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NEW ZEALAND IN THE KOREAN WAR:

THE FIRST YEAR

A Study in Official Government Policy.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in History,
University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

1983
PREFACE

On the morning of 25 June 1950, units of the armed forces of the Korean People's Democratic Republic (North Korea) crossed the 38th Parallel into the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in an all out effort to bring that part of the Korean peninsula under its control. The effect of this action was to elicit an immediate military response from the United States, through the United Nations, and a call for all members of that organisation to "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area". This appeal was answered by sixteen nations and for the next three years they were to actively participate in one of the most significant events of the post-1945 period.

New Zealand was one of the first countries to respond to this call for assistance when, on 29 June 1950, two ships of the Royal New Zealand Navy were despatched to serve in Korean waters. A month later, on 26 July 1950, the Government decided to extend this assistance by providing an artillery battalion and some ancillary units to serve on the ground in Korea. It was the beginning of a military and political commitment that was to last the entire course of the war and beyond and which was to have a significant impact on the formulation of New Zealand's post-war defence and foreign policies. This thesis endeavours to examine and assess the significance of the Korean War for New Zealand as well as to explain the reasons and implications for this country's involvement in the first year of the conflict.

In preparing this thesis, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Ann Trotter for her invaluable comments, criticisms and guidance. I am grateful also, for the assistance of Messrs Ian Muir and Paul Edmonds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in granting me access to the Ministry's
files. At the Ministry of Defence I have been greatly assisted by the staff of the Defence Library in securing source material, and by Miss Denise Dellabarca in preparing the final draft. To Ian McGibbon I owe a great debt of gratitude. In his former appointment of Defence Historian he kindly arranged access to Defence files and in his present position of official historian responsible for the writing of the history of New Zealand's participation in the Korean War, he has given me his valuable time and assistance to an extent that went far beyond what could reasonably be expected of him. Finally to my wife Linda I owe a special debt of thanks for without her unstinting support and encouragement this thesis would not have been completed.
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<td>JCS</td>
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<td>KPDR</td>
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<td>RNZASC</td>
<td>Royal New Zealand Army Service Corps.</td>
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<td>RNZEME</td>
<td>Royal New Zealand Regiment of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.</td>
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<td>RNZN</td>
<td>Royal New Zealand Navy.</td>
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<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea (South Korea).</td>
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<td>SSCR</td>
<td>United Kingdom Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea.</td>
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CHAPTER I

PRELUDE TO CONFLICT

For few countries in modern times has the fact of geographical location had more serious consequences than for Korea. A small, mountainous peninsula projecting out of the central Asian land mass, Korea is roughly 550 miles long, spans 220 miles at its widest point, and has an area a little over 85,000 square miles. On all sides, it has natural boundaries, the Yellow Sea to the west, the Sea of Japan to the east, the Korean strait to the south. On the north the Yalu and Tiumen Rivers separate Korea from Manchuria and, for a short distance, the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately for Korea, these geographical obstacles have not served to discourage the unwanted attentions of its neighbours. The strategic importance of the Korean peninsula due to its close proximity to China, Japan and Russia, has made Korea, more than once, the focus of modern power politics in the Far East. Sometimes described as a "dagger pointed at the heart of Japan", Korea became instead Japan's invasion route to the Asian mainland. For China and, later, Russia, Korea was a back gate both to be locked against intruders and to be opened during any opportunity for expansion. Thus in the past 100 years this hapless nation has experienced foreign intervention, military occupation by foreign powers, foreign rule, wars between alien armed forces, and internecine struggles stimulated and kept alive by foreign influences.(1)

By the turn of the twentieth century, Korea had been the occasion of two major Far Eastern conflicts; the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the

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Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. As a result of the latter conflict, Korea had imposed on it a measure of peace and stability, but at the expense of its autonomy. On 29 August 1910 Korean sovereignty was formally transferred to Japan by treaty and Korea became a dependency of the Japanese Empire.

It was not until the closing stages of World War II that this status of Korea came under scrutiny by Allied Powers. During the course of the Cairo Conference of November 1943, the heads of Government of China, the United Kingdom and the United States resolved, as part of their discussions, "that in due course Korea shall become free and independent". This statement received the endorsement of the Soviet leader, Marshal Joseph Stalin, at Teheran the same year.

During 1945 the question of Korea was taken up again at an international level. At Yalta oblique reference was made to the possibility of a multi-power trusteeship for Korea until it was ready to assume full sovereignty, but no specific commitments were made.


3. At a separate conference held at Teheran, also in November, attended by Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, Stalin declared in response to a question from Churchill that "although he could not then make any firm commitments he thoroughly approved of the statement that it was right that Korea should be independent". A Historical Summary of United States - Korean Relations, US Department of State, Publication No. 7446, Washington 1962, p.10.

4. Conference between Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt, 4-11 February 1945. "The real significance of the Yalta conference as far as Korea was concerned was that it secured Russian entry into the Pacific War and thereby made Russian activity in Korea inevitable". Arthur L. Grey "The Thirty-Eighth Parallel", Foreign Affairs, Vol 29 April 1951 p.482.
Five months later at the Potsdam Conference, where the participants(5) defined the terms of the surrender of Japan, it was reaffirmed that the articles of the Cairo statement be carried out regarding Korea, and when the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on 8 August, it too accepted the conditions of the Declaration. Thus China, the US, the UK and the Soviet Union became "publicly committed to the ultimate independence of Korea". With the capitulation of Japan on 10 August the opportunity to implement the agreements of these conferences presented itself. However, the almost immediate manifestation of Russian and American mistrust of one another's intentions regarding the post war settlements in Europe and Asia was reflected in their policies towards Korea. The most significant development at the time of these growing Cold War tensions as far as Korea was concerned was the division of the country at the 38th Parallel.

This decision, it seems, evolved out of strategic necessity in the eyes of the policy planners in Washington.(6) The Soviet Union had very quickly moved its forces into Manchuria and on 12 August, four days after the declaration of war on Japan, Russian troops mounted amphibious landings in north-eastern Korea. With the imminent possibility of Soviet forces occupying the entire peninsula, it was agreed in Washington that "for tactical reasons the US should occupy as much of Korea as was still feasible", and on this interpretation the authorities in Washington hastily drew up a draft directive encompassing all the conditions for Japanese surrender including a proposed division of the task of accepting the surrender of Japanese forces in Korea on a territorial basis. The draft proposals were communicated to the British and

5. United States, United Kingdom and China.

6. For a detailed account of the division and a discussion assessing why the Soviets accepted this proposal see Grey op cit, pp.482-487.
Soviet Governments. Stalin requested minor changes but the essence of the directive, the division at the 38th Parallel, was unaltered. On 2 September 1945, General Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) in the Pacific, issued this directive as General Order Number 1, including the provision for the acceptance of the surrender of Japanese forces north of the 38th Parallel by Soviet forces and south of the parallel by those of the US. The directive was carried out on 9 September 1945.

Undoubtedly the 38th Parallel was chosen in the light of the most limited tactical considerations only. Strategically it has little to commend it, as it bisects Korea where the country approaches its greatest breadth, and provides relatively limited natural defences. But with the nearest American troops at this time some 600 air miles away in Okinawa and the Russians already in Korea, the US felt the move imperative. After all there was still the possibility of American forces getting possession of the capital and most populous city, Seoul, which was south of the parallel and even further south of the point of reported Russian operations (7). Moreover, the dividing of the peninsula at the 38th Parallel was envisaged by the US merely as an arbitrary demarcation for the purpose of facilitating an easy transfer of authority, "no more than a military expedient between two friendly powers" (8), not as a permanent boundary creating two Koreas. Given the justifications for the establishing of this dividing line, however, it seemed inevitable that a conflict of interest between the two powers would develop and transform the 38th Parallel into a frontier between North and South.

7. Ibid, p.484. The report was based on information regarding the Russian position as at 12 August.

Both powers were quick to consolidate their positions in their respective zones of occupation with the Americans establishing a US Military Government in the south and the Russians utilizing the existing, albeit rudimentary, governmental machinery established by the de facto Korean authorities in the north. These moves effectively alienated the two zones, which not only disrupted the normal Korean social and administrative relationships but, by separating the predominantly agricultural south from the more industrial north, adversely affected the economy of the country. Although attempts were made by the American Commander in Korea to overcome these problems by direct military negotiation with his Soviet counterpart, these were to no avail and the whole question of the future of Korean unification was taken up at a governmental level.

The matter was accordingly placed on the agenda of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the US, the UK and the USSR at Moscow in December 1945. An agreement was concluded to which China later adhered. It was decided to establish a joint US-Soviet Commission to consult with the Koreans and work towards the establishment of a provisional All-Korean Government which, for a period of five years, would be subject to a Four-Power Trusteeship by the four signatory powers.

It was, however, quickly apparent that there was no chance of agreement between the Soviets and the Americans on the Joint Commission,

the chief point at issue being the procedure to be followed in consulting with various Korean political groups in the course of organising the provisional government. (12) In less than two years of discussions the bilateral negotiations ended in deadlock, thereby reducing the Joint Commission to impotence.

Meanwhile, the US Military Government came under increasing criticism from many important elements in the southern Korean population dissatisfied with its handling of social, economic and political rehabilitation and, more specifically, of land reform in that part of Korea under its control. (13) At the same time the wisdom of continuing the level of existing American involvement in Korean affairs came under closer examination in Washington. In a memorandum, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of State in September 1947 it was claimed that "from the standpoint of military security, the United States has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea". (14) It was pointed out that in the event of war in the Far East, the forces in Korea would be a military liability, would require substantial reinforcements to maintain, and in the light of

12. McCune and Grey, op cit, pp.64-68. Initial opposition to the Commission came from the Koreans themselves, who viewed the undertakings of the Commission with suspicion. They identified the idea of "trusteeship" with that of the "protectorate" they had endured for nearly forty years under Japan. The problem of deciding those groups which were to be consulted by the Commission stems from this domestic opposition as the Soviets refused to allow the participation of any Korean parties antagonistic towards the Moscow Agreement in discussions to form an All-Korean Government.


current manpower shortages, the two divisions then stationed in Korea "could well be used elsewhere" .(15) On balance, therefore, the liabilities incurred in maintaining a continued US presence in Korea on the existing scale far outweighed any benefits received. This, coupled with the conviction that further direct negotiations with the Soviet Union would be futile, led the authorities in Washington to the conclusion that it was "desirable to withdraw before conditions made a precipitous, prestige-shattering evacuation imperative."(16)

The question which remained then, as one commentator has described it, was how the US Government would "extricate itself from an embarrassing situation in Korea while salvaging what it hoped to achieve, namely, an independent Korea organized in accordance with American conceptions of democracy, friendly to the US and prepared to co-operate with the West in resisting the expanding pressure of Communism."(17) The best course open seemed to be to refer the problem to the United Nations and on 17 September 1947, the State Department declared that the Korean case would be submitted to the second regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.(18)

Such a move appeared to have much in its favour for the Americans. It presented the US with an opportunity to reduce its commitment

15. Goodrich, op cit, p.28
16. Lichterman, op cit, p.577
17. Goodrich, op cit, pp.28-29
18. Ibid, pp.29-41. Goodrich believes that the validity of the U.S. procedure of referring the matter to the General Assembly was doubtful. He writes; "It undoubtedly is true that at the time of the San Francisco Conference a distinction was generally accepted between the function of peacemaking and that of peace-maintenance. The first was regarded as the special responsibility of the powers primarily concerned with the defeat of the enemy states while the second was made the responsibility of the U.N." p.36.
in Korea, at the same time protecting its limited strategic interest there as "the territorial integrity of South Korea would be safeguarded by substituting the moral backing of the UN for the military backing of the US". (19) Also the US could count on a sympathetic majority in the UN which might produce enough pressure on the Soviets to accept the American approach to solving the problem. However, the drawbacks this US initiative presented to the UN and to the cause for the establishment of a free and independent Korea were soon apparent. The US had in reality passed on to the UN a responsibility which the organization was far too weak to carry and as a result prolonged and further complicated the question of Korean independence. Nevertheless, with the concurrence of the General Assembly, the item was included on the Assembly's agenda. (20)

On 28 October 1947, the First (Political) Committee of the General Assembly had before it a draft resolution submitted by the US. It recommended the holding of elections, under the observation of a United Nations Commission, by the occupying Powers in northern and southern Korea not later than 31 March 1948; the establishing of a National Assembly and a National Government of Korea; and the withdrawal of occupation forces after the elections. The UN Commission was to have the power to travel and observe "throughout all of Korea", to be available for consultation, and to make any recommendations that it might wish concerning further UN action in maintaining the independence of Korea. (21)


20. There was criticism levelled against the US action by the USSR questioning the legality of the move and claiming that the problem was not within the competence of the UN. The objection was apparently not taken too seriously by the Soviets as they participated in subsequent discussions of Korean independence in the General Assembly and in the voting. Goodrich, op cit, pp.36-7.

