Crowe to M.G.L. Joy, Washington, 4 February 1954.

servicing in Korea under the UNC should be granted full parity of treatment in questions of jurisdiction and in all other matters relating to their status and the provision of facilities and services. The Acting Secretary of State, Bedell Smith, also pointed out that the US government was hoping to make this arrangement on behalf of the US and the other members of the UN concerned, and assured the UK ambassador that they would consult on all these matters and with respect to the timing and substance of the agreement.³⁴

Once the ratification of the Defence Treaty between the ROK and the US took place on 29 January and 5 February, 1954 respectively, the Korean press brought up the issue of the conclusion of an Administrative Agreement on the status of US forces in Korea. The ROK wished to settle the matters of jurisdiction and finance as soon as possible. The formal negotiations began by the end of February. The Korean Foreign Minister, Young-Tai Pyun, announced that they would insist on jurisdictional arrangements of the type applicable in Japan and the other NATO countries which meant recognition of their primary right to try US and other UN Command Service personnel for off-duty offenses. Other issues were also included: compensation for services and utilities used by US forces and for wrongful acts by individual members of the forces; methods for determining what Korean facilities should continue to be made available for free; and the extent to which the agreement should deal with the inter-relationship between the US and Korean commands.³⁵

³⁴PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/5 R. Makins, Washington to the F.O., 11 February 1954.

³⁵PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/24 Request by the ROK for an Administrative Agreement, 23 March 1954.

The State Department cautiously responded that the immediate US objective was to prevent those issues from becoming a source of friction between the US and the ROK before a US-UN Command position could be worked out.³⁶ Nevertheless, the US did not want to accept the Japanese-type arrangement which would allow the Korean government more authority and thus weaken the US-UN Command's control over the ROK military. Again the ROK's threat to go it alone and attack the North after leaving the UNC was the major concern of UNC officials. It was thus important to keep the ROK army under UNC control and restrain Rhee. The military option of unleashing Rhee had never been in the minds of American policy makers. The US Ambassador in Seoul realized the chances of a satisfactory settlement on jurisdiction were becoming less. As the Koreans were never likely to settle for anything less favourable than the Japanese model, the only hope was to agree with this in principle but seek agreement that the coming into effect of such provisions would be delayed while there was still a state of war.³⁷ The State Department, however, still hoped to avoid for as long as possible negotiating on jurisdiction.

The problem of jurisdiction became an issue of importance in relation to the forces of other Commonwealth countries. It was not decided whether the US, though it was their intention, would take up negotiations with South Korea for an all-embracing agreement on behalf of all UN forces. Lieutenant-General Wells, Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth Forces in Korea, expressed his strong opposition to giving the Korean authorities criminal jurisdiction over Australian forces. Apart from his own views as an

³⁶PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/26 Text of a State Department Information Policy Statement, March 1954.

³⁷PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/39 R. Makins, Washington to F.O., 22 June 1954.

Australian, there was the political consideration that public opinion in Australia would largely be hostile to and distrust Korean justice.³⁸

The War Office in London thought it should be Britain's aim to keep to the minimum the concessions which were made to South Korea. They believed that there were good reasons for adopting this attitude as there were strong precedents, in the immediate post-1945 period, for forces serving in an allied country retaining very wide extra-territorial privileges (e.g. the Anglo-Belgian Memorandum of Agreement of May 1944, the Anglo-Italian Agreement in 1947). It was argued that Korea was quite different to Japan: troops and bases were maintained in Japan 'for our own convenience, but it is only the Koreans who benefit from the presence of British forces in Korea'. During the Second World War it was always assumed that countries in a position like Korea would contribute their available facilities to the common effort.³⁹ Therefore, the British government should strongly oppose any agreement on jurisdictional status which would bring members of the British Forces in Korea, in any circumstances, within the jurisdiction of the South Korean courts.⁴⁰ It was a definite objection to any retreat from the complete immunity from Korean processes. The apparent inclination of the Americans to make concessions in this respect was a concern to the British.⁴¹

The Foreign Office was apprehensive about the danger that Britain would have to

³⁸PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/19 W. Graham, Seoul to F.O., 4 March 1954.

³⁹PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/40 F.O. minute by J.L. Bullard, 1 July 1954.

⁴⁰PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/23B W.Gardner, W.O. to C.T.Crowe, F.O., 8 April 1954.

⁴¹PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/40A F. Armstrong, W.O. to M.T. Walker, F.O., 29 June 1954.

negotiate on its own with the ROK government either in the context of jurisdiction or of finance, and doubted they could secure any better terms from the Koreans than the Americans. For the period after the US-ROK Security Treaty came into effect Britain would have no precedent to guide it and probably in the eyes of the Koreans no *locus standi* in Korea. The Foreign Office thought that it would be desirable for the US government to negotiate a single agreement on behalf of all UN forces in Korea. If because of the US-Korean Mutual Defence Treaty this was not possible, there should be a separate agreement covering all non-American UN forces to be negotiated by the Americans. If there were to be separate agreements, there should be a Commonwealth representative on the US negotiating team.⁴² The Foreign Office was concerned that, by concluding a separate US-ROK agreement, the Commonwealth forces might be treated in a less favourable way than the US ones.

The Foreign Office learnt from its mission in Seoul that it would be difficult to obtain, by separate negotiation, terms similar to the Americans for the period after the Security Treaty came into effect.⁴³ The solution would be, therefore, for the Americans to negotiate one agreement on behalf of all UN forces in Korea without any distinction in time and without any mention of the Mutual Security Treaty. The Foreign Office was in the end prepared to accept an agreement on the Japanese model on the understanding that 'it would not come into effect until it was agreed between the ROK and the UN Command that there was no longer a danger that the aggression might be renewed.' A

⁴²PRO FO371 110604 FK1193/23 F.O. to the Washington Embassy, 5 May 1954.

⁴³PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/47 A.S.Halford, Legation, Seoul to C.T.Crowe, F.O., 23 June 1954.

Foreign Office official took up the issue with the War Office:

...we must ultimately accept the US decision. The influence of the US government over the Koreans is far greater than ours: we can never hope to obtain more favourable terms on any item than they do. So far as the Foreign Office is concerned we will certainly represent to the State Department our strong dislike of any agreement on jurisdictional matters...but if they should decide that negotiation cannot be avoided, I think we should be prepared to agree.⁴⁴

The US sought an agreement in principle from the ROK that, even though the NATO formula was written into the agreement, they would waive their right to exercise jurisdiction for some period of time into the future.⁴⁵ The Pentagon was not anxious to negotiate the issue because they believed present arrangements, especially with respect to criminal jurisdiction, were better than they were likely to get.⁴⁶ The State Department did not want to make fuss out of the issue, and nor did the Koreans wish to irritate the Americans when the ROK was launching an economic rehabilitation programme aided by the US during the summer months of 1954. Both the US and ROK played down the issue and the jurisdictional problem was shelved without a formal agreement until October. In the end, the US went into negotiations on behalf of all UN forces and it was agreed that after the Security Treaty came into effect in November, the South Korean request for the right to try UN personnel for offenses committed when off-duty was accepted.

Dealing with the financial status of forces was even more delicate as each

⁴⁴PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/54 M.T.Walker, F.O. to Armstrong, W.O., 21 July 1954.

⁴⁵NA RG59 795.00/7-1954 Commitments we might seek from the ROK, 19 July 1954.

⁴⁶NA RG59 795.00/7-1954 Subjects on which we may have something to give the ROK, 19 July 1954.

government was expected to pay its own procurement bill. The State Department was under pressure from the Pentagon to go ahead on the settlement with the ROK, as the Koreans wanted bills for services, e.g. electricity, to be paid off.⁴⁷ The Pentagon wanted agreement on such matters to be concluded immediately. The British Embassy in Washington learnt that, although the State Department was steadfastly holding to their undertaking to consult the Commonwealth fully, the Pentagon was quite capable of acting without consulting the State Department.⁴⁸ The British government was hoping that the UN Command would conduct all the negotiations on their behalf, but realized they were hardly in a position to dictate to the UNC the line they should follow. Nonetheless, Britain maintained a firm attitude that the Koreans ought to continue to provide facilities and services free.

..if in the end we had to give way to the Koreans on this point, it must be made clear to them that it was an unusual concession dictated by an unusual prolongation of the armistice. If the UN Command were going to negotiate with the Koreans in the expectation that concessions would have to be made, we might as well start from an extreme position.⁴⁹

M.G.L. Joy at the British Embassy in Washington approached R. McClurkin, the Deputy Director of Northeast Asian Affairs, and expressed his government's view that the UN Command should not pay for any ROK services. However, the State Department officials argued that the view of the UK government might be appropriate for the pre-Armistice period but the new situation following the Armistice would not permit the UN

⁴⁷PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/55 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 21 July 1954.

⁴⁸PRO FO371 110605 FK1193/59 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 27 July 1954.

⁴⁹PRO FO371 110606 FK1193/61 M.G.L.Joy, Washington to C.T.Crowe, F.O., 30 July 1954.

Command to maintain such a position.⁵⁰ The negotiations between the ROK and the US in November brought an agreement, and the arrangement for the period since the Armistice broadly followed the Japanese precedent; the Koreans would provide free all facilities (in the technical sense of land or building), and the UNC forces would pay for all other services such as electric power.⁵¹ By early 1955, other non-US forces in Korea made similar arrangements through separate negotiations with the South Korean government.

Pending the Geneva Conference in April 1954 the Department of State proposed US positions with respect to the withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea under two contingencies: (a) as part of an agreement on reunification of Korea; (b) as a separate agreement following a failure to reach an agreement on reunification.⁵² The Joint Chiefs of Staff were in general agreement with the position under contingency (a). They concluded that there were obvious disadvantages to any proposal at Geneva to withdraw forces from Korea, if such a proposal was not a part of an agreement on reunification. The JCS's view was revised at the Working Group meeting on 8 April, and was attached with the comments that, if attempts failed to secure agreement on an acceptable proposal for the reunification of Korea, the US should not discuss with the Communists or reach agreements with them on the mutual withdrawal of foreign forces independently of

⁵⁰NA RG59 795.00/7-2154 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Various topics relating to ROK-US relations, 21 July 1954.

⁵¹NA RG273 NSC 5514 US objectives and courses of action in Korea, 25 February 1955.

⁵²NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. GK D-6c Withdrawal of Foreign Forces from Korea, 27 March 1954.

unification.⁵³

From a strategic point of view, the JCS pointed out that mutual withdrawal would not decrease Communist freedom of action: even if Chinese Communist forces observed withdrawal terms, their forces poised on the Yalu river could be quickly recommitted to offensive action in Korea or used for infiltration. Moreover, there was a danger that mutual withdrawal might encourage the ROK to take a provocative action. The timing of the withdrawal in relation to the Korean election was also important. Total withdrawal or the reduction of forces to insignificant levels before the election was unacceptable since US forces would be removed from Korea before it could be determined that the Communists had implemented their part of the agreement by permitting fair elections and accepting the results.⁵⁴

The State Department figured that the disadvantages of agreeing at Geneva to withdrawal of foreign forces outweighed the advantages. From a propaganda point of view, agreeing at Geneva would give the Communists the advantage of appearing to have achieved their major objective at the Conference. It would sanction at the political level the *de facto* partition of Korea and derogate the announced US-UN objective of a unified Korea. Also it might create basic disagreement with the ROK by appearing to constitute US acquiescence in an indefinitely divided Korea. It would cast doubt on US-UN intentions to resist renewed Communist aggression and would weaken the deterrent effect

⁵³NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. GK D-6e Geneva Conference, April 1954: Withdrawal of Foreign Forces from Korea, 9 April 1954.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.3

of the Greater Sanctions Statement by removing the tangible evidence of the US-UN stake in Korea. If the Communists insisted on withdrawal independently of unification, it would appear that the Communists would not agree to the reunification of Korea. By presenting its proposal in this way, the US would be in a relatively strong propaganda position if the Conference reached no agreement on reunification, and could better place the onus of failure on the Communists.⁵⁵ Thus both the State Department and the JCS were against the mutual withdrawal and therefore against discussing withdrawal of forces independently of reunification.

In seeking to obtain the pre-Conference agreement of its allies, the US State Department felt that the US should persuade its allies not to discuss at Geneva mutual withdrawal of foreign forces. If, however, the allies insisted on discussing withdrawal of forces, then the State Department believed the US should, as a last resort to prevent a breach in the solidarity of the UN side, inform its allies of its willingness to consult with them at an appropriate time after the Conference regarding a reduction or withdrawal of UN forces. The position of the US in any such post-Geneva discussions, however, would be determined in the light of the results at Geneva.⁵⁶ The US stuck closely to this policy, and partially because of this the Conference ended without an agreement on the withdrawal of forces.

During the summer of 1954 there was an overall reassessment of the US military position in the Far East. General Hull, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, recommended a

⁵⁵Ibid., pp.7-9

⁵⁶NA RG218 JCS 1776/451 Memorandum for the Secretary of Defence, 8 April 1954.

redeployment plan in his telegram to the Secretary of State arguing that withdrawal from Korea and retention of these forces in other areas, possibly Hawaii or Okinawa, was no longer a sign of weakness.⁵⁷ This was in fact in line with the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April, and the discussions at the National Security Council in March when Governor Stassen, director of the Foreign Operations Administration, argued that the US military strength in the Far East should continue to be based on the US Air Force and the US Navy, and that the Asian nations should be urged to concentrate on the development of indigenous land forces.⁵⁸ Thus the redeployment of US forces was perfectly justified by the continued build-up of each country's forces. The argument in its tone stressed the need for general reductions of US ground forces.

The plans for support of the ROK Army were strongly encouraged.⁵⁹ The efforts to secure acceptance of this continued until an agreed minute was produced by the Department of Defence in late July. It emphasized the build up of the ROK defence forces and the strengthening of their capability to conduct combat operations. However, the US would help this development through naval and air forces rather than ground forces. This included the provision of more vessels, destroyer escorts, jet aircraft and so on. The whole scheme also encouraged additional US financial support for the South Koreans.⁶⁰

⁵⁷NA RG59 795.00/7-554 CINCFE to the Secretary of State, 5 July 1954.

⁵⁸*F.R.U.S.* 1952-54, Vol.12, East Asia and the Pacific, pt.1, p.396 Memorandum of Discussion at the 187th Meeting of the NSC, 4 March 1954.

⁵⁹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. ROK-US relations, 21 July 1954.

⁶⁰NA RG59 795.00/7-1954 Buildup of the ROK Defence Forces, 19 July 1954.

During Rhee's visit to Washington in July both presidents agreed on certain measures to continue the close cooperation which formed an important part of the 'Free World's struggle against communism'. The ROK pledged to retain ROK forces under the operational control of the UN Command while the Command had responsibilities for the defence of the ROK, unless after consultation it was agreed that their basic policies diverged in which case an opportunity would be given to the UN Command to withdraw. The US also made it clear that it was their policy to retain in Korea the equivalent of one UN corps with necessary supporting units, and that the reduction to this level would be gradual. In the event of an unprovoked attack upon the ROK in violation of the armistice, the US would employ its retaliatory striking power against the aggressor. The US promised to support a strengthened ROK military establishment including the development of a reserve system in accordance with arrangements to be worked out by appropriate military representatives of the two governments.⁶¹

Although the British government had long been considering the reduction of Commonwealth forces, the issue had to be dealt with cautiously, and it was believed important not to make any 'premature move'⁶² By the summer of 1954, however, the talks on the reduction were intensified because of the deteriorating situation in Indo-China. As soon as it became clear that France was never going to re-establish its authority over the north of Indo-China, the security of the empire and the vital importance of Malaya and Singapore had almost immediately shifted the Foreign Office's concern from Korea to

⁶¹NA RG59 795.00/7-3054 Agreed minute of conferences between President Eisenhower and President Rhee and their advisors, 27-30 July 1954.

⁶²PRO FO371 110600 FK1192/48 Reduction of Commonwealth Forces in Korea, C.R.O., 15 April 1954.

Malaya. Eden took the issue to the Chiefs of Staff Committee suggesting that early action should be taken for the transfer of forces from Korea to Malaya.⁶³ The UK delegation in Geneva sent a similar message that Britain should reinforce Malaya with as little delay as possible.⁶⁴

The Ministry of Defence reviewed the matter and presented to the Prime Minister an agreed recommendation by representatives of the UK, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff for reductions in the Commonwealth Forces in Korea. The army reduction could be achieved in two phases: phase A - one Brigade Group to be withdrawn, leaving a division of two Brigade Groups which would release two UK Infantry Battalions; phase B - a further reduction to one Commonwealth Brigade Group in all. This would permit the withdrawal of a substantial proportion of the remaining UK troops, including one Infantry Battalion, one field regiment, engineers, signals and ancillary units.⁶⁵ The Foreign Office agreed with the proposed plan recommended by the Commonwealth military representatives, but warned of the need 'not to disturb the State Department unduly.'⁶⁶ By mid-August the Chiefs of Staff Committee agreed that the phase 'A' and phase 'B' reductions should be completed by the end of the year. The proposal also added that Commonwealth forces remaining in Korea after the phase 'B' reduction should

⁶³PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/59 Chiefs of Staff Committee Meeting, 10 June 1954.

⁶⁴PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/62 UKDEL, Geneva to Foreign Office, No.695, 13 June 1954.

⁶⁵PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/64 Alexander, Ministry of Defence to Prime Minister, 25 June 1954.

⁶⁶PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/49A Foreign Office to Washington, No.3625, 24 July 1954.

retain their Commonwealth identity and not be merged into a United Nations division. Those forces would be the only ones relying on British equipment.⁶⁷

Before the reduction plan by the Ministry of Defence was set out, the strength of UN forces in Korea, not counting US and ROK troops, was about 33,000, or the equivalent of two divisions. In July, a group of Turkish officers and men who constituted approximately half the Turkish Brigade in Korea sailed back to Turkey.⁶⁸ The US State Department appeared to be concerned at this move but assumed that some reduction in other UN forces was inevitable. They nevertheless expressed a hope that the total strength of the forces would be maintained at a division or more.⁶⁹ The National Security Council decision on 29 July also emphasized the desirability of retaining other UN forces in Korea in order to retain the 'flavour of UN participation in Korea'.⁷⁰ In September the US Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed with the Commonwealth governments' joint proposal for reduction, and the cut was to be carried out over the next six months.⁷¹ Thus both the US and the Commonwealth countries decided to reduce their forces by two thirds each: the US from six to two divisions and the Commonwealth Forces from three to one brigade group.

The cut in US-UN forces brought renewed worries to some factions in the Foreign

⁶⁷PRO FO371 110602 FK1192/79G 89th COS Meeting Minute, COS(54) 264, 18 August 1954.

⁶⁸PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/68 Ankara Radio, 13 July 1954.

⁶⁹PRO FO371 110601 FK1192/69 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., 22 July 1954.

⁷⁰NA RG273 NSC Action 1189, 29 July 1954. RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, 5 August 1954.

⁷¹PRO FO371 110603 FK1192/105 F.O. to Seoul, 14 September 1954.

Office. The fact that the Americans were withdrawing so many ground forces seemed to suggest that they might count upon resorting to nuclear weapons if ever the Communists should be rash enough to resort to hostilities again.⁷² The Foreign Office had been convinced that the US was ready to take drastic measures in case of a breach of the armistice by the Chinese ever since the Greater Sanctions Statement was issued in July 1953.⁷³ The Foreign Office believed that the Americans certainly saw the nuclear option as an alternative to the massive involvement of ground forces.

The Mutual Defence Treaty between the ROK and the US finally entered into force on 17 November 1954.⁷⁴ Pursuant to the agreement, the US was to assist Korea in the support of the following maximum ROK forces during 1955: Army, 661,000; Navy, 15,000; Marine Corps, 27,000; Air Force, 16,500. Also by the end of the year 10 ROK reserve divisions were to be formed, and these divisions were to be supplied with the minimum equipment to undergo and maintain a reasonable state of training. As the reserve strength also increased, the US expected it would be possible to reduce the total number of active military personnel.⁷⁵

⁷²PRO FO371 110610 FK11910/5 E.Dening, Tokyo to W.D.Allen, F.O., 13 October 1954.

⁷³NA RG218 JCS 1776/411, 478. RG273 NSC 170/1 The Statement carries the commitment that "if there is a renewal of armed attack,... 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."

⁷⁴NA RG218 JCS File 137, Treaties and Other International Acts Series 3097, 383.L1 Korea, Mutual Defence Treaty.

⁷⁵NA RG273 NSC 5514 Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on US Objectives and courses of action in Korea, 25 February 1955.

In the spring of 1955 the Commonwealth countries made a request to Britain for more reductions of their forces in Korea to a token force comprising a Battalion Group.⁷⁶ The Chiefs of Staff, who were in favour of the reduction, argued that the existing Commonwealth Force was already very small and no longer constituted a self-contained and balanced fighting unit. From the military point of view, the further reduction would strengthen the position in the important area of South East Asia by assisting the East Asian governments' contribution to the proposed strategic reserve in Malaya. The reduction, therefore, would have compensating advantages.⁷⁷

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Harding, argued that the proposed reduction of Commonwealth Forces would not make the difference between success and failure in the event of a Communist attack. This, he said, depended on whether nuclear weapons were used and on the quality and training of the South Korean army. He did not believe that the reduction would have an adverse military effect. Marshall Hancock, Australian Joint Services Staff, said that the Australian authorities supported the proposition. The New Zealand Joint Services Staff, Calder, also welcomed the release of the New Zealand forces from Korea, and mentioned his government had already stopped recruiting for the contingent. Therefore the Chiefs of Staff Committee agreed that the military arguments for the reduction remained unchanged. The main military factor was that the reduction would considerably ease the problem for Australia, New Zealand and the UK in supplying increased forces to Malaya, and for Canada in supplying a battalion

⁷⁶PRO FO371 115354 FK1196/30 Note by Selwyn Lloyd, 5 May 1955.

⁷⁷PRO FK371 115354 FK1196/39B Saving telegram, Ministry of Defence, 3 May 1955.

to SACEUR (Supreme Allied Command in Europe).⁷⁸ The question however remained whether, in spite of its military desirability, the reduction was inappropriate at that moment for political reasons.

The Foreign Office cautiously accepted the view of the Chiefs of Staff that the reduction from a Brigade Group to a Battalion Group would not make much difference militarily, and decided to press the US more firmly, although the danger that the US might use atomic weapons in case of renewed aggression was still a worrying thought. The Foreign Office accepted that the improvement of the quality of present forces and the training of the ROK Army would justify the reduction. They believed the US arguments that further reductions of the UNC would have a serious adverse impact on the interests of the Free World in Asia 'did not hold water from the military point of view'.⁷⁹

When the new Foreign Secretary, Harold Macmillan, and the British Ambassador, Gladwyn Jebb, met Dulles at the NATO meeting in Paris in May 1955, they drew American attention to further reductions which were going to be made in accordance with the Commonwealth plan. Dulles accepted that the British Commonwealth Forces no longer consisted of a self-contained and balanced fighting unit and that some rationalisation was inevitable. Yet he emphasized that whatever Britain finally decided to leave in Korea 'should look important'. The British officials in Paris found Dulles' remark 'less uncompromising'. Ambassador Jebb concluded that Britain and the Commonwealth governments could carry out their original plan provided that they could dress it up in

⁷⁸PRO DEFE4/76 COS (55) 30th meeting, 3 May 1955.

⁷⁹PRO FO371 115354 FK1196/30 Selwyn Lloyd to Foreign Secretary, 5 May 1955.

some way which would enable them to call their forces something other than a battalion, and which would enable them to claim that it could be easily expanded at short notice.⁸⁰

Things became urgent when the Australians announced their battalion would leave Korea soon after August.⁸¹ The Commonwealth Military Representatives held a meeting on 30 June. Now it seemed that the character of the residual forces was the most important factor to be considered. The Commonwealth governments agreed that the object of retaining forces in Korea was political rather than operational, and that the force must therefore keep its Commonwealth character and be recognisable as a Commonwealth Force. Initially the Canadian representatives were opposed to the term Brigade Group, because they thought it did not represent the character of the force. Later, consensus was reached that the force should be known as *Commonwealth Contingent Korea* which was to operate formally from April 1956.⁸² The Australian authorities felt that an officer of General rank would no longer be needed for the appointment responsible for the Contingent. It was suggested that the then Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant General Bierwirth, should continue as Commander-in-Chief, BCFK, until the establishment of the *Commonwealth Contingent Korea* in April 1956.⁸³

Meanwhile the War Office in London wished to go even further and expressed

⁸⁰PRO FO371 115354 FK1196/35 G.Jebb, Paris to F.O., No.214, 12 May 1955.

⁸¹PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/46 Record of a meeting of Commonwealth Military Representatives, W.O., 30 June 1955.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³PRO FO371 115357 FK1196/108 Canberra to C.R.O., 13 December 1955.

their preference for a complete withdrawal of Commonwealth troops to that of keeping a token force in Korea. The Secretary of State for War, Anthony Head, set out the difficulties of maintaining a skeleton Commonwealth Contingent in Korea. He suggested that it might be better to withdraw the whole contingent rather than let them come to be regarded by the US military authorities as 'more of a hindrance than a help and lose their morale by having to be employed on lines such as communication work'.⁸⁴ The non-British Commonwealth troops in Korea had been dependent for their equipment on the US forces. A very small force found it hard to maintain its identity as a 'Commonwealth Force', and tended to be absorbed into an American division. Besides a large bill, both in manpower and money for a small contribution, 'this policy was likely to result in the American Commanders on the spot wishing to relegate the force to a non-operational role behind the line'. The War Office wanted to resist this and try to have their force located in a reserve operational area.⁸⁵ The Secretary of State for War asked for the Foreign Secretary's views on whether the Americans would agree to the total withdrawal of the Commonwealth forces.

As an answer to this possibility of complete withdrawal, Harold Macmillan said 'no'. Macmillan admitted that the War Office had made out a strong case for complete withdrawal on military grounds. However, he pointed out, there were weighty political reasons for keeping a contingent in Korea: resistance to aggression in Korea was a UN enterprise as it was the first successful collective resistance to aggression. More

⁸⁴PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/50A Minute by W.D.Allen, 25 July 1955.

⁸⁵PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/50 Anthony Head, W.O. to H.Macmillan, F.O., 20 July 1955.

importantly, it would be regarded as a purely US affair if the Commonwealth forces were to pull out completely. Macmillan argued:

If we withdraw our force in Korea entirely we should appear to be washing our hands of Korea. Furthermore, the United Kingdom and Old Commonwealth countries exercise a considerable influence over the United States Administration's policy in Korea and have succeeded in persuading them to be more moderate than they might have been on their own. If our troops were withdrawn our influence would diminish and we should have less opportunity for intervention.⁸⁶

Again the Foreign Office made a strong case for the political considerations. The problem was re-examined by the Chiefs of Staff in consultation with the Military Representatives of the other Commonwealth countries. A new proposal was made that the force should comprise a Brigade Headquarters commanding a force including one Infantry Battalion which would be commanded by a Brigadier.⁸⁷ The Commonwealth governments agreed a joint approach to the US government in order to discuss the location and

⁸⁶PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/49 Harold Macmillan to Secretary of State for War, Anthony Head, 27 July 1955.

⁸⁷PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/51 Selwyn Lloyd to the Foreign Secretary, 25 July 1955.

Composition of Reduced Commonwealth Contingent Korea.

Brigade Headquarters	Integrated
Infantry Battalion	U.K.
Detachment Engineers	U.K.
Signals Detachment	Australia
Detachment Field Ambulance	Canada
Detachment RNZASC Coy	New Zealand
Detachment Infantry Brigade Work shops	Integrated

accommodation for the residual force.⁸⁸

The four Commonwealth governments, however, had different ideas about the manner of the approach to the Americans. The Australians who had been supporting the general US policy in the Far East wished to ask for explicit American concurrence, and were prepared to review the position in the event of continued strong American objections. The security treaty with the US (ANZUS) might have been in the Australians' minds: they feared any disagreement might have a bad effect on the Americans with whom they were discussing military plans in the Far East involving American assurances of aid.⁸⁹ The Canadians on the other hand took a more independent line. They considered that, 'while the Americans do not challenge the right of the Commonwealth countries to remove their forces, they would never give it any form of blessing.'⁹⁰ The Canadian government wished to simply inform the Americans that the reductions would be put into effect. The British position was summed up by Roger Makins:

...while my instructions were similar to those of my Australian colleague, I was impressed by the advantages of presenting our views as the Canadians suggested. I doubted whether the Americans could 'approve' or even 'concur', and if we embarrassed them by asking, it would make it all the more difficult for us to persist in the face of their objections. I therefore favoured putting it to the Americans in such a way that they could 'take note'.⁹¹

The New Zealand representatives did not take a firm position, but their attitudes

⁸⁸PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/60 C.R.O. to F.O., 25 August 1954.

⁸⁹PRO FO371 115357 FK1196/92 F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 18 November 1955.

⁹⁰PRO FO371 115356 FK1196/66 R.Makins, Washington to F.O., No.511, 2 September 1955.

⁹¹Ibid.

were similar to those of the Australians, i.e. they were very anxious to effect a reduction, but not in the face of strong American objections, in which case they might re-consider and scale down the reductions. A compromise was found by making it clear to the Americans that a reduction would definitely take place, but leaving a possibility for further discussion of minor changes in the composition of the residual force.⁹² It was a relief for the Foreign Office to reach an agreement at last, and each government was allowed to add supplementary comments.

The Foreign Office agreed with the Chiefs of Staff to add a separate recommendation in order to ensure the clear-cut character of the residual forces in Korea: it was essential that the force should continue to be readily recognisable as a Commonwealth contingent; it must retain its independence and not be integrated in an American formation.⁹³ It would also be desirable that the force should keep its operational character and be located in an operational area, although in view of its size the British government could hardly insist on it being permanently employed on operational duties.⁹⁴ Every effort should be made to persuade the UN Command to recognise the importance of the nominal but operational status of the force.

The aide-memoire of the Commonwealth countries was carefully modified, and it was intended to seek the concurrence of the US through their representatives in Washington. Discussions between the US and Commonwealth Military Representatives

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³PRO FO371 115356 FK1196/67 Washington to F.O., 3 September 1955.

⁹⁴PRO FO371 115355 FK1196/51 Selwyn Lloyd to Harold Macmillan, 25 July 1955.

were proposed. The American reaction was that any further reduction was to be regretted but, if it had to take place, it was hoped that it would not be implemented before spring of 1956.⁹⁵ The British Joint Services Mission in Washington informed the Foreign Office that the US Department of the Army had been told to ascertain the detailed composition of the Commonwealth contingent so that the UN Commander could coordinate its redeployment with the Commonwealth Commanders in the Far East.⁹⁶

By early 1956 the whole Korean theatre was re-organised with the reduction of Commonwealth forces. There was a Battalion Group which was commanded by a UK Brigadier with an Australian Deputy. The force Headquarters and an advanced base were transferred from Kure, Japan, to Inchon, a western port of South Korea. The force remained under the operational command of the Americans but was now under the administrative control of Commander-in-Chief, Far East Land Forces, Singapore, and the overall coordinating control on policy matters was transferred from the Australian Department of Defence to the War Office, London.

During the autumn of 1956 the Policy Review Committee in the War Office invited the Foreign Secretary, in consultation with the Commonwealth Secretary and the Minister of Defence, to propose a reduction of the Commonwealth Contingent in Korea to a nominal size and to hold it in readiness for discussions with the US government. The draft paper suggested that there was no satisfactory alternative to a complete withdrawal.

⁹⁵PRO FO371 115357 FK1196/82 BRITCOM, Japan to Dept. of Defence, Melbourne, 11 October 1955.

⁹⁶PRO FO371 115357 FK1196/92 F.O. minute by C.T.Crowe, 18 November 1955.

However, the US government was likely to have strong views and 'we must consult them before taking action'. It was recommended that they should approach the US government after the presidential election.⁹⁷

By the end of October 1956, the Foreign Office was totally swamped with the situation in Suez which was to become one of the most rancorous issues in Anglo-American relations in the 1950s. The Israeli attack on Egypt on 29 October escalated the Suez crisis to its peak. Britain and France immediately intervened on the pretext of keeping the Canal open to international traffic. The US, who firmly maintained their view that international control of the Canal never meant US endorsement of military action, was furious when the British and French vetoed a US-sponsored resolution condemning Israel in the UN on the following day. Moreover, the British opposed the US demands for unconditional withdrawal from Suez and wanted to assist with the UN peacekeeping force in the Canal zone. The US, trying to moderate Britain, urged them to accept unconditional withdrawal. On Suez the Americans were just as determined to avoid military action as the British had been in Indo-China two years earlier.⁹⁸

The crisis caused heightened tension on the Korean Armistice line, and the need for a strong UN Command seemed even greater. It was recommended that the Secretary of State should suggest deferring consideration of the proposed withdrawal at least for a month. Sir Esler Dening at the Tokyo Embassy was convinced, after he had met General

⁹⁷PRO FO371 121130 FK1193/57 Minute by C.T.Crowe, 9 October 1956.

⁹⁸A.I.Singh, *The Limits of British Influence: South Asia and the Anglo-American relationship, 1947-56*. London, 1993. p.212

Lemnitzer, Commander-in-Chief, UNC, that the UN Commander attached great importance to the continued participation of the Commonwealth Forces. In the light of reactions to Suez, an announcement that Britain was about to pull out of a UN commitment would produce negative comment.⁹⁹ Dening warned that adverse US reactions to a withdrawal of the Commonwealth Contingent might be stronger than expected. The Foreign Office concluded that it was 'a very bad moment' to put forward a proposal which 'involved our virtual withdrawal from a UN force and a loosening of our ties with the USA in the Far East.'¹⁰⁰ Crowe at the Foreign Office minuted:

..the latest developments in the Suez crisis, and the strain which has been imposed on the Anglo-American alliance, now tip the political balance in favour of our retaining the Contingent in Korea for the time being...It seemed to me that the political cost of this abandonment of a UN commitment and the danger that we would be getting even further out of step with the Americans outweigh the costs of maintaining the battalion.¹⁰¹

While Crowe's opinion was largely shared, there was no unanimous view on total withdrawal. Arthur de la Mare, the British Counsellor at the Washington Embassy argued in a long telegram that 'the United Kingdom had an absolutely indisputable reason for withdrawal and that was that they could not afford the expense'. He said that the financial reason might not apply in the same measure to the other Commonwealth countries in the Contingent but for the UK it was fundamental. Moreover the role of the British forces in Korea had never been regarded as satisfactory. Pretending that they were there as part of a UN Command was 'to fly in the face of the facts'. It was a US Command, and the role

⁹⁹PRO FO371 121139 FK1193/68 E.Dening, Tokyo to C.T.Crowe, 23 November 1956.

¹⁰⁰PRO FO371 121130 FK1193/65 Minute by C.T.Crowe, 3 December 1956.

¹⁰¹PRO FO371 121130 FK1193/68A Minute by C.T.Crowe, 28 November 1956.

of Commonwealth forces was merely 'to provide an aura of sanctity for a US operation'. The US wanted the Commonwealth forces not because they valued military cooperation in the area but because the Commonwealth countries 'acted as a UN cloak for their own policy'.¹⁰²

From the military point of view, according to De la Mare, the situation was even more unsatisfactory. Britain had about 1,000 men in Korea. If hostilities should be resumed those troops would have to be involved and reinforced with more equipment and supplies. De la Mare took his argument further: in case Nasser asked Britain not to use his canal to make war on his friends, the North Koreans, would the British government be expected to fight Nasser again in order to help their American friends in South Korea? If it was a renewal of hostilities caused by Syngman Rhee who had been subjected to great provocation from the North, the Americans were bound to support him, and 'the US would not let considerations of virtue stand between them and the defence of South Korea and of their general position in Japan and North East Asia - a vital American interest.'¹⁰³ If the US action in Korea was arguably 'immoral' to the British eyes, then the prospect of automatically having to support the US action in Korea would be particularly galling, given the US failure to provide automatic support for the British over Suez.