Despite objections from the Soviet delegation, which advanced two counter-proposals, one calling for the withdrawal, by the beginning of 1948, of both Soviet and American occupation forces in order to "give the Koreans the opportunity to choose their own government", and the second, providing for an invitation to "elected representatives of the Korean people from northern and southern Korea to take part in the discussion of the question", the majority of the members of the General Assembly showed a preference for the American plan.\(22\)

Early military withdrawal, followed by unsupervised elections as envisaged in the Soviet resolution would, it was claimed, "lead to disunity and chaos unfavourable to any free expression of the will of the Korean people". The Assembly consequently rejected this proposal by a large majority.\(23\) Moreover, it was argued that, although inclusion of Korean representatives in the initial consideration of the problem by the Assembly was not practicable, or necessary at this stage, "since everybody was agreed on the desirability of independence", consultation on this level could be made a function of the proposed Commission outlined in the American draft resolution.\(24\)

In accordance with this suggestion, the US representative submitted an amendment to the Soviet resolution providing for the establishment of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) which would not only have the powers prescribed in the American draft resolution but would also be called on to "facilitate and expedite the participation of elected representatives of the Korean people" and insure that the Korean representatives would in fact be "duly elected by the Korean people and not mere appointees by military authorities in Korea".\(25\)

23. Goodrich, op cit, pp.31-32
24. Ibid.
This US version completely altered the nature of the Soviet proposal and consequently made it unacceptable to the USSR. The Soviet delegation added that should UNTCOCK be set up by the Assembly without the participation of Korean nationals in that body's discussions, the USSR would not be able to take part in the work of the Commission.(26) Nevertheless, these principles were incorporated in a further US draft resolution which the General Assembly adopted, by a vote of 43 to none with 6 abstentions,(27) on 14 November 1947.

The resolution as finally passed was, in essence, merely an "improved" rendering of the plan in the initial US draft proposals submitted in October, but acceptance of it met with the immediate problem of whether it could be successfully carried out. The Soviet Union had stated clearly that it viewed the UN initiatives as illegal and UNTCOCK as unrepresentative and refused to co-operate in implementing the resolution. When the nine member UN Temporary Commission(28) convened in Seoul on 12 January 1948, to carry out the directives of the resolution, it was, therefore, almost a foregone conclusion that it would not be permitted to function in northern Korea.

When the Commission failed to gain entry into the Soviet zone or even to establish any contact with the Soviet authorities, consideration had to be given to the question of whether there should be an early

26. The Soviet Delegate to the U.N., Andrei Gromyko, also claimed that the U.S. resolution was "intended to further the ambitions of the U.S. in Korea, politically, economically, and as a base for operations against the Soviet Union." McCune and Grey, op. cit., pp.70, 223.


28. Consisting of representatives of Australia, Canada, China, El Salvador, France, India, the Philippines, Syria and the Ukraine S.S.R. The Ukrainian representative, however, declared his country would not take part.
abandonment of the UN programme, or continuation with a modified arrangement which would apply to southern Korea only. On the latter proposition there were sharp differences of opinion within the Commission itself. The Chairman of UNTCOK, in consultations with the Interim Committee of the General Assembly, claimed the majority of the Commission felt that proceeding with elections in the South alone would only produce the "formation of a separate sovereign government in South Korea, which would not facilitate either the establishment of Korean national independence or the withdrawal of the occupying troops."(29)

The US, however, was anxious for the holding of elections in the south so that "the whole world would know who had denied [the North Koreans] the opportunity of electing their own representatives to the Korean Assembly".(30) Accordingly, the American delegate to the UN, Dr Philip Jessup, submitted a proposal embodying the view that the Commission should carry out the programme throughout as much of Korea in which it was able to function. The majority of the Interim Committee supported the US position, stressing the importance "of not allowing the Soviet Union to use its veto to defeat the execution of the wishes of the General Assembly", and on 26 February 1948, the Committee passed a resolution encompassing the American proposal.(31) The Temporary Commission in Seoul was soon advised that it should observe such elections as could take place "in a free atmosphere and in such parts of Korea as were accessible to it."(32)


31. Goodrich, op cit, p.47. The Soviet Union and the other members of the Soviet bloc refused to participate in the work of the Interim Committee, or "Little Assembly", on the ground that it was an illegally constituted organ.

32. McCune and Grey, op cit, p.224.
On 10 May 1948, UNTCOK duly observed elections in South Korea which it reported to be a valid expression of the free will of the southern electorate.\(^{33}\) Shortly afterwards the elected representatives met at Seoul and constituted themselves as the Korean National Assembly. On 20 July Dr Syngman Rhee was chosen by the Assembly as President of the new government, and on 15 August the new regime proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) claiming jurisdiction over the whole country. The UN General Assembly, in accepting the findings of UNTCOK, on 12 December adopted a resolution declaring that "there has been established a lawful government (the Government of the Republic of Korea) having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult and ... that this is the only such Government in Korea."\(^{34}\) Almost immediately the US extended *de jure* recognition of the Southern government, and undertook preparations for the withdrawal of American troops.\(^{35}\) This move was quickly followed by twenty-seven other countries which took similar action in recognising the southern regime.

Although the creation of the Republic of Korea provided a means of placating South Korean demands for political autonomy, and at the same

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33. Moderate and leftist groups both opposed the holding of elections in the south alone because: (a) they felt that there had not been sufficient effort made to resolve the question by negotiation, (b) that a separate election would divide the country permanently and (c) that a free atmosphere for conducting elections did not exist in South Korea. When the elections took place the leftist groups in fact boycotted them. Nevertheless, out of a total population of about 20 million, 7,036,750 voted, this constituting about 72 percent of those qualified to vote. However, on the basis of votes cast, there was only one U.N.T.C.O.K. observer to every 14,000 voters. *Ibid.*, pp.226-7; Goodrich, *op cit*, pp.57-9

34. *Korean Unification*, pp.75.7; *A.J.H.R.*, 1950, J-3, p.12. The resolution also recommended that a permanent United Nations Commission on Korea (U.N.C.O.K.) be established with much the same scope as the original Temporary Commission.

35. American troops were withdrawn in March 1949, three months after the Soviet Union had departed its troops from North Korea.
time, enabled the US to liquidate a military commitment which had proved to be inconvenient, embarrassing and costly, little was accomplished toward the realization of Korean unity. Moreover, the developments in northern Korea at this time further diminished any remaining hope of achieving Korean national independence.

The Soviet Union, no doubt desirous of withdrawing its military forces from its zone of occupation, and probably as a countermove to the American initiatives in the South, appeared determined to establish a nominally independent administration in North Korea agreeably disposed towards Moscow. On 1 May 1948, the (North) Korean People's Committee(36) published a draft constitution for the Korean People's Democratic Republic (KPDR) and soon after announced that elections for a 572 member Supreme Peoples Assembly, in which South Korea would be represented, were to be held on 25 August.(37) These elections took place without UNTCOK supervision and the outcome of the balloting set the stage for the proclaiming in Pyongyang of the formation of the KPDR on 10 September, in which Kim Il-sung, former chairman of the superseded Peoples Committee, took office as Premier. Like its southern counterpart, the KPDR proclaimed its mandate to apply to all Korea. The Soviet bloc immediately recognised this government and satisfied with the suitability of the regime, the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from North Korea at the end of December 1948.

36. The "Interim Government" of northern Korea set up by the Soviet occupation authorities. See above p.5 and footnote 9.

37. What actually turned out to be southern representation was in fact a convention of 1,002 "delegates" claiming to represent the people of South Korea, which met in Haeju, just north of the 38th Parallel, on August 22-24, to select 360 of their number to represent South Korea in the Supreme Peoples Assembly. For a detailed discussion of the elections see McCune and Grey, op cit, pp.246-50.
With the evacuation of their troops from Korea, the US and the USSR assisted the respective Korean regimes in establishing and building up their own armed forces. In the case of South Korea, the US helped in training and equipping these forces to a level which the American military authorities considered sufficient to defend the newly established Republic. However these "defence forces" were hardly comparable in strength to the armed forces of the KPDR. There was evidence that the Russians had already trained and equipped a North Korean army with an estimated strength of between 125,000 to 400,000 men.(38)

The upshot of these developments was the materialization of separate armed governments on either side of the 38th Parallel, with each regime in complete opposition ideologically to the other. The creation of two Koreas was, in part, the result of the need to mollify Korean demand for greater autonomy, but more directly the outcome of almost three years of disagreement between the two occupying powers in finding a mutually acceptable solution to the Korean problem. By the beginning of 1949, this situation led Korea "almost inexorably into perpetuating the American-Soviet conflict in its own affairs"(39) and, furthermore, put an effective end to organized unification efforts.

The United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK) was nevertheless instructed to continue in its attempt to secure a peaceful unification of North and South Korea and "seek to facilitate the removal of barriers to economic, social and other friendly intercourse caused by the division of Korea."(40) However, as the existing antagonism between the two Koreas

38. John M. Allison, Ambassador From the Prairie, Tuttle Publishing Company, Tokyo, 1975, p.120.
40. Korean Unification, p.76.
developed into irreconcilable hostility, these attempts were abandoned. Already by mid 1949, the authorities in both Seoul and Pyongyang had adopted an offensive stance in the deployment of their armed forces and the incidence of armed skirmishes between the two sides became more regular. At this time UNCOK reported that the border area of the 38th Parallel was becoming "a sea of increasingly frequent exchanges of fire and armed raids."(41) Further indications that the military build-up and resultant friction between the opposing republics could possibly embolden one or the other to resolve the Korean problem by force of arms,(42) prompted a re-evaluation of the role of UNCOK. Accordingly, on 21 October, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution instructing UNCOK to make its first task the observing and reporting of developments "which might lead to or otherwise involve military conflict in Korea."(43)

The originally intended function of UNCOK was also impaired by the position taken over the question of unification by ROK President Syngman Rhee. The southern Government was unwilling to consider unification except on the basis of the unqualified acceptance by the North Koreans of its authority and looked with disfavour on the Commission's attempts to contact leading individuals in the North in an effort to open discussions

41. Lichterman, op cit, p.578.

42. No doubt each protagonist sought in the outcome of any such conflict the establishment of their form of government exclusively throughout the entire country. Although such an attack seemed more likely to be launched from the North, President Rhee had alarmed some American officials with talk of invading North Korea, such as in comments to Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall in February 1949, and in his Independence Day speech of March 1, 1950. In discussions with Ambassador at Large, Philip Jessup, on 14 January 1950, Rhee reportedly claimed that the South Koreans "would have a much better strategic defence line if their forces moved into North Korea and he expressed confidence that they could defeat northern opposition." Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision, Free Press, New York, 1968, p.69.