It was clear that in any case the British government did not wish to become militarily involved in Korea, and they wanted to keep their freedom to take action in the

¹⁰²PRO FO371 121130 FK1193/74 A.J.de la Mare, Washington to C.T.Crowe, 4 December 1956.

¹⁰³Ibid.

light of developments. As long as the British troops remained in Korea, they had little choice but to become involved in the event hostilities resumed. On the other hand, if they pulled out the troops and were asked again to contribute forces, they would be able to make a decision on their own terms. According to de la Mare, Anglo-American relations would never be right until they were based on realism instead of sentiment.

We should tell the Americans openly that we are withdrawing our troops from Korea because we have decided that it is better, in the interests of good relations, to do this than to continue, for the sake of preserving a fiction, to maintain a situation which we cannot afford, and which is bound in the long run to create greater recriminations between us than if we face facts now.¹⁰⁴

The debate on reducing the British military commitment continued throughout 1956. A number of ways and means of reducing the British commitment had been examined and rejected in favour of complete withdrawal. By the beginning of 1957 the voices insisting on complete withdrawal were getting wider support. The latest initiative came from the Ministry of Defence when they reviewed the situation of the British Forces Overseas in January 1957. In the Battalion Group in Korea, Britain provided the Infantry Battalion and most of the Headquarters and supporting units. Australia, New Zealand and Canada provided between them about 220 men only. The cost of the UK component was running at about £2.15m a year. It was considered exorbitant for a token force. A white paper prepared by the Ministry of Defence concluded a complete withdrawal was the only option. It argued that if the Americans took over the 'administrative tail', the unit would lose its Commonwealth identity and American supplies would cost a great deal in dollars. In fact, anything smaller than a battalion force would be bound to be absorbed into an American formation and the whole political point of having a Commonwealth Contingent

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

would be lost. The paper also included a proposal that after withdrawal Britain should appoint a liaison officer of reasonable seniority in order to maintain contact with the UN Command.¹⁰⁵

By this time the scope of the US military commitment in Korea was being re-assessed by the National Security Council. The policies concerning US defence responsibilities shifted as political as well as military developments changed the situation in Korea. NSC 5702 advocated the retention of US forces. It concluded that, pending a political settlement, and in the absence of a renewal of hostilities, and conditional upon satisfactory cooperation by the ROK in carrying out its agreements with the US, the US should continue to deploy in Korea two US infantry divisions and one fighter-bomber wing with necessary support forces. It was also proposed to convert four ROK divisions from active to reserve status. The saving in military funds from this conversion, however, should not be regarded as preparation for further reductions in ROK active military forces.¹⁰⁶

The proposal for the withdrawal of the Commonwealth Contingent had already been mentioned informally to Dulles by Selwyn Lloyd in December, 1956, when they met in Paris, and was discussed further with Dulles by the Minister of Defence in Washington in January, 1957. On both occasions Dulles indicated that the US would reluctantly accept such a decision but that it was hoped that some facade of British representation with the UN Forces would be maintained, e.g. in the shape of liaison officers. The decision on the

¹⁰⁵PRO FO371 127621 FK1192/6 Ministry of Defence to F.O., 25 January 1957.

¹⁰⁶NA RG273 NSC 5702/1 US Policy toward Korea, 18 March 1957.

total withdrawal was finalised by obtaining US concurrence. Had it not been for the Suez crisis, it might have happened the previous year. The Defence Brief prepared by the Foreign Office for the Bermuda Conference in March 1957, included the government's decision. It was a straightforward message that the British government had decided to withdraw their contingent from the UN Forces in Korea for financial reasons.¹⁰⁷ By emphasising the financial reasons the Foreign Office gave the Americans assurance that there would be no diminution of their support for the ROK or the objectives of the UN in working for a united, independent and democratic Korea.¹⁰⁸ The retention of a liaison mission and agreement to raise the status of the UK mission in Seoul and the ROK mission in London to that of Embassies were also included.¹⁰⁹

General Lemnitzer, Commander-in-Chief, UNC, expressed his regret at losing the Commonwealth Contingent in his command. He said he realised there were economic factors which had caused the decision, and hoped nothing would prevent the effective setting-up of a British Liaison Mission in Korea after the troops were withdrawn. He also attached great importance to this token representation, which would visibly demonstrate continued British participation in the UN commitment in Korea.¹¹⁰

The governments of the UK, Australia and New Zealand agreed to the

¹⁰⁷PRO FO371 127621 FK1192/17 Bermuda Conference, Defence Brief by Foreign Office, Forces in Korea, Brief no.SB6, 7 March 1957.

¹⁰⁸PRO FO371 127621 FK1192/22 F.O. to Washington, 28 March 1957.

¹⁰⁹PRO FO371 127621 FK1192/21 F.O. to Washington, 28 March 1957.

¹¹⁰PRO FO371 127624 FK1192/85 H.J. Evans, Seoul to P.G.F. Dalton, F.O., 17 June 1957.

establishment of a small liaison mission at the main headquarters of the UN Command in Korea. The Mission was to operate with effect from 1 September 1957. On that date responsibility for representing the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff at Headquarters, UNC, would pass from the senior member of the service attaches at the British Embassy in Tokyo to the senior Commonwealth Liaison Officer, Commonwealth Liaison Mission in Korea.¹¹¹ The War Office mapped out the provision of personnel: the head of liaison staff was to be the UK-Commander, Brigadier Coad, Commonwealth Contingent Korea; the naval representative was to be the existing UK Royal Navy liaison officer; army and air representatives were from Australia and New Zealand; the chief administrative officer was a UK Army officer. The total number of personnel was thirty five including five administrative officers.¹¹²

The Canadians declined to participate in the Mission, although they had a Liaison Officer (Major) in Korea. The Canadian government had been in favour of grouping Commonwealth forces, but opposed to identifying them as Commonwealth.¹¹³ This had a great deal to do with the Canadian desire to manage their own affairs free of the impositions of a joint formation of a Commonwealth position. It was the Canadian forces among the Commonwealth countries who most heavily relied upon the American supply system and who had often been trained in America, yet who most resolutely demanded the withdrawal of forces. As early as 1955, the Canadian government had pressed for the

¹¹¹PRO FO371 127624 FK1192/117 W.O., Directive to the Senior Liaison Officer, Commonwealth Liaison Mission Korea, 14 August 1957.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³J. Grey, *op.cit.*, p.93

complete withdrawal from Korea. Their greater reliance on the Americans reflected their closer proximity to the US, but it was to be a source of great difficulty with the other Commonwealth governments. The fact that the Canadians were not a member of the Commonwealth Liaison Mission caused some embarrassment.

From the end of October 1957 the Commonwealth Liaison Mission was accommodated in the United Nations Compound camp on the south eastern boundary of Seoul. This placed the Mission reasonably near Headquarters UNC and the Military Armistice Commission Secretariat and Headquarters Eighth US Army which were all located in Seoul. The Liaison Mission was also closely linked with the Military Armistice Commission. Successive UN Commanders refused to allow officers below the rank of Brigadier-General to be members of the Liaison Mission, and downgrading of the rank of the head of the Mission meant the loss of the Commonwealth seat on the Military Armistice Commission. The Liaison Mission's relations with the US forces were generally cordial, as close contact with the US forces was always regarded as important.¹¹⁴

On 7 February 1958 the government of the PRC announced that they fully supported withdrawal of all foreign forces from North and South Korea simultaneously.¹¹⁵ Dulles, in a press conference a few days later, repudiated the Chinese statement and stressed that the US did not plan any reduction of US-UN forces. He added, however, that

¹¹⁴PRO FO371 141565 FK1194/1 Report by the British Commonwealth Liaison Mission in Korea, Covering the period; Sept.1957 - Sept.1958, 12 January 1959.

¹¹⁵PRO FO371 133663 FK1015/10A F.O. to Washington, text of Chinese statement of 7 February, 10 February 1958.

there could be some reduction in the South Korean forces.¹¹⁶ The US government had initially proposed to disband four ROK divisions during 1958 in order to reduce the large military burden involved in maintaining ROK military forces at such levels. But the proposal proved to be too drastic, especially when President Rhee violently opposed the reduction of forces. The intelligence report of the State Department in February 1958 also warned that any severe reduction in US or ROK forces would entail a 'psychological shock' on the ROK-US alliance, and recommended a modernization programme involving the reorganization of the two US divisions and certain improvements in the equipment of the Korean forces which would eventually permit a reduction in ROK forces without weakening Korea's security.¹¹⁷

The Chinese statement calling for a simultaneous withdrawal was followed by another significant statement which resulted in a shift in Communist policy on Korea: the North Koreans and the Chinese announced on 19 February that Chinese troops would be withdrawn from North Korea and the withdrawal could be completed by the end of 1958. The Chinese warned that if the US government and the 'Syngman Rhee clique' interpreted their initiative as a sign of weakness and attempted to take advantage of it, they would certainly 'meet with unthinkable consequences.' A subsequent statement issued by the Chinese People's Volunteers announced their readiness to come back into Korea at any time if there were a renewal of hostilities.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶PRO FO371 133663 FK1015/8 Washington to F.O., 11 February 1958.

¹¹⁷NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research and Analysis. Intelligence Report no.7654, 6 February 1958.

¹¹⁸NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Peiping radio broadcast, 7 February 1958.

The US thought that the Communist decision was based primarily on propaganda considerations, although it might have been influenced by a number of factors, including the economic burden imposed by the maintenance of large Chinese forces in North Korea. By this 'relatively safe' withdrawal across the Yalu, the US believed the Chinese hoped to support the Soviet propaganda offensive and gain international credit for themselves (and incidentally remove the 'aggressor' label which had been one of the principal reasons given for their exclusion from the UN). The Americans feared this would put the West on the defensive in Korea and weaken popular support for the ROK government by seeming to offer a new opportunity for unification. Another factor considered by the US was that the Communists might be genuinely alarmed by US atomic weapons capabilities in South Korea and wished to bring pressure on the US to reduce or eliminate them. The US believed that the Soviets were certainly reluctant to provide either the Chinese or the North Koreans with similar weapons.¹¹⁹

The other nations which took part in the Korean hostilities (with the exception of the ROK) confined their public reactions to very brief statements welcoming the Chinese decision to withdraw. In private, they concentrated their attention on developing a coordinated position through diplomatic consultations. The US was concerned that the general indifference existing in much of the free world to the UN policy of a peaceful settlement of the Korean problem and the susceptibility of the Koreans to any 'new' move to break the deadlock would ensure that the Chinese moves would have considerable

¹¹⁹NA Lot Files. Office of Intelligence Research and Analysis. Intelligence Report no.7687 Implications of Communist Chinese Withdrawal from North Korea, 17 March 1958.

appeal in the long run.¹²⁰

The Chinese withdrawal took place by stages. The first units departed on 30 April 1958 and the remainder completed their withdrawal in November.¹²¹ There were no further military moves during 1959. The US believed that the troop withdrawal and accompanying gestures were essentially part of a coordinated propaganda manoeuvre by Peiping, Pyonyang, and Moscow, and that the Communists had no intention of taking further concrete steps which were likely to weaken their position in North Korea or lead to Korean unification on anything but Communist terms. As long as the Communists maintained their policy of obtaining unification based on their own terms of elections and continued the propaganda offensive, the US seemed to have every reason to remain in South Korea. Britain supported the US line that to withdraw all UN troops before genuinely free elections took place throughout Korea would be too risky.¹²²

In Britain the continuing difficulties of maintaining British overseas commitments affected even their limited military presence in Korea. In late 1958 the War Office raised the 'old issue' of reducing its burden by cutting the total manpower at its disposal and sought a Foreign Office view on the possibility of withdrawing the Liaison Mission. It was recalled that, back in early 1957 when the Mission was first proposed, it was 'at the special request of the Americans' that the Mission was set up with the object of avoiding

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²PRO FO371 141535 FK1015/16 Minute by P.G.F.Dalton, 20 March 1959.

a complete British withdrawal.¹²³ It was therefore assumed by the British military that the Mission would stay in Korea only for a couple of years.¹²⁴ The Foreign Office continued to maintain that the Mission served a political purpose out of all proportion to its small size. Moreover, they did not want to give the Americans the impression that their support for them in Korea was wavering, especially when the Americans were beginning to feel that their allies should take a somewhat larger share generally of the burden of defence against Communism.¹²⁵ To withdraw the Mission therefore 'would be false economy of the worst kind, since we would lose far more in American goodwill than we could possibly gain in cash or manpower.'¹²⁶

While the reorganization of the US divisions was carried out during 1959, the UN forces which amounted to two US divisions, a Turkish brigade, a Thai company and a few liaison groups including the British, remained in South Korea throughout 1960. The Liaison Mission finally left Korea in 1961.

With the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement, attention in Washington, London and other Commonwealth countries had quickly turned to the future of the UN military commitment in Korea. Although all the governments with a military contribution desired

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴PRO FO371 141565 FK1194/2 Major General R.W.Craddock, Director of Military Cooperations, W.O. to D.F.MacDermot, Far Eastern Department, 7 January 1960.

¹²⁵PRO FO371 141565 FK1194/2 D.E.MacDermot, F.O. to R.W.Craddock, W.O., 27 December 1958.

¹²⁶PRO FO371 141565 FK1194/2(A) A.J.de la Mare, Washington to P.Dalton, F.O., 12 January 1960.

a reduction, there was general recognition that there would be no immediate running-down of forces, and that some military strength had to be maintained in case of a resumption of hostilities. Given the possible aggression of either the Communists or Rhee, security in the region was the most urgent matter to the Americans. The US was not prepared to accept Communist control over the whole of Korea, nor to risk a general war initiated by the ROK. UNC forces, therefore, should stay in Korea in order to prevent any likely threat to the equilibrium as long as the division in Korea remained advantageous to the overall US post-war strategy.

Once it became certain, especially since the Geneva Conference, that Rhee would never compromise over the early Chinese withdrawal from North Korea, the US decided to tie the issue of foreign forces withdrawal to that of a satisfactory Korean political settlement. If Rhee continued to argue for a unilateral withdrawal of the Chinese, that would give the Communists the propaganda advantage. On the other hand, the Communists' acceptance of troop withdrawal, separate from the issue of unification, would lead to an evacuation of the UNC, and that would endanger the UN peace process by allowing Rhee a certain degree of leeway to go ahead and sabotage the Armistice. Moreover, if UN forces were removed before the election, the UNC would not be able to determine whether the Communists had implemented the agreement by accepting the results.

The overall American strategic and political position in the Far East and the situation in a divided Korea called for long-term military planning. Congressional pressure as well as the nuclear option provided grounds for withdrawal of US ground forces. The

US would maintain a strong military posture in the Far East by providing effective support to the ROK. The Mutual Defence Treaty, in a large sense, was given to the ROK as a *quid pro quo* for its cooperation. The strengthened position of the ROK in turn allowed redeployment of the bulk of US forces. But the US was certainly discontented with the similar move of the Commonwealth countries to reduce their forces. The cost of containing Communism was dear, and the 'flavour' of the United Nations and increased cooperation among the allied governments were continuously required. This became a source of strain in Anglo-American relations.

The British military commitment in support of the US policy in Korea was, as Oliver Franks once pointed out, based upon the American assumption that 'we are the only dependable ally and partner'.¹²⁷ This view was reflected in the fact that the British objective in Korea was not basically a military one. The deployment of the British Commonwealth Forces was largely governed by the idea that this would give Britain some say in the conduct of the US-UN operation. The Foreign Office also recognised the need to line up the Commonwealth so that collectively they would have a real influence upon the Americans. Keeping the forces in Korea was fundamentally political and designed to give political cover to US military action.

However, the political argument of the Foreign Office conflicted with that held in military circles which believed eventual withdrawal was inevitable. The Chiefs of Staff tried to use the opportunity presented by Korea to press for closer coordination of Anglo-

¹²⁷*Documents on British Policies Overseas*. Series II, Volume IV, No.25 Franks to Younger, 23 July 1950.

American military planning not just in Korea but on a global scale. However, they were to be disappointed if they had hoped for a return to the structured closeness of the old wartime Combined Chiefs of Staff organisation.¹²⁸ They believed their support and contribution were undervalued. So was this why they came round to accepting withdrawal.

The political advantages strenuously argued by the Foreign Office gradually diminished especially after the Geneva Conference. The British were hardly in a position to influence the conduct of the US-UN. Despite the effort to dissuade the Americans, the British soon realized that the nuclear option was considered by the Americans as an attractive alternative to conventional warfare. As one British official said:

The Americans presented us with a *fait-accompli* and made it abundantly clear that we could like it or else. It is a pity that we did not take the 'or else'.¹²⁹

The Suez Crisis had an impact on all aspects of Anglo-American relations including the Korean problem even though the rift produced by the British action in Egypt was soon healed. In the short term the need to avoid further offending the Americans led the Foreign Office to delay the plan to remove British forces from Korea. In the long term, however, the Suez operations revealed the difficulties in mounting large scale operations without the Americans while the whole Egyptian affair indicated the undesirability of retaining ground forces overseas. The financial constraints faced by Britain also led to the military's acceptance of a much reduced army and a greater reliance

¹²⁸Yasamee Heather, 'Britain, Korea and the politics of power by proxy'. Occasional Papers, No.5 Korea, FCO Historical Branch. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, April 1992.

¹²⁹PRO FO371 121130 FK1193/74 A.J.de la Mare, Washington to C.T.Crowe, 4 December 1956.

on a strategic reserve. The manpower cuts in the immediate post-Suez defence White Paper were effectively to rule out the continuation of a British military presence in Korea.

The whole point of keeping forces in Korea became significantly weakened and the price to maintain such a nominal force became too high. Britain and Commonwealth countries wished to end their exorbitant military commitment when the meagre political gain was outweighed by other considerations - strategic and financial. The prospect of continuing deadlock in Korea and the deteriorating situation in Vietnam quickly shifted the focus from Korea to Indo-China. It became critical for Britain to protect Singapore and Malaya where they had greater and more direct interests.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Economic Reconstruction:

US and UN Aid, 1953-1960

During the political military turmoil which followed the Armistice Agreement, attention turned to the perplexing problems of bringing relief to the millions of South Korean war victims and of restoring the country's shattered economy. Little was discussed concerning Korea's struggle for economic recovery before 1953, yet the reconstruction of Korea was as much a part of the purpose of the United Nations as was the fight on the battlefield. Economic rehabilitation was primarily a task for the Koreans but it was too great to be undertaken without foreign aid. There was aid flowing through two main channels: the direct aid given by the US and the aid given by the United Nations.

From 1945 until the beginning of 1949, American aid to Korea, like aid to Japan, was carried on under the Army's GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) programme. It served as an adjunct to the occupation tasks of pacification, demilitarization, and democratization. Justified under the formula of 'preventing disease and unrest', GARIOA aid contained at least a hint of the notion of using economic aid to help build healthy political conditions in the occupied countries, a purpose that was to become especially important for US aid in later years. \$326 million of GARIOA funds, largely for consumption relief, were allocated in this period to Korea, compared with

approximately \$1.2 billion aid to Japan for similar purposes.¹

In January 1949 the US extended diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Korea. The military occupation of South Korea was formally terminated, and the responsibility for US aid was transferred from the Army to the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA). The emphasis of aid shifted from relief to recovery, or more precisely, from the limited aim of maintaining minimal civilian consumption to the broader aim of increasing production in order to raise exports, reduce imports, and eliminate the need for external assistance. GARIOA aid had been conceived in terms of the policy objective of facilitating the military occupation. By contrast, the more comprehensive objective of ECA aid was 'to assist the Korean people in establishing a sound economy and educational system as essential bases of an independent and democratic state.'²

When the war broke out in June 1950, the aid programme reverted substantially to its pre-1949 orientation. Some of the new funds were transferred to the Army for procuring commodities for civilian consumption, and some were used to meet the short-term needs of agriculture and industry for working capital- for example, to obtain fertilizer and cotton. However, the programme's emphasis on capital formation had to be cut back. In effect, after the outbreak of the war, the objective of economic aid reverted from recovery-and-development to immediate relief. In April 1951, economic aid to Korea,

¹Charles Wolf, *Foreign Aid: Theory and Practice in Southern Asia*. Princeton University Press, 1960. p.19

²*Ibid.*, pp.47-48

apart from the relief activities of the UN Command, was formally suspended.³

From 1951 to 1961, America's major aid activities were grouped together under a label with a distinctly military connotation - *mutual security*. The fundamental assumption underlying the aid programme was that rearmament of the free world was necessary for American security. Economic assistance in some form should be extended to preserve the achievements of existing aid programmes if they were imperilled by the new burdens of rearmament.⁴ The Mutual Defence Assistance Programme, which was originally planned for Southeast Asia in fiscal year 1951, was expanded as a result of the recommendations of a State-Defence-ECA military survey mission, shortly after the North Korean attack. The Mutual Security Programme began, in fiscal year 1952, in an international environment dominated by the Korean War. The Programme's authorizing legislation was repeated each year in the annual Mutual Security Act (1951-7).⁵

Aid work through the UN agency started soon after the Korean War broke out. The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, UNKRA, was established by the UN resolution on 1 December 1950, when it appeared that an end of the war was imminent. It was directed by an Agent General (Lt. General J.B. Coulter, US Army) and advised by an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the governments of the US, the UK, Canada, India, and Uruguay. No less than thirty-nine nations contributed to the Agency, and UNKRA's staff consisted of nations of almost as many countries.

³Ibid., pp.49-50

⁴David A. Baldwin, *Foreign Aid and American Foreign Policy*. New York, 1966. p.24

⁵Charles Wolf, *op.cit.*, pp.108-109, 145 and 179

As the war dragged on, however, UNKRA did not commence operations on a significant scale until 1952. By then the line between the North and the South was stabilized and it was agreed that the time had come when UNKRA could initiate a reconstruction programme. A target of \$71 million was set, a joint plan was agreed upon with the Korean Government, and UNKRA's first programme -that for 1952-3 - was born.⁶ With the coming of the armistice, the opportunities for effective action increased, and it was followed by two more larger plans, one for the year 1953-4 and one for 1954-5. After rather a hesitant start, therefore, complicated by organizational difficulties and by the not altogether helpful attitude of the South Korean Government, reconstruction work under the Agency, UNKRA, started to make fairly rapid progress.⁷

The aid programme in Korea was administered from three funding sources: namely, the UNKRA, Civilian Relief in Korea administered by the US Army Department, and the aid programme administered by the Foreign Operations Administration under the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command. The main burden of aid was borne by the US, both in the form of direct aid for relief and as a main contributor to UNKRA. Apart from UNKRA, which was financed by other member governments as well as the US, Civilian Relief in Korea and the FOA were regarded as US direct aid. The US direct aid was used by the Civil Assistance Command of the United Nations Forces (KCAC) to

⁶Sir Arthur Rucker, 'Korea - The Next Stage.' *International Affairs*. R.I.I.A. July, 1954.

⁷General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), Tenth session, no.18 (A/2936): Report of the Agent-General of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency for the period 1 Sept. 1954 to 30 June 1955.

assist the Koreans primarily in the field of relief.⁸ With this money, food, clothing, medical supplies, consumer goods, and raw materials were imported, whereas UNKRA's money was used primarily for long-term reconstruction plans such as rebuilding mines and factories, restoring the agricultural and fishing industries, repairing communications, and rehabilitating social services.

When the Eisenhower Administration took over the formulation of the 1954 programme in January 1953, there was no sign of abatement in the conflict in Korea nor in Indo-China. If the signs of communist detente had some influence on the European segment of the Mutual Security Programme, they had little influence on the programme in Asia.⁹ The Mutual Security Act's military orientation was largely unchanged. The vivid recollection of the 'China lesson' helped to increase military aid in Asia. By early 1954, however, the new administration, witnessing the temporary cessation of hostilities in Korea, felt the need to give the Mutual Security Programme a fresh look. The basic assumption supporting the aid programme was unalterable, namely that any form of aid - economic and military - was conducted in order to enhance the ultimate security of the US vis-a-vis Communism. Yet the American policy makers came to acknowledge and stress the difference between efforts to obtain short-term military results and those to gain long-term benefits through economic cooperation with the aid recipient. They began to conceive of the Cold War in terms of a long-term competition with the Communist bloc rather than a short-term military one. Foreign aid was a useful policy for winning over less-developed nations. Countries bordering the Sino-Soviet bloc deserved special

⁸Sir Arthur Rucker, *op.cit.*, pp.313-314

⁹Charles Wolf, *op.cit.*, p.157

attention, e.g., Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Turkey, and Thailand.¹⁰ The Mutual Security Programme in Asia, despite its military orientation in other areas, accorded considerably more emphasis to non-military economic-development than it had done since its first fiscal year.¹¹

Conceptually, the distinction between military aid and economic aid was based on the differing purposes or objectives motivating the two categories of aid: military capabilities, conceived primarily in terms of force goals relevant for meeting various local war contingencies or actualities, in the case of military aid; and political stability, and, occasionally, political loyalty and friendship, in the case of economic and technical aid. Each of these broad objectives in fact applied fairly generally to the corresponding aid category for all recipient countries.¹² In physical content, the distinction was between 'military hardware and training' allocated to particular types of forces, and 'civilian software' allocated directly or indirectly to particular sectors of the economy. In reality, however, this distinction was hardly appropriate. By the time the Mutual Security Act of 1953 was passed in the US Congress, it became more difficult and less meaningful to maintain the same distinctions. The Mutual Security Programme retained its previous orientation and content, but the problem of identification of objectives and interpretation of allocations could no longer be based simply on a distinction between military aid (MDAP -Military Defence Assistance Programme), involving hardware and training, and economic and technical aid, involving all other software and services. For, beginning in

¹⁰David A. Baldwin, *op.cit.*, p.25

¹¹Charles Wolf, *op.cit.*, p.179

¹²*Ibid.*, p.159

fiscal 1954, increasing amounts of non-MDAP aid acquired objectives virtually identical to those associated with MDAP aid.¹³

Following the passing of the Mutual Security Act of 1953, the initial US four-year(1954-7) economic aid programme in Korea was launched. In it the US set out the objectives of its Korean aid programme: to stabilize and then to rehabilitate and develop the Korean economy to make possible eventual self-sufficiency. In addition, the aid programme was to make possible the support of the Republic of Korea Army, one of the largest and best free world fighting forces in the Far East. Effective prosecution of the aid programme would be an important factor in giving the Korean people a stake in the maintenance of peace, and it would serve to demonstrate to the world that 'we were interested in the welfare of the people who were standing with us'.¹⁴

Eisenhower had sent Henry J. Tasca to Korea in April 1953, to investigate ways and means of strengthening the Korean economy. In accordance with the recommendations made by Tasca, Congress subsequently approved the use of \$200 million for rehabilitation and economic support of the Republic of Korea, to be derived from the savings in the Department of Defence budget that would result from the cessation of hostilities. Tasca estimated that approximately \$1 billion would be necessary to rehabilitate Korea.¹⁵ This aid was to be made available over a four-year period and

¹³Ibid., p.161

¹⁴NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Morton to the Secretary, 12 December 1953.

¹⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Economic Aspects, Briefing on Korea, September 1953.

would supplement and be closely coordinated with Korean export earnings, the UNKRA aid, and assistance administered by the US Army. It was expected that this external aid would result in a substantial improvement in the stability of the Korean economy.

Close attention was given to the organizational arrangements. Tasca studied the problem thoroughly and his basic recommendations were embodied in an organizational memorandum approved by the President on 7 August 1953.¹⁶ It stated that an economic coordinator should be appointed to serve on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, UNC, whose function was to coordinate and integrate the US and UN aid programmes and develop an overall programme with the Koreans including the use of Korean resources.¹⁷ The Economic Coordinator was at the same time the Foreign Operations Administration representative in Korea, paid by FOA, and had the privilege of reporting on operational matters directly to the FOA. In mid-August 1953, Tyler Wood was appointed as the Economic Coordinator.

The work of UNKRA and the FOA was so closely interrelated that the UNKRA, which was undertaking a much smaller and more specific job, in fact preserved only nominal independence. The Agent General of UNKRA, General Coulter, and the Economic Coordinator, Wood, consulted each other not only on the programme itself but on the organizational arrangements. The arrangements, expressed in a letter from General Coulter to Wood, were that the Economic Coordinator was responsible for the

¹⁶Ibid., p.9

¹⁷NA RG59 Records of the Department Assistant Secretary of State for Far East Economic Affairs, 1951-57, 17 December 1953.

determination of overall requirements and priorities, the allocation of responsibility for appropriate fields of activity and projects to the various implementing agencies, and the determination of policies on pricing and credit and on local currency and their application. Negotiations with the Korean Government on broad policy and programme matters were also conducted by the Economic Coordinator on behalf of UNKRA.¹⁸

Between 1953 and 1954 the UNKRA programmes were sharply accelerated, from a total of \$70 million to \$130 million, and covered altogether seventy-four projects, devoted mainly to the restoration of the basic industries of Korea: agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, light industry and the power it needed.¹⁹ A limited number of projects to aid the restoration of the social services were also included.²⁰ The UNKRA also had a programme of aid for voluntary agencies. Catholic, Episcopalian, Church of England, Presbyterian, and other church missions had for long been working there as well as many other international and national agencies, such as the Friends, the YMCA and YWCA, Red Cross Societies, and Church World Service. Hospitals, clinics, and orphanages, run by these organizations, were doing much to care for the destitute and sick. A central committee known as KAVA (the Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies) met regularly in Seoul and grants were made by UNKRA to the agencies. UNKRA also helped to meet the freight charges of supplies imported into Korea by the agencies.²¹

¹⁸Ibid., pp.8-9

¹⁹NA RG59 795.00/8-2553 Briefing on Korea for Nixon's visit, September 1953.

²⁰Sir Arthur Rucker, *op.cit.* p.320

²¹Ibid., p.317

For the administration of UNKRA's programmes, the Agent General set up his Headquarters in Seoul, with an international staff of some two hundred people. In addition, UNKRA had a Liaison and Procurement Office in the United Nations Building in New York and small liaison offices in Tokyo and Geneva. UNKRA had also sought to assist the overall reconstruction programme by recruiting and seconding to KCAC (Civil Assistance Command of the United Nations Forces) a limited number of technical staff. The Agent, General Coulter, adopted a policy of relying on the Koreans as a means of lowering administrative costs, and employing technicians, wherever possible, as temporary consultants rather than as long-term staff members.

The most serious obstacle to UNKRA's continuing progress was financial problems. If political and administrative difficulties could be overcome by goodwill and patience, financial difficulties could not be overcome so easily, and the tasks could not be accomplished without adequate financial support. Sir Arthur Rucker, one of the UNKRA members, stressed, at his Chatham House address on 2 February 1954, how urgently UNKRA needed financial support from its member governments. Although the US government was contributing some 70% of the cost of UNKRA's programmes, he argued that the reconstruction work should not be left to one nation only, because the UN created UNKRA. 'If it failed, Korea might be not merely the latest test of the United Nations, but the last.'²²

The difficulties in finding funds were related to the decreasing enthusiasm of the member governments once the Korean war was over. This made programme objectives

²²Ibid.

extremely difficult to achieve. The main reason for UNKRA's lagging activity was its inability to get enough funds from member governments. A contribution campaign was undertaken through the UN. It was, however, clear to the officials in the US State Department in January 1954 that the necessary funds were unlikely to be raised. The difficulty of raising money meant that it had to change its original budget figure, with a consequent abandonment or, at best, postponement of badly needed reconstruction projects. The status of contributions to UNKRA as of January 20, 1954 was as follows:²³

	Amount (\$000)	Percentage
US contribution	65,750	70.9
Other contributions	26,970	29.1
Total	92,720	100.0

Among the other contributions the British share was the largest. Britain was represented on the five member advisory committee, and the Foreign Office was kept informed of developments in UNKRA's activities. Britain, however, was far from enthusiastic and unwilling to make any serious commitment to the economic construction work in Korea; this reluctant attitude became obvious later in 1955 when the US asked for an additional financial contribution. Across the Atlantic, the general tendency to cut down the US budget did not make the aid work any easier. The outlook of the third aid programme - that for fiscal year 1954-5 - was thus precarious. The foreign aid and foreign exchange resources for 1954 and 1955 were estimated by the State Department, and the

²³NA RG59 795.00/1-2854 The status of contributions to UNKRA, 28 January 1954.

totals of \$602 million and \$528 million respectively were distributed as follows:²⁴

Sources	Amount(\$millions)	
	FY54	FY55
Foreign Operations Administration Aid	235	200
Civilian Relief in Korea (Army Relief)	58	51
Armed Forces Assistance programme	15	--
UN Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA)	78	110
Direct Military Support	81	52
Voluntary Contributions (CARE etc.)	28	15
Korean Foreign Exchange	122	120
Total	602	528

The US Treasury felt that a \$602 million programme for FY54 was excessive. The US Bureau of the Budget understood that the \$602 million programme was illustrative and would be modified as the programme progressed. As the Bureau was anxious to cut down its budget, it was stated that anything additional to \$200 million for FOA was 'out of the question'(FOA put in for \$235 million.)²⁵ Their appropriations were much less than estimations by the State Department. The Budget Bureau also recommended that the

²⁴NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Morton to the Secretary, The Korean Aid Programme, 17 December 1953.

²⁵Ibid.

UNKRA appropriation be transferable to FOA if lagging contributions from other nations made a US contribution excessive. A joint press release in Seoul following the signing of an aid agreement mentioned a FY54 programme totalling around \$500 million.²⁶

Although it was originally planned that UNKRA would take the lead in long-term industrial projects and the Foreign Operations Administration in sustaining imports, UNKRA's shortage of funds produced certain changes. Moreover, FOA was not able to contribute financially towards a purely UNKRA project. In March 1954 therefore KCAC (Korean Civil Assistance Command) was taking over from UNKRA a plan to build two thermal electric plants, at a cost of some \$30 million. On the other hand, the fertilizer plant, which UNKRA was to have built at leisure, was to become a joint UNKRA-FOA project and built at a greatly accelerated pace, with FOA contributing most of the money.²⁷

Despite the attempts to rebuild the economy through various projects, the outlook for 1954 was still gloomy. The fundamental cause of this was the low rate of imported aid goods: the actual importation of aid goods met only about 45 percent of the volume earlier assumed and severe inflation was entailed.²⁸ The shortfall in UNKRA imports accounted for around \$30 million of the decrease, and the remainder of the shortfall occurred in the FOA programme. The difficulties, as Tyler Wood noted, stemmed from

²⁶PRO FO371 110586 FK1103/1(A) W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 28 January 1954.

²⁷PRO FO371 113597 FK11345/4 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 4 March 1954.

²⁸NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Robertson to McClurkin, 15 February 1954.

the unrealistic estimates for arrival ratio and the failure to appreciate promptly enough the difficulties in initial organization and the retardation of procurement activity during the period of protracted aid agreement negotiations. Tyler Wood concluded that it was becoming increasingly questionable whether the three objectives of monetary stability, a 20-division army and a \$1 billion increase in gross national product in three or four years could be achieved with the level of aid currently available.²⁹

The most disturbing aspect of the problem, according to Tyler Wood, was the incompatibility of US economic objectives in Korea with the military programme, and this view was shared by the State Department. The basic facts were rather simple: the budgetary deficit resulting from defence expenditures was running at the rate of about \$200 million annually, whereas the aid programme to compensate for this deficit was in the order of \$275 million annually.³⁰ Thus about three quarters of the aid programme was in the nature of a defence support programme, and the remainder of the aid funds was used to compensate for credit expansion and finance the importation of investment goods.

In January 1954 there was a bill to amend four articles of the Korean Constitution dealing with economic affairs. The objects of the bill were officially described as: the encouragement of free enterprise, the attraction of domestic and foreign capital for investment, the establishment of a wider tax base through stimulation of a fair profit motive, the attainment of a balanced and healthy national economy, and of social justice

²⁹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Economic Aid Objectives in Korea, 15 February 1954.