43. Korean Unification, pp.84-6.
between the two factions. Whilst many members of the UN recognised the Rhee administration as the only "lawful government" to be set up in Korea, they by no means supported Rhee's claims that it was the sovereign government of the whole country. Moreover the authoritarian tendencies of the regime and its failure to carry out much needed social, economic and political reform came under increasing criticism from a considerable portion of the UN. Even the US viewed the political trends in the South with some concern.

By the beginning of 1949, however, there was a noticeable shift in the American attitude towards the South Korean Government. Although this policy was not clearly defined, it unquestionably arose out of the rapidly changing political situation in the Far East. The civil war raging in China at this time between the rightist Kuomintang Government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Tse-tung was overwhelmingly moving in favour of the latter. With the proclaiming of the Peoples Republic of China 1 October 1949, the chief concern of US policymakers now was in preventing "the mounting flood from engulfing neighbouring non-Communist countries." With the threat to the ROK magnified as a result of the Communist success in China, the Truman Administration became less inclined to press for reform of the Rhee government and more concerned with its maintenance than some other members of the UN. Yet despite declarations of support for the ROK, American words and actions in early 1950 gave the impression both in Korea and abroad that the US was not deeply committed to its survival.

44. The Commission decided that it could not communicate with the Pyongyang authorities since only the government of the ROK had been recognized by the U.N. as lawful. U.N.C.O.K. made no contacts in the North. Goodrich, op cit pp.74-9.

45. Goodrich, op cit, p.80
On 12 January 1950, the American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, spoke before the National Press Club in Washington, outlining US policy in Asia and the Pacific. The cornerstone of this policy centred on American appreciation of existing military security requirements in the Pacific and accordingly the limit of US assistance to be extended to the region. Acheson spoke of a "defensive perimeter" which incorporated those areas considered vital to American national interests. "This defensive perimeter", he said,

runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus; and from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands... So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against attack ... Should such an attack occur - one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from - the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilised world under the Charter of the United Nations.(46)

This statement was merely a reiteration of established defence policy in the region, an "enumeration of those sectors in the western Pacific in which the US had firm military commitments; ie, [US] responsibilities as an occupying power in Japan and special interest in the Philippines as a former part of United States territory."(47) However, with the omission of Korea (and Formosa) from this "defence line", it was to appear, in the light of subsequent events, as a most unfortunately timed statement. A great deal of criticism was later levelled at Acheson that these remarks probably suggested to Soviet planners the unwillingness of the US to make a serious commitment in Korea and they may well have concluded that they had an opportunity, by the forceful unification of that country, to gain substantial strategic advantages cheaply and without serious risks. But


despite outward appearances, South Korea had not been "abandoned to its enemies" by the US under the terms of Acheson's speech. "With respect to Korea", a leading State Department official claimed, "the United States had associated itself with others of the United Nations in support of Korea's cause and in that sense therefore, Korea's position transcended a definition of interest by a line drawn in any direction."(48)

By May, concern over the "defence perimeter" subsided and the question of US military aid to the southern Republic moved to the fore in response to recent reports of a substantial build-up of North Korean forces together with troop movements of an ominous character. Although in troop numbers there was estimated to be a rough parity between the North and South at this time, the North Koreans were better equipped if not better trained than their Southern rivals. The North had an operational air force, an operational navy and a brigade of tanks, all of which were conspicuously absent in the military establishment of the South. In addition to this, the range of the Northern artillery out distanced that of the South.(49) This disparity between the two sides was supposedly to be remedied with the implementation of a US military aid programme costing $10,970,000 over which American and Korean authorities had reached agreement on 15 March.

48. W. Walton Butterworth, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (succeeded by Rusk 28 March 1950) to John M. Chang, 20 January 1950. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.11-14; See also Memo by Rusk to Under Secretary of State, James E. Webb, 2 May 1950. in Ibid, pp.64-7

The reports of the build-up and mobilizing of North Korean troops near the 38th Parallel were dismissed as "exaggerated". In May General William Roberts, Chief of the US Military Advisory Group to the ROK (KMAG), did not view these developments as indicative of imminent danger of attack by the forces of the KDPR; he reportedly told newspaper correspondents, "There is no buildup of North Korean military forces along the thirty-eighth parallel at present." (50) As late as 19 June intelligence sources had not warned of any imminent threat to the South resulting from recent offensive deployments of Northern ground forces. (51) A few days later these estimates were shown to be completely in error.

On the morning of 25 June 1950 (local time), the armed forces of the KPDR invaded the territory of the ROK. "It would appear", reported American Ambassador to Korea, John J. Muccio, to the State Department, "from the nature of the attack and the manner in which it was launched that it constitutes an all out offensive against the Republic of Korea." (52)

50. Paige, Korean Decision, pp.72-3. K.M.A.G. was the 500 man remnant of U.S. military occupation forces in Korea. Its role was, as its title suggests, that of a consultative body, especially on military matters, but also on general political matters. It was under the operational control of Ambassador Muccio.

51. In a memorandum to the State Department from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) examining the 'Current Capabilities of the Northern Korean Regime', it was stated, "northern Korea's armed forces, even as presently constituted and supported, have a capability for attaining limited objectives in short term military operations against southern Korea including the capture of Seoul." Although reference is given to K.P.D.R. troop deployment, eg, "Trained and equipped units of the Communist 'Peoples Army' are being deployed southward in the area of the 38th Parallel. 'Peoples Army' and Border Constabulary units there equal or surpass the strength of southern Korean army units similarly deployed. Tanks and heavy artillery have also been moved close to the Parallel in recent months." nowhere does it interpret this information as constituting any threat of an 'imminent attack'. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by the CIA, 19 June, 1950, pp.109-121.

52. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Muccio to Acheson (925), 25 June (Korean time), pp.125-6.
CHAPTER II

THE NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVE

I. NEW ZEALAND AND THE KOREAN QUESTION TO JUNE 1950

The American decision to refer the question of Korea to the General Assembly of the UN in September 1947 placed on that organisation and its members some of the responsibility which the US had hitherto assumed alone. New Zealand, by virtue of its membership of the UN, was thus called upon to share this responsibility and to participate in an international attempt to resolve the Korean issue. However, considering the view of the New Zealand Government at that time as to the role the UN should play in issues such as the problem of the independence of Korea, it is hardly surprising that the reception of this development in Wellington was less than enthusiastic.

In the immediate post World War II years the first Labour Government remained in power in New Zealand under the leadership of Peter Fraser. There was in this period a continuation of established principles in foreign policy formulation, partly reflected in the Government's approach to the place of international organisations in the post-war world. Despite the failure of the League of Nations to prevent the onset of the World War II, Fraser resolutely advocated a collective security system under the auspices of a "supra-national organisation which would exercise judicial powers and command physical force and could mobilise the loyalty of men and women all over the world."(1) With the formation of the United Nations Organisation, the "second great twentieth-century experiment in collective security",(2) at San Francisco in 1945,


Fraser's hopes were realised, although there were aspects of the Organisation's Charter which he found far from desirable. At San Francisco Fraser attacked "with unsurpassed earnestness and unsurpassed passion"(3) the provision of veto powers in the Security Council for the five permanent members.(4) Although this stand against the veto was unsuccessful, Fraser himself was nevertheless instrumental in bringing about other important modifications to the Charter. But the Government believed the real value of the UN was in affording the opportunity for lesser powers like New Zealand to act independently in a world dominated by great powers and the ever-increasing rigidity of power blocs and political alignments.

The realities of the ideologically and politically divided international situation were soon reflected in the actions of the UN. By 1947, there had emerged clear signs of a split within the Organisation. Already the veto power provided for the "Big Five" in the Security Council had been liberally exercised by the US and the USSR over most issues which presented a conflict of interest between these two powers, thereby rendering the UN impotent in most matters of political significance. When the problem of Korea was introduced to the General Assembly, therefore, New Zealand expressed a number of reservations. It feared that this move could permanently polarize political allegiances within the Organisation to the extent of threatening its actual capacity to function altogether.

3. J. V. Wilson, 'A United Nations Retrospect', in External Affairs Review, Vol. 10 (August 1960), pp.3-15. The author was a member of the New Zealand Delegation at San Francisco and makes a valid comment on this aspect of Fraser's attitude towards the veto;

"...in my view New Zealand somewhat overemphasised the importance of these voting provisions, since whatever they might be, a Security Council able to reach unity through negotiation would be able to take effective decisions, and a divided Council would not. Even if we had won our fight ... I doubt whether the real position would have radically changed." ibid, p.3

Thus participation by the New Zealand Permanent Delegation to the UN in the discussion and voting on the proposed American and Soviet resolutions during October-November 1947(5), was qualified by Sir Carl Berendsen, New Zealand's chief delegate, stating that he favoured the solution of the Korean difficulties by those who had created them; that is, by the two Powers tackling the question alone. Furthermore, while supporting the American proposal rather than the Soviet draft resolution, Berendsen questioned the desirability of fixing a rigid time-limit for the holding of elections. He considered that the matter should properly be considered in relation to the peace arrangements for Japan, but if that would occasion too much delay the Assembly should confine its action in the meantime to the establishment of a Commission whose sole task would be to ascertain the views of the Korean people.(6)

Similarly with the discussion and voting in the Interim Committee during February 1948 on the American proposal advocating that UNTCOK observe elections in South Korea alone if necessary,(7) the New Zealand representative, James Thorn, voiced some reservations before extending support to the US resolution. Thorn suggested that the American proposal should be amended by the incorporation of United States pledges of co-operation in securing free elections and that the South Korean National Assembly would not necessarily be the definitive form of Korean Government, but would be free to consult with other groups regarding their participation.(8)

He was aware that the adoption of this resolution by the Interim Committee was an act of the greatest importance in that it would produce a definite and final choice between two different approaches to the Korean problem. Moreover, he was no doubt conscious that the implementation of this

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5. See above pp. 8-10.
7. See above pp
resolution could, as the Australian and Canadian delegates asserted, effect the "perpetuation of the division of Korea and the intensification of internecine strife", with the UN seemingly supporting this dissension.(9)

New Zealand's approach to the Korean question prior to mid 1948, therefore, was circumspect. It was not as outwardly opposed to aspects of the UN's action as some Members had been; nevertheless it had qualified its acceptance of these measures by voicing reservations about the objectives of certain resolutions. And subsequent events in Korea seemed to endorse the Government's stance on this issue. By May there were two rival regimes claiming jurisdiction over the whole country, and in September, the Prime Minister was predicting to Parliament that the American withdrawal from South Korea would result in that territory being "very speedily marched over or overridden."(10)

By late 1948, however, this attitude changed as was apparent from a speech delivered by Peter Fraser before the First Committee of the General Assembly on 6 December. In response to a Czechoslovakian proposal calling for admission of a North Korean delegate to the UN, Fraser demanded "concrete evidence" that the Government of the KPDR had been fairly elected and truly represented the people over whom it claimed authority. Furthermore, he claimed that it was essential that the North Korean government should formally state that they respected the authority of the UN. "The United Nations", he said, "might just as well abandon its attempts to promote peaceful co-operation if it was prepared to recognise a Government which flouted its decisions."(11) As for the allegations levelled against the

9. Ibid; Goodrich, Korea, p.49.


conduct and the validity of the ROK Government, he condemned these as mere diatribes intended to take the place of proof. His delegation was quite convinced of the legitimacy of the Government of South Korea. It was, however, waiting to be convinced that the same was true of the Peoples Democratic Republic.(12)

Later, when presented with evidence in the form of assurances from the Soviet delegate that North Korea was a democratically administered country, Fraser dismissed it with the claim that "no one could be certain of what went on in North Korea since its Government, as well as the USSR, had most reprehensibly refused access to UNTOK."(13) Fraser was never convinced of the legitimacy of the northern regime. This was clearly demonstrated with the Government's singular recognition of the southern republic on 29 June 1949 and, later that year, with the New Zealand delegation's vigorous criticism of the KPDR in the UN.

On the basis of a report(14) submitted by UNOK to the Ad Hoc Political Committee of the General Assembly, the New Zealand delegation endorsed the Commission's conclusion that the North Korean regime was no more than "a creature of military occupation ruling by right of transference of power from the Soviet Union."(15) In the ensuing debate sparked off by this report, Foss Shanahan, another New Zealand representative, echoed Fraser's earlier reproach of the northern government when he claimed "there was no objective evidence to show that it was democratic and all the

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12. Ibid.
13. Ibid, p.951
available impartial evidence tended to show that it had no popular basis whatever.  

Moreover, in contrast to this censure of the KPDR, the New Zealand delegation found little difficulty in accepting as reputable the administration in South Korea. Even though UNCK had criticised certain aspects of the policy of this government, these inconsistencies were blamed on the machinations of the North. In fact, it was argued that the activities of the North had actually compelled the ROK "psychologically, if not materially, to place itself on a war footing, and that it was this spiritual mobilisation which had blighted the conduct of the Rhee regime." (17) And the New Zealand delegation was certain as to the source of these difficulties regarding the Korean problem.

The "deplorable situation" in Korea, Shanahan asserted, was the product of the intransigent policy of the northern government's sponsor. He stated emphatically that, while the US had done everything in its power to ensure the successful settlement of the Korean question by the fullest co-operation with the Commission,

all efforts had been completely nullified by the Soviet Union's boycott of the Commission and by its refusal to implement two resolutions adopted by overwhelming majorities in the General Assembly. That attitude had only encouraged the Authorities of North Korea in their defiance of the United Nations and its organs. (18)

Taking this further, Berendsen denounced the Soviet attempt to introduce "phony resolutions" in the General Assembly which he claimed were "presented with no intention or expectation that they should be acted upon, but purely for propaganda purposes." (19)

16. Ibid. This debate culminated in the redefining of the responsibilities of U.N.C.O.K. See above p.15
Yet despite these declarations of concern over the situation in Korea, the entire issue was a rather peripheral one in New Zealand's overall foreign policy considerations during the late 1940s. From the tenor of official statements made during this time it was apparent that the Government regarded Korea merely as an unfortunate casualty of the disruptive strategies of the "ugly menace of international communism" or, as Fraser described it, "that dark, turgid, dangerous flood"(20), which was perceived to be "stalking through the chaos of postwar Asia."(21) In short, the difficulties experienced in Korea were not viewed in isolation, but as part of a wider problem confronting all Asia. In the Government's reckoning, however, that problem demanded less attention as it considered the major issues which affected the well-being of New Zealand lay outside the Asian region.

II. ESTABLISHED PRIORITIES

In dealing with foreign policy and defence in the immediate postwar years, New Zealand government and military circles were initially pre-occupied with safeguarding New Zealand's security and interests in the southern Pacific.(22) This was to be expected given the anxieties felt in New Zealand (and to a far greater extent in Australia) about the perceived


22. An assessment of the various strands which make up New Zealand's foreign and defence policies during and immediately after World War II goes beyond the scope of this study. What is intended here, is to bring out those aspects of these respective policies which the present author considers to have direct bearing on New Zealand's response to the Korean Crisis and not to make a definitive statement on this subject. This has been authoritively examined in I.C. MacGibbon, 'History of New Zealand Defence', in New Zealand, Foreign Policy and Defence, Proceedings of the University of Otago Foreign Policy School, Dunedin, 1977; MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand 1945-1957', in N.Z. in World Affairs; F.L.W. Wood, 'Foreign Policy 1945-1951', in ibid; Wood, The New Zealand People at War.
threat from Japan during the initial stages of the Pacific War, especially after the fall of Singapore in February 1942. (23) Basic pre-war strategy was shattered and for the first time the authorities in both Wellington and Canberra were forced to acknowledge that the security of Australia and New Zealand could no longer be guaranteed by British naval power. For the remainder of the War, both countries would have to rely on the United States to protect their interests in that area. Acceptance of this new approach in defence planning, however, involved "the tacit repudiation of the most basic axiom of [Australasian] thinking ... in matters of defence and physical security." (24) But the reality of a Pacific no longer to be defended by the Royal Navy was recognised then and, indeed, reinforced with the reluctant acceptance by 1945 that the region was unlikely to regain assurances of protection by the British in the foreseeable future.

After the War, initial hopes that New Zealand's interests in the Pacific would be guaranteed by a world-wide collective security system under the auspices of the UN soon faded with the deepening of cold war tensions. By 1948, the Government concentrated instead on regional security arrangements consistent with the UN Charter as a temporary measure till such time as the UN could be made effective.

Once again New Zealand looked towards the US as a guarantor of its security in the Pacific. Accordingly New Zealand along with Australia made approaches to Washington about the formation of some formal defence or security treaty. These initial overtures met with a cool response. The


US was not prepared to extend its commitments outside those areas which it considered to be of immediate importance to American national security. In spite of this lack of response there was, curiously enough, no great concern in Wellington at American unwillingness to be drawn immediately into a formal commitment to the security of the Pacific. By this time the Government apparently accepted as implicit that in any possible future conflict in the Southwest Pacific, the US would not stand idly by and allow the security of New Zealand (or Australia) to be threatened. In any case, such a development seemed remote in the foreseeable future. After all, the US had, in effect, overwhelming power in the Pacific area. Japan had been crushed and her navy no longer existed (and it was an acknowledged fact that the requisite for any prospective invader of New Zealand was a naval force capable of undertaking a major seaborne offensive), the Soviet Union had not been a major naval power since 1905, and China was weak and torn by civil war.(25) Besides, New Zealand, Fraser said, "could not expect to compel a huge country like America to act, she must await a change in the United States attitude."(26) Although Fraser considered a formal American commitment as important, by 1948 it had lost its urgency. Content for the time being, therefore, that New Zealand, and the Southwest Pacific for that matter, was "safer than ever",(27) the Government directed its primary defence considerations beyond the Pacific area towards more traditional regions and obligations. The development of Commonwealth defence arrangements consequently became uppermost in the Government's strategic thinking.

The role New Zealand would play within this framework was discussed in detail by Fraser during Commonwealth meetings in London in late 1948

27. MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand', p.152
and again early the following year. From these consultations it was decided that any military commitment from New Zealand should be directed towards making the maximum possible contribution in the common effort of maintaining Commonwealth security. Acceptance of this obligation was total. "New Zealand", Fraser stated unequivocally, "is in the position where her frontiers are the frontiers of the British Commonwealth, [and] the frontiers of the British Commonwealth are the frontiers of democracy."(28) There was equally complete acceptance that of these "frontiers", the Western nations of Europe were seriously threatened, and

among the Western nations is the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is the centre, focus, and force of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and she is also threatened.(29)

And there was little doubt as to the source of this danger. The uncertainties in Europe, created by the post-war vacuum on the continent, led Western governments to believe that the Soviet Union would capitalise on this situation and embark on an aggressive policy of political aggrandizement. Recent events in Europe seemed to confirm this expansionist orientation of Soviet policy; Czechoslovakia fell to a communist coup; Berlin was blockaded by deliberate Soviet action, and there was no indication that Soviet occupation forces would be withdrawn from Austria.

With the formation on 4 April 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a deterrent to this perceived challenge from the Soviet Union, Commonwealth anxiety regarding the security of Britain was reduced. Yet this strategy was not solely related to the security of the United Kingdom. The strategic value of the Middle East was also of great importance and the defence of this region was considered vital. The Middle

29. Ibid.
East had traditionally been the focal point of Commonwealth trade and communications, and the importance of oil made this region even more valuable.

In planning New Zealand's contribution to a Commonwealth war effort, attention was given to the likely course of a Soviet campaign and to the most effective use of the forces that New Zealand intended to raise. It was decided, therefore, that the Middle East was the logical focus of her effort. Accordingly, in the event of war with the Soviet Union, New Zealand agreed to make available an infantry division, augmented with additional major armoured and artillery formations, and a large proportion of the New Zealand Air Force, which would be employed in a fighter/ground attack role. Surplus vessels of the New Zealand Navy would also be sent to Middle Eastern waters. (30)

Thus from 1945 to 1949, there were three clearly identifiable strands which dominated the foreign and defence policies of the Labour Government; support of the UN and the principle of collective security, the desirability of fostering closer ties with the US, and commitment to Britain and the Commonwealth. (31) Whether or not a reappraisal of this approach was required, due to the considerable change in the international situation at the close of the decade, it would not come within the purview of Fraser's Government. In November 1949, a National Government under the leadership of Sidney Holland took office and any such redefinition of policy would be the concern of this administration. Members of the parliamentary Labour Party, now in the Opposition benches, were not altogether happy with this prospect, "discerning in the conservatives a lack of knowledge and sophistication about foreign affairs." Such

31. See Wood, 'Foreign Policy', p.91.
apprehension proved to be unfounded. The new government in fact showed "no disposition to develop any strong particularistic line of their own, either obtusely traditional or experimentally bizarre."(32) It was content instead to carry on the main lines of Labour's policies. Indeed, it had little reason to alter immediately the orientation of this stance. In National's campaign policy for the 1949 General Election, foreign policy was not given prominence, the upper ranks of the Party being certain that the outcome of the election would not even remotely be affected by this issue. Election promises in this area were not made. And once in office, this apparent indifference to, and subordination of, external affairs persisted. The ministerial portfolio did not, unlike Labour, engage the energies of the new Prime Minister; instead it was delegated to National's eloquent, but somewhat, enigmatic, spokesman on foreign affairs, Frederick W. Doidge.

Soon after the end of the war, and up to the Election of 1949, the predominant theme in Doidge's public statements on external affairs centred on what he saw as the antagonistic and aggressive tendencies of Soviet led international communism, which, in his view, precipitated the cold war. Nevertheless this largely personal conviction approximated closely the "orthodox" view held by the National Party and for that matter the view held by the Labour Government in its last two years in office.

The new administration exhibited no inclination to recall Labour's senior appointments to New Zealand's few overseas missions. Of these Sir Carl Berendsen, who was simultaneously ambassador to the US and the UN, was the most notable.

Berendsen had succeeded Walter Nash, who returned to New Zealand from Washington in 1944, as New Zealand's chief representative in the US. He exercised a wide discretion in exchanges with the American Government, and had a "very large hand in formulating the United Nations stands which he announced." He later claimed that "both Labour and National governments left him largely to himself in these matters."(33) Subsequently described as "hyper moralistic", he was thoroughly convinced of the rightness of the cause of the West and he was "irrevocably opposed to totalitarianism."(34) In this sense he must have been regarded by the State Department as an ideal foreign envoy. Nonetheless, both Labour and National administrations could depend on his despatches to be informative, perceptive and accurate,(35) although they often tended to be verbose and at times at odds with policy emanating from Wellington.(36)

In maintaining the status quo in foreign policy matters, the new government also endeavoured to foster closer links with the US as well as continuing to support the UN. With regard to the UN, however, there was a subtle change in emphasis regarding the importance it would have in the National government's foreign policy considerations, a change possibly resulting from Doidge's deep seated scepticism of the UN. As far as National was concerned, there was little in the record of the UN to instil confidence in its ability to maintain world-wide peace and security and in particular, to guarantee the security of New Zealand. This attitude was not unusual, since conservative parties in New Zealand had traditionally preferred to place "more emphasis on, and faith in, the British connection than in any vague

34. Clemow, op cit, p.41.
35. Interview with G.R. Laking, then Counsellor, New Zealand Embassy in Washington, 14 April 1979.
36. See below pp. 219-20.
international institution."(37) Thus, in inheriting a policy which essentially "incorporated New Zealand's limited forces fully into the collective Commonwealth (and, through it, the wider Western) defence system,"(38) the new Government found little difficulty in following to the letter this aspect of their predecessor's policy.