³⁰Ibid., pp.2-3

for all.³¹ Most of these arguments appealed as strongly to the main opposition party, the Democratic Nationalist Party, as to the Liberals, but the bill was nevertheless cogently criticized in some quarters. The *Chosun Ilbo*, a middle-of-the-road paper, for instance, argued that if the Government really wished to liberalize the economy of the country it could have gone a long way towards doing so without any need for a constitutional amendment. The existing Constitution allowed much more scope for free enterprise than the Government had yet permitted in practice. In fact, a large proportion of vested property formerly owned by the Japanese was still under government control, although it could at any time be disposed of to private managements.³²

The Bill was introduced into the National Assembly but later withdrawn without a vote. The British officials in Seoul criticized the government for mishandling the case and losing prestige, and confirmed the original public impression that the bill was not really of very great importance after all. Moreover, it seemed most illogical that the government was with one hand proposing a constitutional amendment for the purpose of freeing the economy, and with the other introducing the bill to set up an Industrial Bank which was to monopolize the nation's financial operations under complete government control.³³

The background to the proposal to set up a new Industrial Bank goes back to the spring of 1950, when the National Assembly passed two laws, both drafted by an

³¹PRO FO371 110586 FK1103/1 W. Graham, Seoul to F.O., 28 January 1954.

³²*Chosun Ilbo*. Seoul, Korea. 25 January 1954.

³³PRO FO371 110586 FK1103/2 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 11 March 1954.

American banking expert, one establishing the Bank of Korea, and the other a General Banking Act. The Korean president promulgated the first law but not the second.³⁴ In this situation, the existing bank had not been able to make long-term loans. Moreover, the existing bank had long been under the effective control of the Prime Minister, Paik Tu-chin, who was its head before becoming successively head of the Bank of Korea, Finance Minister and Prime Minister. His control of the bank was notorious for exercising political discrimination in its loan policy, and he was often warned by his British adviser, William Reeve.³⁵ Reeve was a member of the UNKRA staff, originally seconded to the Ministry of Finance, who also worked chiefly for the Prime Minister.

The British objections to a new Industrial Bank were principally that it would not be under the control of the Monetary Board, but would be responsible solely to the Ministry of Finance, that it would probably make loans more for political reasons than for good economic reasons, and that it would hamper the efforts being made to restrict credit as part of the fight against inflation. However, several events combined to lessen these fears. Firstly, there was the fact that Ku Yong-su, Governor of the new Bank, was both a member of the Monetary Board, and a well-known opponent of the Prime Minister, Paik Tu-chin. It was unlikely that Ku would behave as a mere 'puppet' of Paik's, for as a member of the Monetary Board he would probably see that the new Bank steered a course in accordance with the policies of the Board. Secondly, another figure in the Ministry of Finance who was very much under influence of Paik, Hwang Ho-yong, resigned in order to stand in the General Election. Therefore, when Tyler Wood spoke in rather 'flattering

³⁴PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/3 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 12 January 1954.

³⁵PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/9 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 14 January 1954.

terms' that the new Bank would do a better job for the country, the objections of the British officials were toned down.³⁶

The British Embassy staff in Seoul maintained close contacts with the US/UN economic aid team. When the British Consul-General, Walter Graham, and the Economic Attache, L. Humphreys, met with the UNC Economic Coordinator, Tyler Wood, they all agreed that the danger of galloping inflation was growing very serious. Tyler Wood pointed out that there was a totally unfounded conviction among the ordinary Koreans that the US stood behind their bad economy trying to correct it. The British officials believed that the inflation was mainly because of huge military expenditure, as the budget deficit was about twice as great as the total income from taxation.³⁷

On the work of the Foreign Operations Administration, Tyler Wood pointed out that, from the practical point of view, there had been a great acceleration in the work of procurement, but relations with Korean officials were disappointingly little improved. He said that this was partly because FOA was 'a useful scapegoat' that could be blamed for all the economic ills of the country. It was true that the Administration and Wood personally were continually attacked in the Korean press. It was also known that Wood's relations with President Rhee were not good. Wood bitterly complained to Graham that the President constantly interfered in economic matters, even with the smallest details. Graham witnessed Tyler Wood freely talking about the President's deplorable ignorance of economics in a telephone conversation with P.H. Shincky, the Chairman of the National

³⁶PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/8 W. Graham, Seoul to F.O., 8 April 1954.

³⁷PRO FO371 110597 FK11345/4 W. Graham, Seoul to F.O., 4 March 1954.

Assembly and a member of the opposition party, and found it very surprising that Wood could criticise the President so freely to any Korean.³⁸

In April the US Congress was to meet in order to consider FOA appropriations for the following year. Unless Wood could say to the Congress that the Korean authorities were fully co-operating with him, Congress would be likely to vote money with provisions as to its use which the Koreans would find very hard to accept. Wood determined to try to make the Korean authorities realize that it was in their own interest to cooperate with him, although he was not optimistic that the Koreans would do so. It was commonly said in Seoul that no one ever had such difficulty in giving away two hundred million dollars as Wood was experiencing. Graham was personally sympathetic to this troubled Economic Coordinator and did not think Tyler Wood was to blame for his troubles. Even if Wood 'lacked the particular gift of warmth to which Koreans respond', the failure to cooperate with Wood lay squarely on the Koreans. Graham thought it was from the President's sensitiveness about national sovereignty, coupled with his ignorance of economics, that most of Wood's difficulties arose. It was 'a great tragedy for Korea that so well-meaning a representative of so generous a nation should be met so grudgingly and so foolishly'.³⁹

Wood explained the difficulty in which he was placed by the unrealistic attitude of the Korean authorities. He had no doubt that much of their limited foreign currency was spent on 'luxury projects'. He had great difficulty in finding out what the Koreans had done with their money. It was believed that the Korean authorities were contemplating

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

grandiose projects for steel mills and a trans-Pacific airline. 'Anything that the Japanese have, the Koreans feel they must have too.' It was not an easy task for the US and the ROK to deal with the deep distrust which seemed to be the basis of many difficulties they experienced. There was the attitude of many American high military and civil officials who believed that the 'ROKS' (as they called the Koreans) were incompetent and corrupt and would, without the tightest of reins, squander American aid funds wastefully and dishonestly. Some of the Korean officials had to try to tone down President Rhee's attitude that any interference, indeed any participation whatsoever by the Americans in Korean internal affairs, was an infringement of Korean sovereignty.

After somewhat acrimonious discussions, a draft for a new Combined Economic Board agreement between the US and Korean governments was watered down to an innocuous document headed 'A programme of economic reconstruction and financial stabilization'. Despite the inoffensiveness of the document, the Koreans were still suspicious of American 'interference'. The hostile attitude of the ROK towards the aid programme was often expressed in the press. In *Korea Times*' editorials and in a press interview with President Rhee, bitter complaints were directed against the US aid programme and Tyler Wood personally. It was also suggested that aid funds should be turned over to the ROK to administer, that FOA administrative costs were excessive, that nothing tangible was being accomplished, and that the ROK had an insufficient voice in the administration of the programme.⁴⁰

Wood pointed out to Washington that it was not feasible to turn over aid funds to

⁴⁰NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Robertson to McClurkin, 28 June 1954.

Korea because this would violate Congressional intent and it had never been done in any other country; it would result in wasteful spending, procurement in Japan would cease, and opportunities for corruption would increase. He added that compared with any other programme of US aid, the speed with which the Korean aid programme had been got under way was phenomenal. With respect to President Rhee's view on the lack of investment, Wood stated that the composition of the programme was agreed between himself and the ROK, and nearly 50% of the programme was for capital investment, 40% for raw materials and the balance for consumer goods.⁴¹

In contrast with the attack on Wood and his FOA programme, General Coulter of UNKRA was enjoying excellent relations with President Rhee. The fact that UNKRA was an international rather than a national body meant there could be no suspicion on the part of the Koreans that any of its actions could endanger the 'sovereign rights of the Republic'. More importantly, the UNKRA programme was concentrating on investment-type projects, which were welcomed by the Korean authorities, and leaving raw material imports to FOA. Its policies happened to coincide with those of President Rhee. However, its funds were insufficient to attempt the promotion of financial stabilization, and were used mainly for smaller projects. General Coulter submitted to the US State Department an aide-memoire pointing out that the projects planned for the year 1955-6 were based on an estimated budget, and the problem remained as how to raise enough funds to carry out those programmes. Although UNKRA maintained relatively smooth relations with the Korean authorities, the limited budget crippled its work. The State Department had to

⁴¹NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Review of Korean Economic Matters: Brief Summary of the Status of Economic Matters, 28 June 1954.

solicit contributions from outside the US. General Coulter urged that the US, UK, Canada and Australia, the main supporters of UNKRA, should decide upon a plan of support otherwise UNKRA would be compelled to make plans for liquidation.⁴²

While plans for new programmes for the fiscal year 1955-6 were in progress, the doubts grew whether UNKRA could continue its work with so little money and support from the member governments. By the autumn of 1954 the State Department began to accept the inevitability of its liquidation. In the Department's Working Group Report, produced on 30 August, Tyler Wood of FOA was ambivalent pointing out that, if on balance it was politically desirable that UNKRA continue in existence, the problems arising in the administration of an integrated aid programme should not be of major significance; but that, on the other hand, if there was no particular political advantage to retaining UNKRA, it would be preferable from the administrative standpoint to finish the business and simplify the aid organization.⁴³ Some in the State Department, such as Robertson and Young, were not convinced of the political advantage of keeping UNKRA, and thought that Tyler Wood understated the difficulties flowing from a multiplicity of aid organizations.

The argument that UNKRA was the symbol of collective United Nations action had some force. The US 'did not wish the world to think that it (sic) desirable for the US to pursue a lone course in the world', but the facts of the US economic effort in Korea were well known, and it was difficult to believe that any considerable political advantage

⁴²Ibid., UNKRA's future, p.2

⁴³NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Future of UNKRA, 1 September 1954.

would be achieved by continuing the organization for the purpose of expending \$10 million or \$20 million at the same time that the US was spending hundreds of millions in the same country. Also it was difficult to believe that the ending of UNKRA would provoke an adverse reaction from Korea in view of the 'insistent ungraciousness of that Government with respect to all aid programmes'. Perhaps the only trouble was that the Communists might make something from a propaganda standpoint over the discontinuance of UNKRA, but this was soon dismissed as 'a very small splash'.⁴⁴

The Memorandum circulated by the State Department in August 1954 raised some important questions concerning the American aid to Korea. The fundamental issue was that, assuming the aid programme would help to resist Communism, what would be the best method, from a political standpoint, of presenting and carrying it out. On the large question of economic aid to free countries of the Far East, the US did not believe that it could afford to confine its aid in Asia to a programme with purely military objectives. On the other hand, the US should not embark on a dramatic programme with broad social objectives, since over a period of years the cost would almost certainly be greater than the Congress or the people of the US would be willing to pay.⁴⁵ The difficulties in Korea were regarded as a 'convincing example' of the idea that 'dramatizing any new aid programme in Asia' could face hostility because the people of a recipient country came to expect early and spectacular results and were correspondingly disillusioned when the first year or two of the programme were found to yield little in concrete benefits. The US

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Carl Strom to the Assistant Secretary of State, Robertson, 2 August 1954.

would do well to avoid a repetition of the Korean problem elsewhere in Asia.

While the State Department set out a broader guideline by stressing the inseparable nature of the economic and military aid in order to attain greater effect with limited resources, the US Embassy in Seoul made a thorough report on the situation in Korea. Interestingly, the report highlighted the importance of undertakings in the field of economic aid being kept separate from military assistance. The argument was that the military assistance programme had the relatively clear-cut objective of creating effective military forces in a very short period of time, and this was being done in Korea. These programmes had a high degree of urgency and should not be encumbered with long-range economic aid programmes in which the objectives were much less clear-cut and much harder to attain. In order to obtain the full psychological and propaganda benefits from any economic aid programmes, these should be essentially creative rather than merely defensive.⁴⁶

The Embassy report supported the recommendation which had been submitted by the Economic Coordinator that the aid for the fiscal year 1955 should be made available not in the form of increased economic aid, but rather in the form of additional direct military support. In practical terms, this aid would take the place of defence expenditures by the Korean government and would correspondingly reduce the ROK's total military budget.⁴⁷ The reasoning behind this scheme was that it would reduce the direct inflationary effect of the ROK government's enormous defence expenditures, without

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp.4-5

having to cut back the long-term investment portion of the economic aid programme, and at the same time encourage the independent build-up of the Korean economy by reducing its dependency on the US.

The economic troubles, as British officials observed, basically stemmed from the fact that Korea maintained a far larger army and the defence expenditure than she could possibly support without American help, and that the help, owing to disagreements about its administration, was coming in much slower than was expected.⁴⁸ While Tyler Wood and Paik Tu-Chin, the representatives of the two countries on the Combined Economic Board were conferring in Washington and Seoul, the officials in the British Embassy anxiously hoped that they would reach an early agreement without which the prospect of halting inflation and stabilizing the economy seemed remote.

In the first half of September 1954, there was a massive increase in prices which greatly concerned the officials in the economic ministry as well as the general public. The impending withdrawal of most of the American forces from Korea had a double effect. It meant a reduction in dollars spent in Korea⁴⁹ and it also caused nervousness about an invasion by the Communists, and a consequent fall in the value of real estate, especially in Seoul, matched by a rise in the price of gold, US dollars, and other easily portable valuables. The result of all this was a fall in the Korean government's dollar holdings and

⁴⁸PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/18 W.Graham, Seoul to C.T. Crowe, 24 September 1954.

⁴⁹PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/18 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 24 September 1954.

a sharp rise in the hwan (Korean currency) note issue.⁵⁰

At the end of September Britain was relieved that the economic position had not outwardly deteriorated as rapidly as had been expected. During the second half of September prices rose only moderately. However, there were rumours that the Americans might cut off oil supplies as a means of putting pressure on the Korean authorities to settle financial matters. On 2 October a firm request by the Korean government was sent to Washington for six million dollars' worth of oil. Apparently the Americans denied any intention of restricting supplies, but the signs of oil shortage were looming: the price of petrol tripled in a few days, with few sellers; many industries, including fishing, that depended on petrol, lubricants or other oil came to a standstill at times.⁵¹ Besides the general unhealthiness of the economy, a shortage of ready money continued to cause problems in many other fields. The Korean authorities even had to postpone once more the assumption of administrative control over the regained territories north of the 38th parallel for lack of the necessary funds. Lack of money had also caused a further postponement of the plan to support the price of rice by buying large quantities at a controlled price.⁵²

The friction between the US and the ROK authorities would prevent any substantial improvement in economic climate. One of the major problems was that the

⁵⁰PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/17 W.Graham, Seoul to C.T. Crowe, No.127(E), 24 September 1954.

⁵¹PRO FO371 110586 FK1103/3 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 23 October 1954.

⁵²Ibid.

governments did not agree over the dollar-hwan conversion rate which affected the Korean income of dollars in exchange for hwan advanced to the US Forces. When, back in July 1950, an agreement was signed requiring that the South Korean government provide Korean currency to the UN forces, nothing was said in this agreement about repayment. The disagreement arising from Rhee's insistence on over-valuing the hwan was temporarily resolved just before the end of the Korean war: repayment of \$86 million was made in full and final settlement of the outstanding advances and arrangements were made that all future drawings of local currency by the UN forces should be promptly repaid.⁵³ The payments for local expenditures of UN forces together with US offshore purchases continued to represent Korea's largest source of foreign currency earnings, far exceeding the value of visible exports. However, the quarrel over the hwan conversion rate made all these transactions extremely difficult. It also exacerbated the situation of hyper-inflation, as un-repaid hwan advances represented a significant amount of the total note issue. As the UN Command had to continue to meet the repayment bill while troops were in Korea and there was no fixed exchange rate as such, the issue remained as one of the major contributory causes of friction between the US-ROK governments.

Another sector where the two governments were in dispute was the procurement area. There was the serious delay in the importation of aid goods under the Foreign Operations Administration Programme, and it was consequently slowing down the aid work. The low rate of imported goods - raw materials, agricultural products and textiles - was caused partly by the fact that the supply programme simply could not find these goods to be purchased. The aid goods came mainly from America and nearby Asian

⁵³W.D.Reeve, *The Republic of Korea*. Oxford University Press, 1963. pp.109-110

countries except Japan. The Korean government had been refusing to purchase goods from Japan as the US desired. During the earlier months in 1954 the Korean government had taken steps to bar purchases in Japan by persons using foreign currency owned and controlled by the Korean government. Without notice to FOA, the Korean authorities took similar action with respect to the use of FOA funds. The form in which this action was taken was to advertise for bids for procurement with FOA funds and to omit Japan in these advertisements as a source eligible to supply the goods. This action was inconsistent with the document (called Firm Request) which had been agreed and signed by representatives of the US and Korean governments at the time the request for allocation of the funds was forwarded to Washington. The action also was not in accord with the Procurement Authorization issued in Washington which specifically included Japan as one of the sources.⁵⁴

The Economic Coordinator, Tyler Wood, reported to the FOA that the Korean government was eliminating Japan as an authorized source from published invitations to bid for FOA procurement. The first application of the embargo consisted of the rejection of bids on textiles on the ground that the named suppliers were Japanese.⁵⁵ The officials in the Far Eastern Bureau of the State Department, including Drumright and Baldwin, agreed that US policy regarding procurement with FOA funds should be expressed in unequivocal terms. The US could not consent to trade discrimination involving

⁵⁴NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Memoranda provided to General Van Fleet by the Economic Coordinator in June 1954 covering important points at issue between the US and the ROK in the economic field, 13 June 1954.