The importance of this commitment to Commonwealth defence was underlined in consultations held between the Cabinet and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, in Wellington on 23 June 1950, two days before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. During these discussions, Slim gave a detailed briefing on Commonwealth defence policy as formulated by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff Committee, as well as the part the authorities in London hoped New Zealand would play in this strategy. He stated that there were three main pillars in the Commonwealth strategy, the first of which was the security of the United Kingdom, which was of paramount importance to the whole Allied cause. This itself, he said, entailed the security of a great part of Europe and the object, therefore, must be to retain and defend this area.

The second pillar of this strategy, was the defence of essential sea communications, and the third pillar, the defence of the Middle East, which was most important. "A basic fact to be appreciated", he pointed out, was that, "even if, in the event of war, we won the battle in Europe and lost in the Middle East, the war would not have been won - there would only be an Armistice."(39) Naturally enough, it would be in the

37. Clemow, _op cit_, pp.378-380
38. MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand', p.156
39. Discussions with Field Marshal Slim held on Friday 23 June 1950, CAB 222/2/2 part(i), C.M.(50) 37, p.2 (National Archives).
European theatre that the United Kingdom would be "committing substantial forces" although there was provision for despatching forces to the Middle East, the British were "thin on the ground" in this region and reinforcement would be necessary.

In examining the other likely theatres of conflict in a war, he believed that, "the security of the Far East was important, but not absolutely vital; the Allies could not lose or win the war in the Far East." (40) As for the South Pacific, Slim discounted any possibility of a military threat, particularly to New Zealand and Australia, because the US possessed air and naval supremacy in the Pacific area. The real threat to Australasian security lay elsewhere. "The fate of New Zealand and Australia", Slim reiterated, "would be decided in Europe and the Middle East", and in "preparing for the hot war", these two regions were "priority areas." For this reason and for logistical purposes, "it was in the Middle East that a contribution of forces from New Zealand and Australia were required and would be welcome." (41)

In accepting the position that New Zealand's main contribution would be in that area, Holland stated that he regarded this as more than an understanding - an obligation in fact. He assured Slim that New Zealand's position was the same as that of the United Kingdom and invited him to convey this statement to the United Kingdom authorities on his return. (42)

Despite the apparent exclusiveness of this commitment to Commonwealth security, it was not construed as a jettisoning of other considerations, in particular the importance of the US, in New Zealand's foreign policy formulation. In the first place, the emphasis within this framework was

40. Ibid, p.3
41. Ibid, p.4
42. Ibid.
entirely on "global" war requirements, that is, the effort required of New Zealand would be its contribution to the overall Allied strategy, of which the defence of the Middle East was but a part. In addition to this, was the fact that the US regarded this commitment to the Middle East as an extension of NATO. They saw this region as the "soft underbelly of Europe", and although the North Atlantic Treaty was a safeguard for Europe, the US, like the United Kingdom, did not have the resources to guarantee the Middle East. Later that year, the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, in discussions with the Government in Wellington on his recent visits to Britain and the US, confirmed this American attitude when he told the Cabinet that,

American authorities did not wish Australia or New Zealand to make any contribution to Pacific defence that would prejudice their ability, in a hot war to participate in the defence of the Middle East, which they regarded as Australia's and New Zealand's proper theatre, and in which connection they "agreed entirely with Slim". (43)

Conscious of the significance of this obligation, the Government recognised very clearly the danger to New Zealand's effort in the Commonwealth defence strategy of becoming embroiled in the problems of what were considered to be strategically unimportant areas. In June 1950, the Korean question fell squarely into this category.

43. Record of a discussion at a meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday, 22 August 1950, with the Rt Hon R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia CM (50) 59, (National Archives).
CHAPTER III

"A BREACH OF THE PEACE AND AN ACT OF AGRESSION"

US - UN INTERVENTION: ISSUES AND REACTIONS

The North Korean military attack of 25 June 1950 was not unheralded, though the scale, timing and execution of the offensive took the Western world completely by surprise. The US, in particular, was caught off guard. (1) The invasion was launched from several points along the 38th Parallel with North Korean infantry making their main thrust southwards in the Ongjin, Kaesong and Chunchon areas. An amphibious landing was also made south of Kangnung on the east coast of the peninsula. (2) In the face of weak and disorganised southern Korean resistance, the invasion quickly gathered momentum. Within seventy-two hours the ROK capital, Seoul, was overrun and the defending ROK forces were in full retreat.

In spite of the surprise nature of the attack and the associated uncertainties, American reaction was swift and, as it turned out, decisive. Ambassador Muccio's despatch reached the State Department at 9.30pm 24 June (Washington time) and the course of action which followed was taken on the strength of this single telegram. (3) Having been notified of the content of Muccio's telegram by Dean Rusk, Secretary of State Acheson agreed to its being sent to the White House for transmission to President Truman who at that time was in Independence, Missouri. It was

1. See above, pp. 17-19.


3. The fact that Muccio had submitted the report was considered to be significant for evaluating its contents. He had the reputation of being a judicious observer, thus his conclusion that an apparent "all-out offensive" was in progress, was taken that at the very least, a 'considerable fracas' was taking place in Korea - not just another minor border clash. For a detailed summary of the first two days of the conflict see Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision, pp.79-144.
Also suggested to Acheson that the situation be referred to the UN Security Council. Accordingly, Acheson called the President at 11.20pm, informed him of Muccio's report and suggested that a meeting of the Security Council be called. Truman agreed. At 11.30 pm, John Hickerson, Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs telephoned Secretary General Lie, informed him of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, and told him of the intention of the US to bring the case before the Security Council.

Drafting then began in the State Department of three documents: (i) a formal communication from the US Mission at the UN requesting a Security Council meeting, (ii) a resolution to be introduced by the US Acting Representative, Ernest Gross, and (iii) a statement to be made by Gross.(4)

At 3 am on 25 June (WT), Ambassador Gross contacted Secretary General Trygve Lie and read to him a formal US communique which concluded with the operative paragraph, "Upon the urgent request of my Government, I ask you to call an immediate meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations" to censure the North Korean action which "constitutes a breach of the peace and an act of aggression."(5)

Later that morning, further confirmation of the substance of Muccio's telegram reached Washington, this time from UNCOF. The content of this cable reiterated Muccio's observations and made the same recommendation as the State Department;

4. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.126-127
5. Foreign Relations - KOREA, P.131; Korean Unification, p.87
Commission wishes to draw attention of Secretary General to serious situation which is assuming character of full-scale war and may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It suggests that he consider the possibility of bringing matter to the notice of the Security Council.(6)

Added to this was a relay from the US Far Eastern Command in Tokyo to the Department of the Army describing the military developments as reported by KMAG, which likewise concluded that the North Koreans were "engaged in an all-out offensive to subjugate South Korea".(7)

The emergency session of the Security Council requested by the US convened at Lake Success at 2 pm that afternoon.(8) The representatives of China(Formosa), Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, France, India, Norway, the United Kingdom, the US and Yugoslavia were present. The representative of the Soviet Union, Mr Malik, continuing the boycott his Government had begun six months earlier of all UN organs where Nationalist China was represented, was absent. After a brief introductory statement by Secretary General Lie, who "considered it the clear duty of the Security Council to take steps necessary to re-establish peace in Korea", Ambassador Gross submitted the text of the resolution drafted in the State Department during the preceding fourteen hours and expressed the gravity with which the US viewed the aggression in Korea.(9)

Once the draft resolution was presented to the Security Council, it was immediately apparent the importance to the American stand on this issue of having varied and reliable information concerning the situation in Korea from diplomatic, military and especially UN sources. Referring the


8. Lake Success was on Long Island, New York. It was in the same time zone as Washington, Eastern Daylight Time, (E.D.T.).

incident to the UN would, in the first place, call upon the international community to take sides and make a moral judgement on an issue which was presented "not simply as an operation against an enemy but as a crusade against a criminal." (10) The telegram from UNCOCK was, therefore, of crucial importance as it provided a non-partisan, factual basis for the preamble of the American sponsored resolution. More important, and secondly, it corroborated the wording of the draft resolution which assigned responsibility for the conflict to the North Koreans who had, amidst all the confusion created by the suddenness of the attack, been quick to accuse the ROK of initiating hostilities declaring that its action was merely a retaliatory measure. Since the call in the Security Council was to censure the aggressor, it was essential to ascertain which sided fitted that description.

After some minor changes to the initial draft, the majority of the Security Council accepted the American evaluation of the situation, and at 6 pm adopted the resolution sponsored by the US by a vote of nine to none with one abstention - Yugoslavia. (11) The resolution declared the North Korean action a "breach of the peace", called for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th Parallel. Furthermore, it called upon all members to "render every assistance to the United Nations..."


11. The deputy representative of Yugoslavia, Djuro Nincić, in explaining his country's vote argued that although the Security Council should always take 'determined, radical and resolute action' in matters of lawless aggression he felt that "the picture we have been able to obtain so far from the various despatches that have come in... is not sufficiently complete and balanced [to] enable us to pass judgement on the merits of the case or assess the final and definitive responsibility and guilt of either of the parties involved."

in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities."(12)

While to many observers the resolution seemed somewhat innocuous, clearly the real importance of its successful adoption lay in providing the foundation for whatever additional measures might be needed to secure North Korean compliance with it. For the rest of the world not yet privy to American intentions, however, the action (or inaction) of the American delegation in the Security Council seemed to indicate that the US would not do anything really effective to counter the setbacks in Korea. Not only had there been no appeal for military sanctions against the North Koreans, but as far as anyone could tell, the Council had not even been asked to arrive at a specific determination of aggression against them.(13)

Surprised both by the outbreak of hostilities on the Korean peninsula and the promptitude with which the issue was laid before the Security Council of the UN, New Zealand's appreciation of the US initiative was typical of those countries unaware of the implications behind initial American reaction to the conflict in Korea. This was further compounded by the limited information the authorities in Wellington were receiving at this time. On Monday, 26 June, selected Cabinet Ministers, military and government officials met with Field Marshal Slim for general discussions. When the subject of the Korean invasion was raised, they were told that from earlier discussions Slim had had with the US Chiefs of Staff, he believed "the United States would not commit their forces to assist the

13. Paige, op cit, pp.120-121.
Government of Korea. He felt, however, that they would give every kind of help short of armed assistance."(14)

If that "help" merely entailed bringing the matter to the attention of UN, then this was little more than a token gesture in the opinion of Sir Carl Berendsen. Both the UN and the US "incurred clear moral responsibility for South Korea when they established that state", he wrote in his first report from Washington since the invasion, a state which had from its inception been fated to absorption by North Korea, either on this occasion or subsequently, "unless the United Nations and/or the United States took physical steps to ensure the contrary." Now the time had come when they were "challenged with the demand to put up or shut up" in Korea. "I think neither will do either" he lamented.(15)

As for the resolution, it was, Berendsen concluded, nothing more than a gesture or outcry serving as a smoke screen for the absence of action.

The first reaction here to the Security Council's resolution has been a sense of relief and satisfaction at the 'instant action' of the United Nations. This of course is nonsense; instant it was, and a welcome moral judgement, but action it is not, and I fear there will not and cannot be effective action.(16)

Subsequent events were to prove both Slim and Berendsen wrong.