⁵⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Korean Trade Discrimination with FOA Funds, 12 April 1954.

procurement with FOA funds. FOA was required to procure on the basis of all feasible sources to maximize the use of aid dollars. Non-discrimination in procurement was a basic element of all FOA programmes. The US was, therefore, insisting on the application of this policy to the Korean aid programme because 'it was incontestably in the best interests of Korea to procure at the cheapest source, or at a source which could effect the earliest delivery.'⁵⁶ As a result, the US held up Procurement Authorization for \$45 million worth of goods for which Firm Requests had been issued, pending an agreement with the Koreans on two points: a more realistic exchange rate for counterpart funds, and the inclusion of Japan in the list of countries where aid goods might be bought.⁵⁷

Historically, since the Japanese occupation in 1910, Korea had been largely dependent on Japan for items of manufactured goods, semi-finished goods and machinery. Korean traders were familiar with Japanese trade practices and had a tendency to purchase in Japan because of their familiarity with these. In addition, the Korean economy had been integrated closely with the economy of Japan, and to a large degree administrative and technical skills had been provided by the Japanese. This situation had led the ROK to fear that Korea might continue to remain far too dependent on Japan economically. The reluctance of the ROK to trade with Japan or to utilize Japanese technical skills, and the long-term problem of developing an adequate body of administrators and technicians among Koreans were further complicating factors.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibid., p.2

⁵⁷PRO FO371 FK1112/17 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 24 September 1954.

⁵⁸NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Briefing on Korea, September 1954.

The long-standing reasons for a state of tension between Japan and Korea and for Korean feelings against Japan were well known. The Korean Prime Minister once admitted to the National Assembly that the disagreement with the Americans over the 'procurement area', i.e. the inclusion of Japan as a source of supply, was partly responsible for the rise in prices, and the ruling Liberal Party subsequently recommended to the Government that Japan should no longer be excluded. This recommendation was, however, rejected, doubtless at President Rhee's personal insistence.⁵⁹

When Walter Robertson had invited Moyer, the FOA Regional Director for the Far East, to a State Department meeting for the purpose of initiating a close working relationship on the Far Eastern programme, there was a discussion of the views and fears of the Korean Government on the expenditure of Korean aid funds in Japan. While FOA had no programme in Japan, the importance of Japan in the economy of the Far East and its role as a source of procurement for various programmes called for continuing FOA attention. Robertson emphasized that the major purpose of the Korean aid programme was to build up the economic base in Korea. He sympathized with the Korean fear that too much emphasis might be placed on the indirect use of Korean aid funds to help to relieve the Japanese of some of their economic problems. He pointed out, however, that a failure to utilize the Korean aid funds as extensively as possible because of a fear of spending such funds in Japan to meet their current problems could well result in a failure to achieve lasting benefits in either country. Moyer indicated that he would carefully follow the development of the Korean aid programme with this point in mind. Both officials agreed that their views on the expenditure of Korean aid money in Japan should not be taken to

⁵⁹PRO FO371 110593 FK1112/18 W.Graham, Seoul to F.O., 24 September 1954.

reflect a lack of recognition of the serious economic problems with which the Koreans were confronted.⁶⁰

The economic dispute between the Koreans and the Americans concerned almost every aspect of aid operated in Korea. In an attempt to compel the Americans to pay for hwan advanced since the end of May at the old official rate, of 180 hwan to the dollar, the Koreans refused to advance any more hwan until outstanding advances were paid. This time the Americans openly retaliated by cutting off supplies of petroleum products and threatening to pay their Korean labour in US currency. The British embassy observed that, although the dispute caused a serious fall in the prestige of the Korean government, the majority of the 'thinking' Koreans seemed to support the line the government had been taking. The British officials took a sympathetic attitude to the Koreans believing that the accumulated amount of currency advanced to the UN Command certainly attributed to the devastating inflation. Besides, by insisting on various economic agreements with Korea, such as commodity price agreements, revision of trade relations and tariff policies, 'America was behaving like a Shylock. If America wished to aid Korea, she should do so open-heartedly and not commercially'.⁶¹

The US State Department prepared a memorandum as a basis for discussion at the meeting of the National Security Council ad-hoc Committee in November.⁶² It reaffirmed

⁶⁰NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. FOA-State Relationships on Mutual Security Programme in the Far East, 15 September 1954.

⁶¹PRO FO371 110597 FK11345/10 No.149, 12 November 1954.

⁶²NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Far Eastern Department to the Under Secretary, 12 November 1954.

the basic objective of US economic aid as supporting non-Communist governments in Asia in the interests of national security. Such a programme should be designed to counter Communist moves to extend their influence and control in Asia, including attempts to exploit economic weakness and the political instability which such weakness often caused. More rapid economic progress in the free countries of Asia where non-Communist governments were in power would minimize Communist opportunities to capitalize on poverty and discontent; it would also make the people of those countries less susceptible to Communist propaganda claims of economic progress attainable under Communist rule.⁶³

The NSC ad-hoc Committee not only supported the principles and ideology behind US economic aid but also made a few related suggestions: it was essential to recognize that the US capabilities to extend material aid were not unlimited and any new programmes must be undertaken only in the light of realistic assessments of such capabilities on a continuing basis; the major part of financial assistance should be extended on a repayment basis; Asian countries must clearly understand that their development was largely dependent upon their own efforts and resources and that external aid could only supplement such efforts.⁶⁴ In short, the scope of future economic aid in Asia was approved on a national level, and greater attention was focused upon the region as a whole. At the same time more concrete and practical programmes concerning each recipient country should be adopted, because the economic aid expenditure must be the most appropriate in terms of the basic objectives of the US. The ad-hoc Committee requested the Department of State and FOA jointly to prepare specific plans and

⁶³NA NSC 5429/2 Future US Economic Assistance For Asia, 20 November 1954.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp.4-5

programmes for implementing the recommendations of the Committee.

The British government, in an aide-memoire, gave the State Department certain 'preliminary and tentative' observations concerning future economic assistance to countries of Southeast Asia and the Far East. It supported in many respects the principles and ideology which characterized the discussions in the State Department and the National Security Council Committee. It, however, stressed that aid should be of a sufficient scale to catch Asian imagination and cover a sufficient period of years to enable Asian governments to have confidence in the future. Nothing should be done which did not have the full support of the Asians themselves. Contributing countries should not divest themselves of the control of their contributions in favour of an international body even if the latter represented contributing countries. Arrangements for the aid programme should provide for direct bilateral negotiations between recipients and contributors.⁶⁵

The British observations were accompanied by an overall assessment of what influenced reactions to US aid efforts. These included: suspicion of US motives and the fear in some countries that acceptance of economic assistance would create political obligations; very limited cooperation which had existed between Asian countries in the past; and the fact that most of the economic problems of these countries arose from their trade with the outside world. The British government proposed the establishment of a fund, pledged by contributing countries (with the US the biggest contributor), which would represent the maximum committed total, and against which bilateral credit

⁶⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. UK Government Proposals regarding Economic Aid Programme, 22 December 1954.

arrangements would be made for the extension of aid. The long-term development aid with this fund, however, should supplement and not compete with the IBRD and the IMF. Also strong US support for the use of sterling was requested.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the US Secretary of State formally requested a UK contribution to UNKRA for the FY 1955 from the British Foreign Secretary. By this time the Foreign Office was considering the termination of UNKRA. Eden replied to Dulles that the UK would make a further contribution under one of two conditions: the UK would contribute \$2.8 million immediately and contribute the balance of \$5.46 million (the balance of the UK's pledge) when further contributions from other sources would be available to make the UK total contribution equal 17.5% of the total; or the UK would contribute a final \$4.3 million and take steps to wind up UNKRA in an orderly fashion.⁶⁷

The State Department accepted the second UK alternative, believing that it was improbable that additional contributions could be expected which would make possible the \$5.46 million contributions which the UK offered as a first alternative. By this time it was obvious that funds were available only in the form of a US-UK contribution. The US was discouraged by the lagging contribution of the UK, and certainly not prepared to contribute an additional \$8.6 million in order to meet the total allocation because it would substantially exceed the 70% reservation in the US pledge. By accepting the British second condition the US initiated a chain of events which resulted in the liquidation of

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Liquidating of UNKRA in FY 1956, 7 December 1954.

UNKRA.⁶⁸

The failure of other member governments to pay pledged funds had already entailed the dismissal or transfer of expensively recruited staff. Uncertainty about UNKRA's future and whether pledged contributions would be honoured made any kind of planning difficult. Both the US and UK governments accepted the fact that there was no better alternative than to liquidate UNKRA, and believed that there was no unusually difficult problem inherent in the liquidation. At the UN the Canadians volunteered to stress the 'tremendous US bilateral aid to Korea, supplementing the unilateral assistance, in case the Communists attempted to make capital of the issue in the UN or to make an invidious comparison of the aid efforts in North and South Korea'. As for the relations with the ROK, the Americans thought that they could remind the ROK that 'it was not a US act which resulted in UNKRA's liquidation.'⁶⁹ In the meantime, the UNKRA Advisory Committee instructed the Agent General, Coulter, to continue his programme within the limitation of funds until the end of FY1955-56, and at the same time to submit a plan for liquidation. The UN finally passed a resolution on UNKRA's liquidation in 1955 and UNKRA's activities were transferred to the Foreign Operations Administration.

Meanwhile, the US-ROK Combined Economic Board continued to maintain its intention of 'establishing a stable economy' in Korea. Both parties assumed specific responsibilities and the principles of economic policy were outlined, with emphasis on stabilization measures, maximization of output, and progress toward a better trade balance.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p.2

Briggs, the US Ambassador in Seoul, critically commented in his report to the State Department that the suspicious non-cooperative attitude, inefficiency and corruption existing throughout the ROK Government and private enterprise must be drastically altered if any programme of American aid was to achieve its objective of economic viability for Korea in the long-run. The inauguration of the austerity programme in Seoul was only a 'lip service', and real accomplishments in the type of economic reform must follow. It attacked the 'bizarre and unsound economic theories' held by President Rhee, and urged the early settlement of the military hwan and aid goods pricing controversies. If the ROK was to fail to carry out its internal reform measures by reducing its military expenditure and increasing the economic input, the US might have no alternative but to re-examine aid commitments for the current year 1955 as well as the desirability of continuing further aid to a country that persisted in rendering such aid ineffective by its own actions (or lack of actions).⁷⁰

Briggs' report went further. The dangers to US international prestige if aid to Korea was cut back because of Korean non-cooperation might be reduced by emphasizing regional aid to other countries in the Far East. Estimates in the interim report to Congress as to what might be accomplished in Korea with a billion dollar four-year-programme of aid would have to be drastically revised unless there was an early change for the better in Korea. This was all added to the increasing verbal concern in the Congress for contributing to political stability and cohesion in recipient countries, and the emphasis on allocations for Asia as a whole continued to grow.⁷¹

⁷⁰NA RG59 611.95B/1-1955 Briggs, Seoul to Secretary of State, 19 January 1955.

⁷¹Ibid.

The US direct assistance to Korea was cut in 1956 below the 1955 level. In part, the cut was due to the shift of emphasis on the aim of US aid: it was not economic progress but internal stability and military preparedness that constituted the declared foreign-aid policy aim. Also in part, it was due to the overall Congressional reduction and to the implicit judgement that resources previously devoted to aid work should be used to encourage voluntary agencies or the private sector of the US economy to provide aid.

Above all, the change was a result of a general reassessment of US aid policy. At the Far East Meeting held in April 1956, the Chairman, Raymond Moyer, pointed out that several factors forced the US to take a new look at its programme in the Far East. He cited as paramount among these, changing political and economic developments in the area and Soviet competition in the field of foreign aid. The State Department had for some time been watching the increasing Soviet aid in North Vietnam. The worries were shared by Tyler Wood who said that the Soviets appeared to meet the fundamental needs of less-developed peoples better than the Americans did - for example, the Soviets had taken surplus agricultural commodities from several countries in the Far East, thus relieving them of a burden which the US could not alleviate.⁷² The increased flexibility of Soviet Bloc foreign policy in general, and the acceleration of its economic offensive in the uncommitted areas, including some neutral countries in Asia, provided the stimulus for reassessing the premises, purposes, and possibilities of US foreign aid.

The changing economic and political developments as well as the increasing Soviet influence in the region led the US to review their non-military Mutual Security

⁷²NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. ICA Far East Meeting, 26 April 1956.

Programme in Asia as a whole. In the era of competitive coexistence, the Soviet Union had seen, in Secretary Dulles' words, 'the advantage of having a mutual security programme of its own'.⁷³ The result was to focus attention, both in Congress and the Executive Branch, on a number of serious questions concerning the US programme that had been around and unanswered for years. How to evaluate the relative emphasis that was placed on military and economic aid; how to determine whether the US should try to outmatch Soviet Bloc aid offers or should 'more or less call their bluff'; and how to measure the accomplishments of both economic and military aid. President Eisenhower's call for reform set forth a basic approach which was to be governed by two factors: contingency funds should be kept at the highest possible level, whereas the number of aid programmes recommended for individual countries should be held to a firm minimum level.⁷⁴

Howard Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Economic Affairs, laid out new points affecting the future US foreign aid programme. In his report to Clarence Randall, Special Assistant to the President, Jones stated that the US policy objectives regarding the aid programme were to curb the power and prevent the expansion of international Communism and increase the strength and expand the influence of free world countries. The Communists in the Soviet Union, he argued, had launched an economic offensive which involved commitments of well over a billion dollars. An essential principle of the US response to this challenge should be that 'they should not

⁷³NA RG59 Hearings before a sub-committee on appropriations, House of Representatives, 84th Congress, 2nd session, Washington D.C., 1956.

⁷⁴NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Memorandum for Robertson, FY 1958 Mutual Security Programme, 15 February 1957.

outbid but out-perform' the Communists.⁷⁵ Funds should be available to be used, if, as and when necessary in the US interest and should not be tied to a budget appropriation schedule under which their use must be determined about two years in advance. The situation was too fluid for this fixed operation type of procedure and required flexibility.

The study by Jones was broadly reflected in the following Five-Year Projection of Grant Economic Aid for the Far East. The Far Eastern Bureau estimated that over the next five years the total amount of US grant aid would decline more rapidly than loan aid would increase, leading to a total decline in US economic aid. These estimates were based on the assumptions that there would be no marked change in the nature and intensity of the Communist threat in general; that Korea and Vietnam would remain divided; that the US aid loans would be long term, low interest, and repayable in local currency, and there would be a presumption, especially for revenue producing projects, that US aid would be on a loan basis. In extreme cases, however, e.g., Korea and to a lesser extent Taiwan, Vietnam and Laos, where the US would have to supply local currency (budgetary) support, aid should be on a grant basis. The countries exempted from the loan policy were as follows and the figures in million US dollars showed that the decrease in the amount of grant was relatively small.⁷⁶

⁷⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Howard P. Jones to The Honorable Clarence Randall, US Foreign Aid Programme, 18 February 1957.

⁷⁶NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Howard P. Jones to the Under Secretary, Five Year Projection of Grant Economic Aid Requirements for the Far East, 30 March 1957.

Grants by Fiscal Year					
	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Korea	295	295	290	277	272
Taiwan	68	65	62	61	57
Vietnam	225	215	200	175	150
Total	695	660	618	560	505

The Assistant Secretary of State, Walter Robertson, supported the view that the assistance to Korea should continue to be on a grant basis. Korea was unique in the extent to which the US financed even the internal costs of the Korean government in the form of direct budgetary assistance. Robertson believed that it would be an unwise fiscal policy to make loans where there was no reasonable expectation of repayment. Congress and the Americans should not be misled to believe that Korea was expected to repay its loans. Above all, as the Korean government itself had no illusions about its debt and inability to repay it, at least for some time to come, it would inevitably cause more friction if the US was to press for repayment.⁷⁷

As the first US four-year (1953-57) economic aid programme in Korea came to a close, it was met with the reductions in FY 1958 appropriations for the Mutual Security Programme. An overall reduction of 20 percent was involved from the level recommended to Congress.⁷⁸ In many respects, the attitude accompanying Congressional consideration was more significant than the actual appropriations. Certain choices had to be made as to

⁷⁷NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Walter Robertson to The Under Secretary, 10 April 1957.

⁷⁸NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Memorandum of Conversation, 9 October 1957.

how the US should allocate their great but not unlimited resources between use at home and use abroad, between use in various areas of the world, and between various types of programmes designed primarily to strengthen their defence and the free-world economies. On the one hand, the US was struggling with the problem of the cut in aid funds and the effect of the reduced appropriations on different types of assistance. The readjustments, as well as evaluation, of the programme became extremely difficult. On the other hand, the burden of the cuts needed to be shared by each aid recipient country, and Korea was no exception.

In 1958, due to massive infusions of US aid, levels of activity in all sectors of the economy returned to or exceeded the pre-1950 position, and inflation which had been chronic and severe was under some control for the first time since the Korean War. The Seoul wholesale price index, the most commonly used measure of price movements, dropped approximately 7 percent. Money supply, another sensitive indicator of Korean financial stability, rose by 20 percent, as against increases of 61 percent in 1956 and 29 percent in 1957. Living standards, although still very low, also reached the pre-1950 levels.⁷⁹ However, fundamental obstacles, i.e., the division of the country, limited agricultural and mineral resources, and a lack of skilled labour, continued to impede the development of a self-sustaining economy. Above all, maintenance of a huge military establishment was the principal strain on the ROK's limited fiscal resources and thus a prime contributor to inflationary pressures.

⁷⁹NA Lot Files. Intelligence Report, no.7654 The Republic of Korea: Present Situation and Outlook. 6 February 1958.

The chief long-term economic objective of the ROK was the development of sufficient industrial capacity and natural resources to make the country self-supporting. The ROK government continued to give priority to capital projects over an immediate increase in living standards, and pressed for a greater share of US aid to be used for investment. Nevertheless, a greater share of US aid programmed in 1957-1958 went for the purchase of consumer goods, e.g., fertilizer, industrial raw materials, and fuel than in previous years. As a result, there was relatively less for so-called 'project assistance' (capital investment), for reconstruction and for the development of productive plant.⁸⁰ Greater emphasis on using US aid to import consumer goods (non-project assistance)⁸¹ reflected the US desire to check inflation and to generate Korean currency for the support of the ROK defence budget.