Immediate US estimates of the political repercussions arising should North Korea be successful in its attack precluded the abandonment of the

14. CAB 222/2/2 part(i), C.M.(50)37, Record of a meeting with Field Marshal Slim held on Monday, 26 June, 1950, pp.3-4.
ROK and persuaded the authorities in Washington to pursue a policy via the UN dominated by the following considerations. Of these, a firm belief that the North Korean Government was completely under Kremlin control, that there was no possibility that the North Koreans acted without prior instructions from Moscow, and the move against South Korea must therefore be considered a Soviet move, were basic. It followed, in the view of top intelligence, military, diplomatic and civilian officials in the Truman administration, that a victorious North Korean invasion necessarily implied a Soviet triumph. This, they felt, would demonstrate that the USSR could wage a successful war by proxy and with impunity, as well as affording increased prestige for the international communist movement. This prestige would be gained directly at the expense of American standing as "leader of the free world against Soviet Communist imperialism". (17) Since the ROK was, as one official put it, "a creation of US policy and of US - led UN action, its destruction would have calculably grave and unfavourable repercussions for the US in Japan, South East Asia and in other areas as well." (18)

If the US took little or no action to prevent the "liquidation of the South Korean Government", it was asserted, the feeling would grow among

17. These estimates were formulated on incoming telegrams from US missions in Moscow, London, Paris and Yugoslavia as well as on a report prepared by the 'Estimates Group, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State' of 25 June 1950. Discussion of this information, which was distributed to the President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, leading Army, Air Force, Defense, Navy and State Department officials, took place during the two famous Blair House meetings of 25 and 26 June with the Chiefs of the aforementioned groups participating. For complete documentation see Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.139-183.

South East Asian leaders and peoples that "the USSR was advancing invincibly, and there would be a greatly increased impulse to 'get on the bandwagon'". Moreover, ineffective US intervention in Korea would embolden Chinese Communist leaders to adopt "more militant tactics in their attempts to promote Communism in other parts of Asia," and a more determined effort to take Formosa. The adverse effects on American prestige in Western Europe also gave cause for concern.(19)

But the effect of the invasion in Japan was clearly uppermost on the minds of American decisionmakers. Japanese reactions to the situation in Korea would depend entirely upon the course of action pursued by the US since, it was argued, they would "regard the position taken by the United States as presaging US action should Japan be threatened with invasion." Failure of the US to take any action in Korea, be it effective or otherwise, would add force to the argument that alignment of Japan with the United States would, while inviting Soviet aggression, in no way ensure American protection of Japan against such aggression ... Rapid and unhesitating US support for the ROK, on the other hand would reassure the Japanese as to their own fate and ... would enhance their willingness to accept US protection and its implications.(20)

From a purely military standpoint, Communist (and therefore Soviet) domination of all Korea would, in the event of a "hot" or global war breaking out, be of immense strategic value in neutralising the usefulness of Japan as an American base. Thus the time had come when, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley declared, "we must draw the line." The Korean situation offered as good an occasion as any to

show the nations of Asia that the US was willing to "make commitments necessary for success in stopping Communism in the Far East." (21)

These commitments began with the acceptance by the Blair House Group (22) of Secretary of State Acheson's four-point proposal for US action. This was issued at noon, 27 June, by President Truman in a statement pointing out that the North Korean troops, in defiance of the Security Council, were pressing their attack. In view of this, Mr Truman "ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support." Furthermore, the attack upon Korea, he claimed, makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war ... In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary function in that area. Accordingly the US Seventh Fleet was ordered to the Formosa Straits "to prevent any attack on Formosa." At the same time Truman ordered that

21. Ibid, p.152. The decision to intervene was made, in part, on the assumption that the Soviet Union was not prepared to "risk the possibility of a full scale war with the West". This was based on the premise that "the Soviet Union stood to gain more by avoiding a shooting war and that the only way - according to the Soviets - in which the West could really stop Soviet cold war successes would be by initiating a shooting war". Reconciling this with the belief that the USSR inspired and controlled the North Korean invasion had many analysts in Washington understandably "puzzled". As a safeguard therefore, a cable was sent out to every important American Embassy and Military Base around the world stating that it was "possible Korea was only the first of a series of co-ordinated actions on the part of the Soviets", and requested that they "maintain utmost vigilance and report immediately any positive or negative information". See below also p.75. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.139, 157-161, 166; Paige, op cit, pp.125-141.

22. See above p.42, footnote 17.
military assistance to the Philippines Government and the forces of France and Associated States in Indo-China be accelerated.(23)

Acheson further recommended that Warren Austin, the American Representative to the UN, in addition to advising the Security Council of these steps at the Council meeting scheduled to be held the next day, introduce a further resolution that had been drafted in the State Department. This resolution, the purpose of which in Britain's view was "not only to secure assistance from other countries but to validate action being taken by the United States,"(24) called for additional aid to the ROK and was calculated to "get full support".

23. Statement by Truman, cited in A.J.H.R., 1950, J-3, p.3. This statement was a modified version of the original suggested by Acheson, which contained the phrase "The attack on Korea makes it amply clear that centrally directed Communist Imperialism has passed ..." When the State Department forewarned the British Government of the substance of this intended speech some twelve hours before Truman made it public, the authorities in Westminster voiced their objection to the term "centrally directed Communist Imperialism" being used in the U.N. and strongly urged that Austin's statement to the Security Council "be so worded as to omit any reference to Soviet responsibility for the attack, which however obvious, is not susceptible to proof. It seems essential [therefore], to give the Russians an opportunity of beating a retreat when confronted with this welcome manifestation of American power determination."


When the Security Council convened at 3 pm on 27 June it noted from the report of the UN Commission on Korea (25) that the North Korean forces had not complied with the earlier UN resolution. Ambassador Austin, informing the Council of President Truman's actions, referred to the North Korean disregard of the Council's injunctions and asserted that the continuing aggression was "an attack on the United Nations itself". He then introduced the draft resolution containing the operative paragraph:

The United Nations Security Council recommends that the members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area. (26)

This second resolution was duly adopted, in the continued absence of the Soviet Union, by seven votes to one (Yugoslavia) with two abstentions (India and Egypt). (27)

These developments drew a mixed response from the authorities in Wellington. They were satisfied that the recommendation proposed in the resolution was "both right and timely", and considered that there was "complete moral and, they believed, also adequate legal justification for


26. U.N. Document S/1511. The clause "to restore peace and security in the area" was apparently drafted in the office of the U.N. General Counsel. At his request, it was inserted by the Department of State to its own draft resolution which ended after "... repel the armed attack". This clause invited a notable reinterpretation of the U.S.-U.N. objectives in Korea and later served as sufficient justification for the crossing of the 38th Parallel. See below Chapter VI. Lichterman, 'To the Yalu and Back', p.580.

27. A.J.H.R., 1950, J-3, p.6. The Indian and Egyptian delegates abstained for want of instructions, but India accepted the resolution two days later.
the course of action which the US resolution envisaged." Berendsen was thus instructed to give his support to it.(28) The "neutralisation" of Formosa, on the other hand, the Government viewed as action unnecessarily provocative which involved New Zealand in a purely American venture of questionable merit. There was some anxiety that the repercussions from Truman's measures could precipitate an escalation from what was essentially a localised civil war to a wider, general conflict. "The United States decision to insulate Formosa", Minister of External Affairs Doidge told the Defence Committee, "was not based on Security Council resolutions. Any resultant action between American and Chinese communist units therefore, could lead to the invocation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty (of February 1950) and hence very probably to World War III."(29) Berendsen shared this sentiment, adding that it was a "bitter thought that if it had been made clear before that the United States could and would do what it is now proposing to do, the necessity for doing it might never have arisen."(30) And he was sceptical of the motives behind the move. "With regard to the new intentions to Formosa", he told Doidge, "the United States' interpretation that the attack on South Korea sheds new light on the intentions of the Communists does not seem to me to be a particularly valid one."(31) Nevertheless, he conceded that the Americans were to be "greatly commended" for providing cover and support for the ROK forces, although this might prove to be "too little and too late."(32)

28. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No. 70, Minister of External Affairs to S.S.C.R., 28 June 1950.

29. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Doidge to Defence Committee, 24 July 1950. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

30. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No. 89, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 28 June 1950

31. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Memorandum from Berendsen to Doidge, 4 July 1950

32. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No. 89, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 28 June 1950.
The assistance given under Truman's speech was indeed restricted both in degree and operation. A naval blockade of the entire Korean coast was ordered and air cover was, at first, limited in that US combat aircraft had specific instruction in no circumstances to fly north of the 38th Parallel. But as the situation in Korea deteriorated further, this constraint was lifted to allow the Air Force to conduct missions in North Korea on "specific military targets whenever militarily necessary". On the same day, 29 June, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the hero of the Second World War in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, to take operational control of the Seventh Fleet and of the air forces then employed in Korea. Of greater importance, however, was the directive which permitted MacArthur to engage "certain supporting ground units" to reinforce South Korean troops. (33) The US was now committed to a policy of ensuring the survival of the ROK.

On balance, therefore, the initiative shown by the US in sponsoring the Security Council resolution and its own independent actions regarding aid to the ROK were generally welcomed in New Zealand as an expression of Western steadfastness against overt communist aggression. Yet the decision to intervene in Korea with the accompanying course of action pursued by the US, could not but help bring into question the apparent incongruity of this undertaking. It was, in the Government's view, nothing short of a volte face in American policy towards Korea specifically, and the Far East.

33. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No. 92, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 1 July 1950; Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.240-1, 271; Paige, Korean Decision, pp.221-6, 244-252. These "certain ground units" were limited to essential communications and other essential service units, with the exception of army combat and service forces to ensure the retention of a port and air base in the general area of Pusan - Chinhae. Thus it was an early political decision to retain a southern foothold later called the 'Pusan perimeter'.

in general. With reference to Acheson's speech of 12 January(34), which the Government accepted as evincing official policy regarding the region, the question arose how Korea, apparently defined as non-vital and considered expendable prior to 25 June, could become the object of large scale involvement of American military resources after that date. One attempt at providing an answer was immediately forthcoming. The decision actively to support the South Koreans "gave cause to reflect once more", Berendsen explained to Doidge, "the fact that the foreign policy of the United States always had shown, and still did show an astonishing and at times, a disturbing lack of continuity".(35) A similar sentiment was echoed at a meeting held between the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, and the National Cabinet in New Zealand on 22 August when Menzies, discussing the American position, stated,

In deciding to resist aggression in Korea, the United States had to improvise defence in a position which they regarded as militarily indefensible. If foreign policy and defence diverge you are bent on suicide.(36)

When the Government received, via British sources, notice of the "renewed" strategic, political and symbolic importance accorded Korea vis-a-vis the impact of the invasion on Japan and the Far East, it was at least able to rationalise the American decision, but it still regarded the action as being fraught with inconsistencies.(37) It seems certain, however, that on evidence now available, intervention represented no sudden

34. See above pp. 17-18.
35. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Memorandum from Berendsen to Doidge, 4 July 1950.
36. CM (50) 59, Record of a discussion at a meeting of Cabinet with the Rt Hon R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, 22 August 1950.
switch in US policy. The purpose of the Acheson speech, for instance, was to do no more than simply "bring home what the United States Government had done to defend vital interests in the Pacific, not to speculate on what it might do in the event of various exigencies in Asia."(38) This was one occasion in which the inferences drawn from a public statement belied the actual intentions of the official who made it. Taking the Korean emergency up with the UN therefore, was precisely what Acheson had prescribed and fully in accordance with established policy.

One issue which was to become the subject of much controversy, was raised as a result of the adoption of the American sponsored resolutions. This was the question of the legality of the UN action. Although concern with this issue was less in New Zealand than perhaps elsewhere, there were some utterances in official circles which broached this subject.(39)

From the outset of the conflict the North Koreans consistently charged that the South had initiated the hostilities, and that subsequent UN action was effectively condoning an aggressor. The measures envisaged in the UN resolutions were, consequently, misdirected at best in the view of North Korea and in wider communist circles.(40) This contention did not, in the


39. The majority of dissenting views in New Zealand in regard to the UN action of June were restricted to a small minority of communists and intellectuals. See Clemow, op cit, pp.173-190 for an examination of these protests.