US economic policy in Korea was constantly in conflict with Korean economic objectives and it remained as a source of difficulty in US-ROK relations. The US effort to lower inflation by importing basic commodities was at variance with the Korean wish to use US aid for capital investment. The US believed that government investment in economic development must be limited as long as military expenditures remained large. The British adviser in Seoul, William Reeve, thought the South Korean approach of increasing the capital investment without reducing the defence budget was 'quite illogical'. During the second half of 1950s about one third of total governmental expenditure was devoted to defence, a larger proportion than budgeted for economic reconstruction. Maintaining an army of over 600,000 men aggravated inflationary pressures by absorbing

⁸⁰NA RG59 795.00/26-459 ICA Far East Meeting, 26 April 1959.

⁸¹Non-project assistance included food, raw cotton, fuels, and semi-finished materials.

resources which might have been used more constructively and undoubtedly increased the commodity-type aid to meet the need for servicemen. A preponderance of capital investment could result in further inflation if there were not enough consumer goods. Reeve believed that American aid officials were right to insist on bringing in commodities for sale to enable local currency to be used for investment, for support of the civilian demand, and to fund the budgetary deficits created by the maintenance of the large Korean army.⁸²

Massive dependence on US aid continued to characterize the ROK economy. US aid accounted for roughly one-fourth of the total value of goods and services available to South Korea in 1958. Excluding military aid, the US was financing about 90 percent of all ROK imports. However, 1958 saw the beginning of the substantial reduction of aid, and it was clear that US economic aid in 1958-1959 was below the levels of the previous years.⁸³ Although the effect of aid reduction was not felt immediately, there was a sharp realisation among the Korean authorities of the need for long-term planning of future economic development.⁸⁴

By the end of 1959 the US believed that living conditions in South Korea had improved greatly from the low point of wartime misery. Yet the Koreans were still very

⁸²W.D.Reeve, *The Republic of Korea* pp.122-123

⁸³NA RG59 795.00/26-459 ICA Far East Meeting, 26 April 1959. US aid to Korea during US fiscal year 1958-59 was \$295 million (of which a maximum of \$35 million was earmarked for development projects and about \$49 million in commodities).

⁸⁴PRO FO371 141552 FK1101/3 Annual Economic Report, H.Evans, Seoul to F.O., 28 March 1959.

poor. Some 75 percent of the people were engaged in farming and fishing, with per capita production not more than \$50 per year. In proportion to cultivated acreage, Korean rural population density was the second highest in the world. The total population, swollen to over 22 million by northern refugees, was increasing at a rate of 1.6 percent annually. Urban living standards were rising faster than those of the rural areas, but the problems of underemployment and unemployment were grave.⁸⁵

While the Koreans continued to press for military aid from the US, the State Department had been under intermittent pressure from the Bureau of the Budget to reduce US aid to Korea. In 1960, after some hard bargaining, the State Department agreed with the Korean authorities on a figure of \$250 million economic aid which was a little lower than that of in 1959.⁸⁶ The US was somewhat relieved that the Koreans were beginning to look for other sources of aid such as the Development Loan Fund and IMF. Unfortunately, however, in the view of the International Bank, Korea was not creditworthy and was therefore ineligible for bank loans.⁸⁷ As in 1957, the US decided that loans could not yet be given to Korea.

As the period of immediate postwar reconstruction ended (1953-1960), a transition from mere survival to expansion took place. Industrial and mining production registered

⁸⁵NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. A study prepared at the request of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Conlon Associates Ltd., 1 November 1959.

⁸⁶NA RG59 795.00/2-1060 US aid in Asia- Korea. 10 February 1960. The figure, however, was reduced by \$40 million from what the State Department had originally planned in 1957.

⁸⁷PRO FO371 150685 FK11345/2 Washington to F.O., 3 November 1960.

steady gains and agriculture made a little progress. In general, however, the foundation of the Korean economy was still very weak. The British thought that a steady economic growth for South Korea was 'possible and likely', but the degree of progress would be contingent upon a wide range of factors. Inflation was only precariously under control and still considered a threat. The Korean production system, according to the British, was characterised by a high degree of unevenness: high-powered and ultra-modern equipment furnished by FOA and a small number of skilled workers coexisted with antiquated methods and tools. Modern entrepreneurial talent was scarce and its growth was inhibited by nepotism. The British also believed that the interaction between business and government was extremely close and marked by an unfortunately large amount of personal favouritism and corruption.⁸⁸ Inefficiency, mismanagement, and waste were the subject of much comment in the context of Korean reconstruction efforts.

Difficulties between the ROK and the US over aid arose against a background of South Korea's suspicions of 'interference' that would undermine its national sovereignty.⁸⁹ The Koreans argued that while aid was always accompanied by a large influx of American advisers and experts who supervised and initiated projects, once underway these projects should then be controlled by the national Government. The Americans were exasperated by this and tried to impose their will upon Korean officials not very tactfully. Constant reforms in aid administration proved that the American working method was far from perfect. The American dilemma lay in whether to give strong support to a government whose policies the US disapproved of and could not effectively influence or control. The

⁸⁸PRO FO371 141537 FK1016/32 British Embassy Seoul to F.O., 13 December 1959.

⁸⁹PRO FO371 150681 FK1113/10 H.Evans, Seoul to F.O., 4 August 1960.

downfall of Rhee's regime in April 1960 therefore brought fresh hope to American aid officials, as 'it removed one of the principal obstacles to progress.'⁹⁰

Foreign aid in most forms principally serves the national interest of the donor country. The objective of US aid in Korea, during this early Cold War era, stemmed from long-term competition with the Soviet Union: by helping Korea to stabilize, rehabilitate and develop internally, the US hoped that Korea would be eventually self-supporting and an anti-communist fortress in the region. Since 1949 this Cold War-oriented ideology characterized the nature of aid to Korea which led to the amalgamation of military and economic aid under the umbrella of *mutual security*. The military features of aid were temporarily emphasized during the Korean War, but once the war was over the distinction between military and economic assistance was difficult to make. The principle of mutual security was therefore strictly maintained in Korea at least until 1961, although some US aid officials argued in favour of separating military aid from economic aid.

The four-year economic aid programme was launched following the passing of the Mutual Security Act of 1953. By this time, the MDAP (Military Defence Assistant Programme) was virtually identical with the non-MDAP. The question that concerned aid authorities was how to apply the Mutual Security Programme to the overall political, military and economic situation in Korea in order to achieve maximum effect. Adjustment was constantly required in US aid policy as a whole in order to tune in with the changing political climate which was prompted particularly by the Soviet Union's economic

⁹⁰NA RG59 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. W.McConaughy, Seoul to Secretary of State, 8 August 1960.

offensive. It certainly made long-term planning difficult. Also there was Congressional pressure to cut the budget. By 1957 US aid policy gradually shifted its emphasis from direct aid in the form of grants to loans which were dependent on individual countries achieving self-sustaining growth for repayment. Flexibility, however, was stressed in the case of Korea, and the transformation was gradual so that US aid remained on a grant basis.

The inflow of aid into Korea during 1953-1960 was at an average annual rate of about \$270 million. A peak was reached in the years 1956-1957 and subsequently there was an appreciable decline. The administration of US economic aid to Korea, as distinct from military aid, was put under the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), later redesignated as the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), a semi-autonomous agency of the Department of State, which established a resident mission in Seoul.

The difficulties in implementing the aid programme were due to the uneasy relationship of the US and the ROK. As one US official put it, President Rhee's arrogant attitude that the 'US cannot do without him or that he is favouring us by accepting aid'⁹¹ was added to his fundamental fear of the US encroaching on Korean national sovereignty. Rhee was profoundly embittered by the US efforts to force procurement from Japan and by the US refusal to pay the dollars requested by Korea for the hwan advanced to the UN Command. In fact the bickering over the hwan-dollar exchange rate resulted from the unrealistically high demands of the ROK. Political wrangles clearly disrupted the economic reconstruction work. Yet the enormous defence expenditure, as British officials

⁹¹NA RG59 795.00/5-1954 Briggs, Seoul to Secretary of State, 19 May 1954.

rightly saw, was the main cause of economic difficulties and the mounting inflation.

Korea's economic reconstruction was also aided by the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency which was set up in 1950. UNKRA was short-lived mainly because of inadequate funds and the lack of interest in its work by America's allies. Although it was a part of the UN operation, it was very much a US-operated agency, with an American Agent General and with the biggest contribution - over 70% of its budget - being borne by the US. US aid officials were often disturbed by the administrative confusion caused by overlapping responsibilities with direct US aid under the FOA. UNKRA officials managed to maintain relatively good relations with the Korean authorities, but lack of support and, most of all, funds from member governments made the liquidation of UNKRA inevitable. Given the fact that only the US and UK were the real contributors (they made up to 80% of total UNKRA budget), UNKRA lost its UN character. When it was wound up in early 1958, the remaining tasks were quickly absorbed into the FOA, and the aid channel to Korea was simplified.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

The Korean question posed a challenge to the Anglo-American relationship. While both Britain and America shared, in a broad sense, the same goal - to prevent Communism from spreading in Asia, - they differed in their approaches as to how to fight the Asian Cold War. The governments of Washington and London had in fact never been able to coordinate Asian policies as they had in Europe. The British government had high hopes of relaxing tensions with China as they saw the greatest danger as a threat to their interests in Hong Kong, Malaya and Singapore. The overriding British concern therefore was to prevent the Korean conflict from becoming a general catastrophe. The British policy of seeking a *modus vivendi* with China was based on the belief that diplomatic and economic relations with the West and membership of the UN would integrate China into the world system and undermine the Chinese inclination towards isolationism and hostility: it would also reduce the PRC's reliance on diplomatic and economic contact with the Soviet Union. Britain was reluctant to reverse its policy on China: broad political, economic and strategic considerations continued to dictate that a moderate line be followed.

Britain also believed that an agreement on Korea would lead to a new phase in regional relations in which she and America could work out positive ways of approaching the new regime in Peking. This hope, however, was gradually replaced by the general fear

that the Korean conflict might be turned into a general war against China. The British belief in avoiding direct confrontation was sharply contrasted with the US hardline approach to containment based on resisting the dynamic and disruptive communists in China by isolating them. The US did not share the British view that the PRC could be accommodated and that ignoring the Peking government would only drive them in the direction of Moscow.

The different perceptions generated divergent policies. During the Panmunjom negotiations America realized that the Korean conflict was a drain of US resources which offered no immediate solution. The popular anti-Communism of the Republicans, together with a sense of urgency to end the war, provided the Washington government with the political authority to take a tough stance. Britain, although equally frustrated by the dragging process of negotiations, still believed that the US should adopt a more flexible attitude. Disagreements arose over the Greater Sanctions Statement. It was, to the US, a *quid pro quo* for the initial and temporary peace settlement. The British Conservative government, however, regarded the signing of the Statement as an endorsement of US policy which contained the danger of extending the conflict outside Korea employing nuclear weapons, a subject on which the British were always very sensitive. Despite the British efforts to moderate the effect of the Statement, the US was adamant, justifying its merits in terms of a warning to the Communists. The British reservations could not prevent the Statement from being issued as a part of the Armistice Agreement.

The Geneva Conference of 1954 opened a new era in great power relations. One of the most significant features was that the People's Republic of China now launched its

campaign to be an active player in great power politics. The US was extremely uneasy about this gesture. America's sensitivity to the issue of recognition was overtly expressed in the Communique of the Berlin meeting of February 1954 that 'neither the invitation to, nor the holding of the conference shall be deemed to imply diplomatic recognition'.¹ The US efforts to undermine the PRC, however, were not successful, as China became a full-voting member of the Conference. The self-conscious Chinese delegation and Chou En-lai's vigorous activities were an indication that the PRC was a key player in the Korean affair.

America and Britain were in agreement that Korea could not be abandoned, not least because of the psychological effect on Europe.² The governments, however, did not reach an agreement before the Conference on what their positions were going to be in terms of settling the Korean problem, and this consequently weakened Anglo-American cooperation in negotiating with the Communists.³ Despite the British wish for round-table talks, the conference turned out to be a two sided one between the UNC and the Communists, which symbolized the Korean phase of the east-west struggle. Propaganda statements dominated the proceedings and the hostile atmosphere reduced the hope that the conference would find any solution to the Korean problem.

¹NA RG59 GKI Memo 5. Berlin Communique on the Geneva Conference, 18 February 1954.

²Bradford Perkins, 'Unequal Partners: The Truman Administration and Great Britain.' Louis & Bull eds., *The Special Relationship*. Oxford, 1986. p.63

³A great deal of pre-conference discussions were on the participants and procedure of the Conference. There is no evidence that the UK and US produced any agreement on their positions on Korea.

The Anglo-American relationship was put on trial when it was faced with the 'principles' laid out at the Conference. The early withdrawal of Chinese troops and an election in North Korea under UN supervision were the principles insisted on by the US and the ROK. Most western allies including Britain did not find these principles acceptable nor justifiable before world opinion. The Chinese and North Koreans called for the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops before the election, and required an all-Korean election to be supervised by 'neutral' countries outside the United Nations. The conflict which developed around these views prompted Britain to make energetic attempts to find a compromise or a position more acceptable to international opinion by trying to moderate US-ROK views.

As the political and psychological importance of the ROK to the Washington administration increased, especially after the humiliating French defeat in Indo-China in early May 1954, the pressure on the US mounted. The military option for Korea had long been ruled out, i.e. the US had no intention of resuming the war to unify the country. The risk of extending the war outside Korea was simply too great. It would also be difficult to avoid the criticism that the US was launching another imperialistic war. The US had to hold a tight grip on Rhee who openly protested against the UN peace process and wanted to unify the country by force. On the other hand, the US was well aware of the danger in abandoning Rhee. It was against their Cold War strategy: the US was not convinced that the final outcome of an all-Korean election and a unified Korea with a new political system would be beneficial to the US. The worst nightmare of course was that the ROK might be lost to communism.

Britain's mediation in Geneva was laboriously pursued by Eden. His idea of a 'neutral Korea' - gradual withdrawal of all foreign troops and security guaranteed by the great powers including China - satisfied neither side. Being conscious of public opinion, Eden believed that his idea was more acceptable before the world. However, Eden's idea, which was later embodied as 'five principles', was seriously flawed by the fact that the principles did not deal with crucial issues in concrete terms, such as the timing of the troop-withdrawal and the terms of free elections. Moreover, he was unable to clear the ambiguity regarding a 'neutral' supervisory commission: it was likely that Eden might have thought of free western neutral states acting under UN auspices such as Switzerland and Sweden, whereas the Communists wanted an equal number of Communist countries included in the Commission. The Communists' idea of 'neutral' would certainly undermine the effectiveness of the supervision. Challenged both by the US and the communists, Eden did not pursue his principles further and consequently they never became a formal proposal.

For weeks there was no sign of compromise between the UN and the Communists. Significantly, by the end of May 1954, South Korea accepted the elections in the South as well as the North, but still insisted on the Chinese withdrawal from North Korea before the elections. To accept all-Korean elections was regarded as a positive step and welcomed by some members of the UN. It did not, however, lessen the pressure on the US. On the contrary, the US feared that, since the ROK made some concessions over the area of elections, the Communists were likely to demand the reciprocal withdrawal of the UNC forces. The US was not prepared to accept this demand. Policy makers in Washington certainly did not intend to leave Korea even if the Chinese were to withdraw,

for the UNC force was a deterrent against provocative action by Rhee as well as by the Communists.

The UNC force was determined not to withdraw from Korea. In order to avoid this scenario the best US strategy was to refuse to compromise over the neutral supervisory commission. The American insistence on maintaining the UN's authority through its supervision of elections should be interpreted in the context of prolonging a divided but peaceful Korea. Given the Communists' claim that the UN had lost its authority because it sided with the US during the Korean War, the Americans believed that emphasizing the UN's authority would be the best point on which to break with the Communists. The Communists were likely to refuse to accept the UN's authority which would, to the relief of the US government, ensure the continued division of Korea. It would then avoid a situation where the main obstacle would appear to be the ROK's refusal to hold elections without a unilateral Chinese withdrawal. By the end of the Conference, the US containment strategy had preserved the status quo in Korea and the UN blamed the Communists for the failure of the Conference.

It was certainly unfortunate that British officials had either been misled or were ignorant of US intentions at Geneva. They were dissatisfied with the US highlighting the UN's authority. Britain believed it was the UN's supervisory role, not the organization itself, that the Communists refused to accept. Thus the Communists and the Western Allies could accept the principle of free elections and it was the means whereby the UN or a neutral commission supervised the elections that should be emphasized rather than whether or not the UN should supervise them directly. It is difficult to know whether the

Communists would have been prepared to compromise over the terms for the elections. Like Syngman Rhee, the North Korean leader wanted to unify the country by war.⁴ Not knowing if he would win the elections, it is highly unlikely that Kim Il-Sung would have accepted the terms for ensuing free elections set out by the UN side. Britain expected that in any case the Communists would not agree to the British idea of a neutral supervisory commission. Britain nevertheless believed that, given the importance of free and fair elections for the Korean settlement, it would be more justifiable to world opinion to emphasize that the Communists had failed to accept neutral supervision of free elections rather than the UN's authority. Eden's closing speech, however, was one supporting the Americans by upholding the UN's authority. The UK could not afford an independent policy over Korea. Private conviction gave way to the pragmatic policy of preserving the 'special relationship'.

To keep unity on the UN side was a problem for the Americans as much as for the British. However, the constant pressure to keep the ROK under control, together with the hard line Cold War strategy of maintaining the status quo, pushed America to ignore the voices of the western allies calling for compromise. Britain's strong reservations over the correctness of American support for the ROK disappointed the US. The incompatible personalities of Dulles and Eden should not be over-emphasized, since it would distort the degree of policy differences. The US was resolute and determined. The British government, despite their policy differences, decided to support the US and to attempt to persuade other allied countries in order to preserve Western unity.

⁴Interestingly the leaders of North and South Korea called their war 'Minjok Haebang Joenjang' (war of national liberation).

There was no doubt that the Korean question, after the Geneva Conference, had a significant impact on the United Nations. At the ninth UN General Assembly, the US was determined to preserve the status quo in Korea rather than renew the efforts for a settlement. The Communists called for a new set of discussions and resolutions as another attempt to settle the Korean question, but the US contended that there should be no substantial debate 'unless the Communists were ready to accept the Geneva principles'. The US feared that new negotiations with the Communists would shift the equilibrium which preserved the present deadlock. There was no sign of compromise on either side: the ROK would not yield its demand for the Chinese withdrawal, and the Communists would not change their position on the neutral supervisory commission and simultaneous withdrawal as the preconditions for the elections. Given the ROK's menacing disposition to attack the North, it was regarded as premature to withdraw the UN force. Also the new discussions at the General Assembly might evoke the disagreements among the western allies which had been momentarily suppressed at Geneva. Different views would only undermine UN solidarity. Therefore the impasse, odd as it seemed, had to be sustained.

Britain made another attempt to budge the Americans believing that it was too negative to leave the Korean question as it was by simply avoiding serious discussions at the UN. This was when UNCURK was introduced by a British official in order to justify not making new initiative. UNCURK, representing the UN commitment to the unification and rehabilitation of Korea, had never done any serious work. The British idea of galvanising UNCURK was to emphasize its responsibility for considering any new proposals for free elections. However, the US was determined to avoid the issue which, they believed, would inevitably bring up the question of the UN's role in Korea. The US

feared that the Communists' attitude to the UN's authority would change and they might accept the UN's supervisory role. Then the US would have had to deal with Rhee who would never retreat from his demand for the Chinese withdrawal. The UN's authority, therefore, should remain as the sticking point so that the US could maintain the status quo without having to take a public stance on the position of the ROK. The US dismissed the British idea and went ahead with their policy of no substantial post-Geneva discussions. UNCURK lost a chance for improvement. As in Geneva, Britain was not able to persuade the Americans and chose to follow the US lead.

The Anglo-American partnership was also evident in the military field. The UK joined the US/UN military operation by sending troops, but British forces serving in Korea were there more for political reasons. The Foreign Office believed that keeping forces in Korea would provide a stronger position from which to influence the Americans. But they soon realized that the political argument was slowly weakened by strategic, military and financial considerations. When the war was over in 1953, Britain and America agreed in general on the gradual reduction of forces. However, they were not in accord on how the issue of troop-withdrawal should be utilized in an attempt to solve the Korean question. The UK believed that an agreement with the Communists on the terms for troop-withdrawal would accelerate the peace settlement as it was closely linked with the issue of unification. The US refused to accept the issue as part of a positive solution to the Korean question. The Americans believed it was possible that the volatile Communists would demand UN troop withdrawals in return for accepting UN supervised elections. The US could not accept this because the ROK would not accept anything other than a Chinese withdrawal before an all-Korean election. There was little chance of

reconciliation. The US was determined not to allow any party to change the present deadlock. Being unable to persuade the Americans, Britain learnt that their influence on the course of events was frustratingly minimal. Britain also felt that their contribution of the British Commonwealth Force, however small it was, was severely undervalued. Moreover, Britain had to accept that the nuclear option, which was to compensate for the reduced level of forces, was always, in the Americans' minds, a perfectly acceptable military alternative.

Britain's broad aim in East Asia was to maintain her political and economic position without committing more resources to the area. The only way of achieving this was to align with the US. The Churchill cabinet took little interest in Korean affairs, but maintained that Britain should continue to support US Korean policy. Cooperating with the US, however, did not mean easy acceptance of the American position. British policy was exercised in essentially the same pattern throughout the period: a belief in a negotiated settlement combined with a plea for compromise with China and opposition to Communism on a basis justifiable to international opinion, that gave way in the face of American determination. The British views received little shrift and their position did not have any specific, direct affect on the US. This, however, should not necessarily be seen as a sign of failure. Britain's overwhelming interests lay in the prospect of cementing the 'special relationship', and not falling out with the US over Korea.

The US clearly recognized that Britain's continued friendship and support were essential ingredients of its Cold War strategy. They turned to the UK but not for modification of their policies. In fact, the US was occasionally irritated by Britain

suggesting a more moderate course than Washington wished to take. The US was aware that its positions on Korea received only tentative endorsement by the UK. Nevertheless the Cold War in Asia entangled with the Korean question foreclosed a number of options for the US: America had no intention of becoming involved in a regional war by encouraging Syngman Rhee's ambition to unify Korea; on the other hand, their Cold War strategy would be at risk if they ignored the political value of the ROK. Within these limitations, it was the US, not the UK, who took control and refused to be diverted.

It is true that, as Manderson-Jones puts it, 'while the US viewed [the Special Relationship] as an instrument for American system-building, Britain, belying the postwar realities, saw it as the pillar of her own diametrically opposed design for reinstating herself as a major power'.⁵ Anglo-American unity was precariously preserved. A remarkable resilience was what the relationship showed in Korea.

It seems tragic that South Korea and its President Syngman Rhee were a major obstacle to the whole peace process of finding a solution to the Korean problem. The ROK opposed all UN peace efforts for a negotiated settlement based on a divided Korea and maintained an aggressive stance to try and bring unification on its own terms. Typical of many emerging countries, the ROK was beset with insurmountable problems, internal as well as external. A priority was given to the issue of unification. In the pursuit of unification, however, the leaders of the ROK revealed a lack of sophistication combined with totally unrealistic thinking. The relentless opposition to the armistice and to a peaceful, negotiated settlement inevitably led the ROK to face constant criticism from its

⁵R.B. Manderson-Jones, *The Special Relationship*. London, 1972. p.20

allies. The ROK government was aware of the dire consequences of any unilateral action. However, they failed to see that the national aspiration for unification, if expressed in such an emotional and menacing way, would never be effective nor achievable because it would be unacceptable to the international community. The importance of obtaining the goodwill of the Western allies should not have been neglected.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

British officials

London

ADDIS, John Mansfield

Born June 11, 1914. Appointed a 3rd Secretary in the Foreign Office, October 1938. Appointed one of the Prime Minister's Private Secretaries, October 1945. Appointed to Nanking, November 1947. Moved with H.M. Embassy to Peking, February 1950. Appointed Counsellor and Consul-General at Peking, September 1954. Acted as Charge d'Affaires there in 1956. Transferred to the Foreign Office and appointed Head of Southern Department, August 1957.

CROWE, Colin Tradescant

Born September 7, 1913. Appointed a Probationer Vice-Consul at Peking, November 1935. Appointed Vice-Consul attached to H.M. Embassy at Washington, June 1940. Employed in the Foreign Office and promoted Consul, September 1945. Promoted Counsellor, September 1953. Appointed Head of Far Eastern Department, 1954. One of the most influential officials in the Department concerning Korea until 1956.

DALTON, Peter Gerald Fox

Born December 12, 1914. Appointed a Vice-Consul in China, February 1940. Served in Bangkok, Montevideo, and Hong Kong. Appointed Head of Far Eastern Department, December 1956.

EDEN, Sir Anthony

Foreign Secretary, October 1951-April 1955. Prime Minister, April 1955-January 1957. Head of the British Delegation at the Geneva Conference and one of the three rotating chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Korea.

JOHNSTON, Sir Charles Hepburn

Born March 11, 1912. Appointed to the Foreign office as a 3rd Secretary, October 1936. Transferred to Tokyo, May 1939. Promoted to Counsellor (Head of Japan and Pacific Department), January 1951. Head of China and Korea Department, December 1951. Promoted Minister, November 1956.

LLOYD, (John) Selwyn Brooke

Born July 28, 1904. King's Counsel, 1947. Minister of State in the Foreign Office, October 1951-October 1954. Minister of Defence, April-December 1955. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 1955-July 1960.

TRENCH, Nigel Clive Cosby

Born October 27, 1916. Appointed a member of the Foreign Office, May 1946. Transferred to Lisbon, October 1946. Promoted 1st Secretary, November 1948. Returned to the Foreign Office, March 1949. Appointed 1st Secretary at Lima, February 1952. Transferred to the Foreign Office, January 1955. Assistant, Far Eastern Department from 1957.

WALKER, Malcolm Thomas

Born April 8, 1915. Served in Beirut, Baghdad, Benghazi, and Khartoum. Assistant, China and Korea, Far Eastern Department, 1955. Appointed Consul-General at Hanoi, April 1958.

Washington & United Nations

CACCIA, Sir Harold Anthony

Born December 21, 1905. Appointed 3rd Secretary in the Foreign office, October 1929. Served in Peking, Athens, and Vienna. Appointed Deputy Under-Secretary of State, February 1954. Member of the UK Delegation at the Geneva Conference, 1954. Appointed Ambassador to Washington, November 1956.

CROSTHWAITE, Sir Ponsoby Moore

Born August 13, 1907. Appointed a 3rd Secretary in the Foreign Office, October 1932. Served in Baghdad, Moscow, Madrid, and Athens. Appointed to New York as Deputy Permanent UK Representative to the UN, September 1952. In charge of the Delegation in 1954. Appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at Beirut, October 1958.

DE LA MARE, Arthur James

Born February 15, 1914. Appointed a Probationer Vice-Consul at Tokyo, November 1936. Served at Keijo (Seoul), October 1938-May 1939, and was in charge there in November 1938. Served in Tokyo, Washington, and San Francisco. Appointed Head of Security Department, January 1954. Appointed Counsellor at Washington, May 1956.

DIXON, Sir Pierson John

Born November 13, 1904. Appointed a 3rd Secretary in the Foreign Office, October 1929. Served in Madrid, Angora, Rome, and Prague. Appointed Deputy Under-Secretary of State, June 1950. Appointed Permanent Representative of the UK to the UN, March 1954. Tried to avoid conflict among the Allies over the Korean issue at the 9th UN General Assembly, 1954.

JEBB, Sir Gladwyn

Permanent UK Representative to the UN, 1953-1954.

MAKINS, Sir Roger Mellor

Born February 3, 1904. Appointed to the Foreign Office as a 3rd Secretary, 1928. Transferred to Washington, April 1931. Appointed to be one of H.M. Ministers on the

staff of H.M. Ambassador, May 1945. Appointed Under-Secretary of State, 1948. Promoted Deputy Under-Secretary of State, 1949. Appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at Washington, December 1952. Appointed Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, October 1956.

SCOTT, Sir Robert Heatlie

Born September 20, 1905. Appointed one of H.M. Vice-Consuls in China, 1930. Served at Singapore with the Special Commissioner for South-East Asia. Transferred to the Foreign Office, 1948. Promoted to be an Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1950. Appointed Minister at Washington, July 1953. Acted as Charge d'Affaires in 1954 and 1955. Appointed Commissioner General at Singapore, October 1955.

TOMLINSON, Frank Stanley

Born March 21, 1912. Appointed a Probationer Vice-Consul at Tokyo, January 1935. Stationed at Yokohama and Kobe. Appointed 1st Secretary in the Foreign Office, February 1947. Transferred to Washington, February 1951. Promoted Counsellor, May 1951. Appointed Head of South-East Asia Department, December 1954. Transferred to Berlin, January 1959.

Seoul

BLACKWELL, John Kenneth

Born May 8, 1914. Appointed a Probationer Vice-Consul at Peking, November 1938. Served in Beira, Copenhagen, and Canton. Appointed Consul and 1st Secretary at Seoul, February 1957. Acted as Charge d'Affaires, 1957-1959. Transferred to the Foreign Office, July 1959.

CLEMENS, Clive Carruthers

Born January 22, 1924. Entered the Foreign Office, July 1947. Served in Rangoon, Lisbon, Budapest, Brussels. Appointed 1st Secretary and Consul at Seoul, May 1959. Acted as Charge d'Affaires in 1959.

EVANS, Hubert John

Born November 21, 1904. Appointed a member of the Foreign Service and appointed to the Staff of the UK High Commissioner in India, at Bombay, September 1947. Served in Managua and Rotterdam. Appointed Minister at Seoul, February 1957. Appointed Ambassador and Consul-General there, April 1957. One of the few who obtained first-hand knowledge of the internal developments in Korea.

GRAHAM, Walter Gerald Cloete

Born May 13, 1906. A China expert during the 1930s and 1940s. Transferred to the Foreign Office and appointed Head of the China Bureau in Research Department, August 1951. Appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Korea, September 1952. Appointed Ambassador to Tripoli, 1955.

STEWART, Andrew Charles

Born April 22, 1907. Appointed to the Foreign Service, August 1947. Appointed Charge d'Affaires at Djakarta, December 1949. Transferred to The Hague, September 1952. Acted as Charge d'Affaires in 1952, 1953 and 1954. Appointed Minister at Seoul, January 1955.

US Officials

BRIGGS, Ellis Ormsbee

Born December 1, 1889. Held minor posts between 1926 and 1944 and then was appointed to a series of eight ambassadorial posts: Dominican Republic, 1944-1945; Uruguay, 1947-1949; Czechoslovakia, 1949-1952; Korea, 1952-1955; Peru, 1955-1956; Brazil, 1956-1959; Greece, 1959-1962; and Spain which he declined for health reasons. In Korea, he worked with General Mark Clark in preparing for the armistice ending the Korean conflict and signed a \$700 million economic recovery pact.

CALHOUN, John A.

1st Secretary and Consul in Seoul. Advisor to the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

DEAN, Arthur H.

Deputy Chairman, for the Secretary of State, of the US Delegation to the negotiations at Panmunjom for the prospective political conference on Korea, September 1953-February 1954. Special Representative of the Secretary of State for discussions with ROK President Syngman Rhee, April- May 1954.

DOWLING, Walter Cecil

Born August 4, 1905. Joined the Foreign Service in 1931. Held minor posts in Oslo, Lisbon, Rome, Rio de Janeiro, and Vienna. From 1953 to 1955, he was Deputy High Commissioner in Germany under James B. Conant. The Eisenhower administration appointed him Ambassador to Korea in 1956; there he signed a treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation to facilitate economic relations but was called home in 1959 as a symbolic protest when President Syngman Rhee induced the passage of acts limiting democracy in Korea, although he returned after a short time. Later that year, however, he left Seoul permanently and returned to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

DULLES, John Foster

Born February 25, 1888 in Washington DC. Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower and one of the most prominent individuals to have held that post. Head of the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference on Korea, 26 April-3 May 1954. Dulles extended containment to the Middle East (Baghdad Pact) and Southeast Asia (SEATO) and generally opposed violence as a means of foreign policy (by criticizing the joint British-French-Israeli venture in the Suez Crisis, 1956). As the strongest and most visible member of the Eisenhower cabinet, he gained a reputation as an excellent advocate of

foreign policy to the administration and Congress, and his frequent travels to different parts of the world made him seem to overshadow the President himself as an American foreign policy leader, although recent research has shown that Eisenhower remained firmly in charge.

HERTER, Christian Archibald

Born March 28, 1895. Consultant to the Secretary of State, January-February 1957. Under Secretary of State and Chairman of the Operations Coordinating Board. Under Secretary of State until April 1959. Thereafter Secretary of State.

HULL, John E.

Major General. Commander-in-Chief, UNC, and Commander-in-Chief, Far East.

JOHNSON, U. Alexis

Ambassador in Czechoslovakia. Coordinator of the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference. Head of the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference, 20 June-17 July 1954. Deputy Representative and Coordinator of the Delegation, 17-21 July 1954.

JONES, Howard P.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Ambassador to Indonesia after February 1958.

JONES, William G.

First Secretary of the Embassy in Korea.

LANE, Samuel O.

Officer in Charge of Korean Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, February 1958-June 1960.

LEMNITZER, General Lyman L.

Commanding General, US Army Forces, Far East and Eighth US Army, April-June 1955. Commander-in-Chief, UNC; Commander-in-Chief, Far East; and Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, June 1955-July 1957. Thereafter Vice Chief of Staff of the Army.

LODGE, Henry Cabot Jr.

Born July 5, 1902. US Ambassador to the UN, 1953-1960.

McCLURKIN, Robert J. C.

Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, from January 1955.

McCONAUGHY, Walter P.

Ambassador to Korea from December 1959.

NES, David G.

Officer in Charge of Korean Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, May 1956-October 1957.

PARSONS, Howard L.

Officer in Charge of Economic Affairs, Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, February 1955. Acting Deputy Director from January 1956. Deputy Director, April-October 1956. Thereafter Director until May 1959.

PARSONS, J. Graham

Ambassador to Laos until February 1958. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, March 1958-June 1959. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs from July 1959.

RADFORD, Admiral Arthur W.

US Navy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff until August 1957.

ROBERTSON, Walter S.

Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Deputy US Representative at the Geneva Conference, 8 May-20 June 1954. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs through June 1959. One of the most hard-liners in the State Department.

SMITH, Walter Bedell

Born October 5, 1895. During World War II, he served on General Eisenhower's staff in Europe and was Eisenhower's Chief of Staff in the North African campaign. Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1946-1949). From 1950 to 1953, Smith was Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and, when Eisenhower became president, he was named Under Secretary of State. He was Head of the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference, 3 May-20 June, and 17-21 July 1954.

STROM, Carl W.

Counsellor of the Embassy in Korea until July 1956.

TAYLOR, General Maxwell D.

US Army, Commanding General, US Army Forces, Far East, and US Eighth Army, until March 1955. Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command and Commander-in-Chief, UNC. Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, April-June 1955. Thereafter Chief of Staff of the Army through June 1959.

VAN FLEET, James A.

General. Commander of the US Eighth Army in Korea. Appointed Special Representative of President Eisenhower to conduct a military survey in the Far East, April 1954.

YOUNG, Kenneth T.

Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State. Advisor to the US Delegation at the Geneva Conference and Chairman of the Delegation's Working Group on Korea.

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CAB 133	Cabinet Records of International and Commonwealth Conferences from 1945
CAB 134	Cabinet Far Eastern Committee
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DEFE 5	Chiefs of Staff Committee: Memoranda
DEFE 6	Reports of the Joint Planning Staff
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3. Birmingham University Library, Birmingham

Special Collections Department

Robert Anthony Eden

AP14 Personal and Political Correspondence, 1921-1960. Not much on Korea.
AP20 Political Documents. Diary whilst at Geneva is useful.

4. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

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