Government's opinion, warrant comment, but it did elicit some ridicule in New Zealand's daily newspapers. One paper disposed of the claim by saying that "The South Korean invasion of North Korea must have been launched some miles south of the frontier and moved rapidly back to Seoul and beyond. This was too much to expect any non-Communist to believe."(41) Similar derision was added by a cartoon with the caption "South Korea kicked North Korea on the boot with the seat of its pants."(42)

An argument which was not so easily refuted was that put forward by the Soviet Union which concentrated on the strict interpretation of Article 27 of the UN Charter. This Article states: 'Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of seven members including the concurring votes of the permanent members'. Since the Soviet Union had absented itself from the Council over the question of Chinese representation on that organ, it claimed this absence meant that the resolutions passed did not have the assent of a permanent member and were therefore illegal. But by 1950, the practice had grown up whereby the abstention of a permanent member from voting was deemed still to be a concurring vote within the meaning of Article 27.(43)

Most members of the UN accepted the validity of this "convention", under which absence was regarded as a deliberate abstention from voting, and thus did not have the effect of negating an otherwise valid resolution. The USSR would have to be present to exercise its right of veto.

Not until 1 August did Malik, the Soviet representative return to the UN; under the alphabetical rotation system, he immediately assumed the

Presidency of the Security Council. By this time the two crucial resolutions assuring an international involvement in the Korean conflict had been adopted as was a third resolution establishing a Unified Command for UN forces in Korea under overall US control. MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of these forces. (44)

Nevertheless, the strength of this argument did not go unnoticed by Berendsen. "In my opinion (and I am not alone in the belief)", he told Doidge,

the Soviet Union are unquestionably right in their contention that the resolutions of the Security Council in this matter are invalid, because, they did not carry with them the 'concurring vote' of the Soviet Union. (45)

Two leading New Zealand newspapers were also apparently in agreement with the Soviet claim, although they found little difficulty justifying the action. One editorial pointed out, "The Security Council had acted within the spirit of the Charter but not of its letter." (46) The other argued, though action without Russia makes it possible for the United Nations to be presented as an instrument of western policy, that is of smaller consequence to the United Nations than failure to act where action was supremely necessary. In the one case a majority of United Nations members supports its purposes and principles; in the other the whole membership would have proclaimed its futility. (47)

Yet another argument which had some currency was the assertion that the Korean hostilities were at bottom a civil war, and thus terms such as "aggressor" and "aggression" were completely inappropriate. Moreover, in

44. U.N. Document S/1588. This resolution was adopted on 7 July 1950. See Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.263-329.
45. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Memorandum from Berendsen to Doidge, 4 July 1950.
such an event, the Charter of the UN forbade the intervention of the Organisation in the domestic affairs of any state when it was a matter between two groups of one state. (48) Again this charge was difficult to counter, but Doidge was clear in espousing New Zealand's appreciation of the issues at stake when he asserted "aggression to be none the less aggression, though it fight under an ideological banner and call itself liberation, or by other high-sounding phrase." (49)

Taking a different approach to this whole issue, was a leading American participant in the early period of the Korean War, George F. Kennan, Counsellor of the State Department and Director of the Policy Planning Staff. He offers a perceptive analysis of the question of intervention and it is worth repeating at length. He argues,

I never approved of the involvement of the United Nations in the Korean affair, or understood the rationale for it. This was, after all, an area in which we had taken the Japanese surrender and accepted the responsibilities of occupation. There was as yet no peace treaty with Japan to define its future status. We had accepted the responsibilities of military occupation in South Korea, and the fact that we had withdrawn our own combat forces did not mean, in the continued absence of a Japanese peace treaty, that these responsibilities were terminated. We had a perfect right to intervene, on the basis of our position as occupying power, to assure the preservation of order in this territory. We needed no international mandate to make this action proper. Nor did the Charter of the United Nations require us to involve the organization in such a conflict. Article 107, while somewhat ambiguous, conveyed the general impression that problems arising immediately from the recent war [World War II] were not to be considered proper subjects for the attention of the United Nations. (50)


49. Statement by F.W. Doidge at Sixth Session of the U.N., 9 November 1951. in Statements and Documents, p.289

50. George F. Kennan, Memoirs: 1925-1950, Hutchinson, London, 1967, p.490. Article 107 provides: 'Nothing in the present Charter shall invalidate or preclude action, in relation to any state which during the Second World War has been an enemy of any signatory to the present Charter, taken or authorised as a result of that war by the Governments having responsibility for such action.'
Such interpretations were hardly considered in Wellington. What criticism the New Zealand Government had of American policy and actions during this period of rapidly changing circumstances, it confidentially noted "for the record" and kept to itself. Of paramount importance was the need outwardly to present a common front in the face of this challenge from "Communist Imperialism". While "all eyes looked to America" to provide the necessary measures to avoid the loss of Korea by default, it would have been less than appropriate for Wellington to raise issues of comparatively trifling concern. Thus the US effort to pre-empt an otherwise certain North Korean fait accompli by presenting one of its own in the UN was considered by the Government as completely justified and at least morally legal, even if through that action, New Zealand would be called on to help secure the territorial integrity of South Korea.
CHAPTER IV

MILITARY COMMITMENTS: PROBLEMS AND MOTIVES

Although it did not have a representative on the Security Council at the time of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, it was incumbent upon New Zealand, like other members of the UN, to comply with the resolutions passed by that body. The resolution of 27 June placed just that obligation on the UN membership when it recommended members furnish assistance to the ROK necessary to repel the North Korean attack. But the wording of the resolution, it was noted in Wellington, made this obligation "general and moral rather than strictly legal, and the extent of any member's co-operation remained within its own decision". While this offered to those member countries less inclined to become physically embroiled in the Korean conflict a "way out", New Zealand would have no part of it. It was ready to "face up to a moral responsibility" and lodge a physical protest against "lawless aggression". (1)

That New Zealand was at first approached by the British Government to consider extending assistance to South Korea, however, undoubtedly went far in eliciting a prompt and positive response from the Government to the Council's resolution. On 28 June, the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, spoke to the House of Commons of the measures HM Government would be taking in pursuance of the 27 June resolution. It was decided immediately to place British naval forces in Japanese waters at the disposal of the US authorities to operate on behalf of the Security Council in support of South Korea. (2)

1. PM 324/2/9 part(i), Summary of Events - Korean Situation, 29 June 1950.
When notifying Commonwealth governments of Attlee's statement, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations Patrick Gordon-Walker explained the reason for the UK decision. "We consider by far the most important contribution we can make would be a demonstration making clear our firm support for the resolution and the action taken by the United States." That Whitehall considered as desirable a similar demonstration by other Commonwealth countries was apparent when the same telegram asked,

If there are any ways in which the Commonwealth Governments feel that they can make a contribution in support of the Security Council resolution, we for our part, would naturally welcome this, and if they should wish, we would be glad to arrange to discuss matters with them in whatever way is thought most convenient. (3)

On receipt of this advice, the authorities in Wellington quickly undertook a review of New Zealand's ability to provide some form of military aid to support the ROK. It was decided that of the three armed services, the Royal New Zealand Navy would be the least affected by having part of its total strength temporarily "diverted" from the primary commitment to New Zealand and Commonwealth defence. As for the type of vessel best suited for deployment in Korean waters, Navy advisors concluded that priority should be given to despatching anti-aircraft frigates and/or cruisers since the principle role these ships would play would be in support of ground forces and the main danger to be faced would be attacks by enemy aircraft. (4)


4. NA 08/11/26 part(i), Memorandum by Staff Officer, Plans, 'Factors Affecting Employment of R.N.Z.N. Ships in Korea', 29 June 1950.
The deployment of these vessels was bound by the availability of RNZN units. Four of the Navy’s vessels were on tours of duty – BELLONA and ROTOITI in the Pacific, TAUPO and HAWEA in the Mediterranean. Only TUTIRA, which was due in Auckland on 29 June, and PUKAKI already in Auckland, were available to sail at short notice. Consequently they were ordered to prepare immediately to join the Far Eastern Forces.(5) After further consultations with the UK, both on a governmental and service level, concerning the operational command of the New Zealand units, it was agreed, "for reasons of administrative convenience", that they should be attached to the Commander of the Royal Navy forces in the Far Eastern theatre.(6)

The decision having been made, Berendsen was instructed to advise Secretary General Lie and the US Government of New Zealand’s intentions.(7) Finally, preferring to have the New Zealand offer appear part of a concerted Commonwealth action, the Prime Minister, Sidney Holland, announced the Government’s decision to the House of Representatives, also on 29 June. "The New Zealand Government", he said,

will do whatever lies within their power to fulfill the obligations they have incurred under the United Nations Charter. They are prepared to make available units of the Royal New Zealand Navy should this form of assistance be required.(8)

On 30 June, Trygve Lie reminded the Government of its obligations under the 27 June resolution, and requested the type of assistance likely to

5. NA 08/11/26 part(i), Memorandum by the Chief of Naval Staff (Commodore F.A. Ballance) to Minister of Defence, 28 June 1950.
7. PM 324/2/7 part(ii), O.T. No.172 Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 29 June 1950.
be forthcoming from New Zealand. (9) Understandably he received an immediate and favourable response. The next day, Holland issued a statement on the provision of naval vessels, giving orders to the two frigates HMNZS PUKAKI and TUTIRA to sail for Hong Kong en route to the Korean area. Both ships left Auckland on Monday, 3 July. (10)

This naval commitment was in line with the type of aid so far offered by Britain and by Australia. (11) Even the US had limited its military commitments, up till 30 June, to air and sea cover for the ROK troops. But it soon became clear that these measures were inadequate in the light of military developments in Korea. The early days of July produced only isolated resistance from a broken, retreating South Korean Army, and the first American infantrymen to make contact with the enemy, beginning 5 July, were overrun and decimated. This initial, piecemeal deployment of US troops was "a brilliant defensive manoeuvre which slowed down the enemy's attack long enough to throw off his timetable", and consequently gave MacArthur time to ferry in reinforcements necessary to secure the Pusan beach-head. (12)

But it could not disguise the fact that the leading military and political authorities in Washington and in Tokyo had grossly underestimated the North


10. N.Z.P.D., Volume 289, 1 July 1950, p.17. PUKAKI was replaced by ROTOITI in November 1950 and HAWEA replaced TUTIRA in April 1951. The R.N.Z.N. maintained two frigates continuously in Korean waters and all six of New Zealand's frigates completed at least one tour of duty in the zone, between them steaming more than 300,000 miles. Among other tasks, they helped to cover the landing at Inchon which first broke up the Communist advances in South Korea. Patrol activity comprised the major part of their work. The frigates made their own commando landings, they clashed with pirates and repulsed an attempted invasion by a sampan fleet on friendly islands. Shortly before the ceasefire, they were engaged in inshore bombardment of hostile strongpoints and troop concentrations. Members of the Navy received 24 awards and two ratings were lost.

11. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.146, N.Z. High Commissioner to Australia to Minister of External Affairs, 30 June 1950. This was extended the next day to 'place at the service of the U.N. through U.S. authorities the RAAF Fighter Squadron then stationed in Japan'. I.T. No.92 Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Minister of External Affairs, 30 June 1950.

Korean military capability as well as the size of the American combat force required to repel the Communist troops. On 9 July MacArthur, as US Commander-in-Chief, Far East, acknowledged this oversight when he reported to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff that

The situation in Korea is critical. We are endeavouring by all means now available here to build up the force necessary to halt the enemy, but to date our efforts have been ineffective. His armoured equipment is of the best and service thereof.... as good as any seen at any time in the last war. [Furthermore], the enemy's infantry is of thoroughly first class quality.

In view of this he strongly urged that in addition to "those forces already requisitioned, an army of at least four divisions with all its component services be despatched to this area without delay".(13)

MacArthur's anxiety soon found wider expression. Three days later New Zealand Embassy officials in Washington informed Wellington of increasing American agitation for more formal commitments from U.N. members. "As the naivety of the original hope that air and sea cover would suffice becomes evident", the despatch read, "Congressmen are deeming that other United Nations countries should share the burden of providing ground forces and not limit themselves to pious expressions of moral support". (14)

And, as if to give force to this summons, Secretary of State Acheson was at the same time directing US-UN Ambassador Austin to "see Secretary General Lie immediately to suggest that he make a further communication to the members..."

13. Foreign Relations - KOREA, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, CX 57481, 9 July 1950, p.336; cf. above p.48. In contrast John M. Allison who, with John Foster Dulles, was present in MacArthur's office in Tokyo soon after MacArthur initially received reports of hostilities in Korea on 25 June, cites MacArthur as dismissing the North Korean attack as "probably only a reconnaissance in force. If Washington only will not hobble me", MacArthur declaimed, "I can handle it with one arm tied behind my back." Allison Ambassador From the Prairie, p.129. According to Dean Rusk, "Washington authorities generally shared MacArthur's estimate because they believed that as soon as American troops were committed the Reds would halt". Cited in Lichterman, op cit, p.582.

that have replied favourably on the Security Council resolutions, [that they] consider without delay what they can contribute in the way of effective assistance including wherever possible combat forces, particularly ground forces."(15) The authorities in New Zealand were formally approached with this request via the UN Secretariat on 14 July.(16)

Despite the Government's endorsement of the US-led UN action concerning the Korean situation, the call for New Zealand to provide ground forces raised far more serious issues than the provision of naval units. The frigates TUTIRA and PUKAKI had been ready and available for immediate operational deployment, but there was no equivalent standing force of army units available for prompt despatch in such an emergency. Thus consideration of provision of ground forces necessitated a full examination of New Zealand's actual defence capabilities. This was undertaken by top Government and military officials during discussions by the Defence Committee, the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and in a memorandum by Shanahan of the Prime Minister's Department.

After careful deliberation, there emerged one objection consistent in all submissions. The main question when considering the latest UN request, Doidge told the Defence Committee, was that "New Zealand had to consider what it could provide over and above its primary task of planning to provide in the global strategy", that is, what forces it could give without threatening the strength of the Middle East commitment.(17) Shanahan's argument was identical - "It must be recognised", he pointed out,

16. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.72, NZPDUN (Berendsen) to Minister of External Affairs, 14 July 1950; U.N. Document S/1619.
17. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Doidge to Defence Committee, 15 July 1950.
that, important though it is to successfully resist the aggression in Korea and thus assist in the development of an effective collective security system, in a hot war Korea is not vital. We should therefore avoid any commitment which would prejudice the ability of New Zealand to make an early and effective contribution in the defence of the vital areas in the event of a major war. Any contribution of forces to Korea therefore, should be so limited as not to affect the efficiency of our effort in the vital theatre (ie, the Middle East) in the event of a major war.\textit{(sic)}(18)

Diverting part of existing defensive forces to Korea from their priority commitment of preparing for the defence of the "vital theatre" would therefore not be considered.

Further naval assistance was not required and in any event was not available or desirable. According to the Chief of Naval Staff, Commodore F.A. Ballance, "the naval situation in Korea seemed to be under control and training in the RNZN would be completely disorganised if a further ship was sent."(19)

This left two alternatives. The Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Sir Arthur Nevill, suggested that a RNZAF ground attack unit, consisting of a squadron of thirty P51 (Mustang) fighter aircraft which the RNZAF held in long-term storage, could be made operational and offered for use in Korea. Problems arising from the need to provide a back-up service for a contribution of this kind would be overcome by teaming up the New Zealand squadron with the Australians who were using Mustangs in Korea and, it was assumed, had organised a supply line for this type of aircraft.

Having made the suggestion however, Nevill was quick to express a

18. PM 324/2/7 part(i), 'Notes on Korea - Topic: Commitment of Ground Forces', Memorandum prepared by Shanahan, 17 July 1950.

19. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M2, Minutes of Defence Committee Meeting held on 24 July 1950.
number of qualifications. The question of time required to prepare such a force for combat readiness was one that had to be taken seriously into account. The strength of the squadron would be about two hundred and fifty all ranks and it would take about four months to form, train and move to Korea. Of greater importance though, was the belief that the use of a RNZAF unit in Korea engendered the same constraints as the use of army regulars would have done. "The provision of such a unit", Nevill emphasised, "would interfere with the realisation of the long term development programme for the employment of the RNZAF in a major war." He consequently advised against such a commitment.(20) Nevertheless, this remained as one option the Government could call upon if needed.

The only remaining avenue open to the policy planners, the use of a volunteer force, now merited closer attention. Even though Army Chief of Staff, Major General Keith Stewart, said that there were certain military reasons against sending a volunteer army force to Korea, a force that must inevitably be small, none of these affected the practicability of such action providing certain guidelines were observed. Aside from the need to avoid interfering with the basic commitment to the Middle East, General Stewart believed a force of about one thousand men would be a "reasonable contribution" as this would cause only minimum interference with the Compulsory Military Training Scheme(21) and it would help in assuring the "preservation of the national identity of any unit sent to Korea." This last reason was

20. NA 08/11/26 part(i), COS (50) M.9, Schedule (No.14) of the Minutes of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 19 July 1950; NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M2, Minutes of Defence Committee Meeting held on 24 July 1950.

21. The Compulsory Military Training Scheme was introduced after a favourable response in a referendum on the issue in the last months of the Labour Government holding office in 1949 to "make it possible for New Zealand to contribute to Commonwealth defence arrangements." Statements and Documents, p.18.
instrumental in deciding what form possible additional aid would take. Despatching an infantry unit was not favoured, not only because it would be "absorbed in a non-New Zealand formation and its national identity would be lost", but also because "experience had demonstrated that any New Zealand infantry force should be supported by its own artillery and armour - this would not be possible in Korea." A consensus of opinion soon emerged which favoured the formation of an artillery battalion as this "would not be dependant on other units for support in the same way as infantry and casualties should be smaller."(22)

Initial logistical estimates revealed the need for some sixteen hundred volunteers, as the unit would have a field strength of eight hundred to a thousand with a small administrative element of two hundred, as well as a further requirement of two hundred men for first and then successive reinforcements.(23) There was some doubt whether an appeal for volunteers could attract enough suitable recruits. In any event, like the proffered RNZAF squadron, it would take at least four months to prepare such a force. Furthermore, any decision on the part of the Government would be on the assumption that it would work as part of another force since the size of the commitment which the Government had in mind would not allow a force large enough to maintain itself. There would be no immediate practical advantage if it was to operate as part of the American organisation, it was pointed out, because of the "difference in weapons, training equipment,

22. NA 08/11/26 part(i), COS (50) M.9, Schedule No. 14 July 1950; NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M2 Minutes of Defence Committee Meeting 24 July 1950.

23. PM 324/2/7 part(i) 'Notes on Korea - Topic: Commitment of Ground Forces', Memorandum prepared by Shanahan, 17 July 1950.
signals, uniforms and even language."(24) It was desirable, therefore, to link a New Zealand force with those provided by other Commonwealth countries.(25)

Clearly, from a purely military standpoint, the problems arising from a ground force commitment of any sort suggested that such a move was to be avoided if at all possible. But political considerations dictated otherwise. In fact, there was complete acceptance of Shanahan's contention that the "basis of a decision by New Zealand to contribute ground forces had to be made primarily on political grounds" and that there were enough of these to warrant examining sympathetically the Secretary General's request.(26)

First, there was the "importance of maintaining the prestige of the United Nations." Failure to respond to the appeal might be seen as reflecting Government doubt about the effectiveness and objectives of UN action. Certainly the image of united and resolute action concerning Korea would be somewhat tarnished. The second consideration was the "primary interest of New Zealand in the security of the Far East and Pacific region". Finally, and more significant, was the "importance of fostering close and friendly relations between New Zealand and the United States." Here was an opportunity for New Zealand to demonstrate its support of American policy by standing alongside the United States on the ground in Korea and to show that New Zealand was a dependable ally. A favourable impression of New Zealand by the US was desirable because, as Shanahan commented, "our security depends

24. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.74 Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 July 1950.
25. NA 08/11/26 part(i), COS (50) M.9, Schedule No.14, 19 July 1950
26. PM 324/2/7 part(i), 'Notes on Korea - Topic: Commitment of Ground Forces', 17 July 1950; NA 08/11/26 part(i), COS (50) M.9, Schedule No.14, Stewart to Chiefs of Staff, 19 July 1950
fundamentally upon the support of the United States of America."(27)

The Government, however, had no information

as to the precise importance attached by the United States Government to the operation in Korea; neither did it know

whether [the Americans] expected New Zealand to provide ground forces having regard to the fact that New Zealand had already despatched frigates. Such a question would almost certainly have to be answered without this information.(28)

In fact, the deliberations thus far submitted were made not only without the benefit of information from the Americans, but also without the all important consultations with other Commonwealth countries. Accordingly, New Zealand's representatives in the US, the UK, Australia and Canada were instructed to ascertain the views of the respective governments on this question(29). Traditionnally, New Zealand had avoided taking the initiative in foreign policy issues of importance and its approach on this occasion differed little from that which it had adopted in the past. As always, caution was the order of the day. This reluctance to make such a decision independent of the rest of the Commonwealth was underlined in discussions between Doidge, McIntosh and the Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, A. R. Cutler. Reporting the substance of these talks to Canberra, Cutler commented that the

New Zealand Government attitude is that Korea is serious but the main concentration on defence should continue along the Middle East strategy. ... Government approach is cautious and it is almost certain that ground troops will not be committed in Korea. To send troops to Korea would entirely disrupt present planning.

27. PM 324/2/7 part(i), 'Notes on Korea - Topic: Commitment of Ground Forces', 17 July 1950.

28. Ibid.

29. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.191, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 17 July 1950; O.T. No.66. Minister of External Affairs to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 17 July 1950; O.T. No.11, Minister of External Affairs to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, 17 July 1950.
Doidge stressed however, that full consultation would be sought with British Commonwealth countries and their attitude would have a large bearing on New Zealand's decision. (30)

The recommendations agreed upon during the various meetings of Government and Military Committees were consequently seen as only tentative appraisals.

When Berendsen reported the importance placed by the US on an affirmative response to the UN appeal, a further dimension had to be considered seriously by the Government. The American authorities, he wrote after consultations with the State Department,

attach the utmost importance to all possible collaboration, both at headquarters and in the field, from other members of the United Nations. An early and firm undertaking on New Zealand's part to provide ground troops within our capacity, as and when and for what such purposes as may be required, would be greatly to our credit and would have an excellent effect here and elsewhere. (31)

Although the Americans had learned through their embassy in Wellington that it could take up to four months for the preparation of a contingent from New Zealand, and while any reduction in this time would be welcome, "even if no reduction was possible they would regard this as a very acceptable offer." (32) Indeed, the State Department, he continued.

are now regarding this incident as a means of "separating the sheep from the goats" and of distinguishing those countries who can be relied upon from those who cannot and they show some signs of regarding this as a test for those who might, at the proper time in the future, form the foundation of a Pacific regional defence pact. (33)

There were, in fact, both political and military reasons for emphasising the need for assistance from UN members. Building up the UN aspect of the

30. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Cablegram No.111, Cutler to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, 18 July 1950. Cutler gave a copy of this despatch to McIntosh for his "personal use and information."

31. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.74, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs 17 July 1950.

32. Ibid; Foreign Relations - KOREA, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices (Circular Telegram), 21 July 1950, p.443.

33. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.74, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 July 1950.
operation in Korea by encouraging the broadest possible participation of the UN membership was, of course, the fundamental political consideration. After all, this was a UN policing action. But it was also reasoned, again by the State Department, that "if a sufficiently resolute front is presented in the United Nations, the USSR, which might be considering further adventures, might be deterred from them." (34) Also, the provision of additional military assistance would be a great morale builder in the US for it would demonstrate that other countries endorsed the American initiatives in Korea.

On military grounds, the call for combat forces arose out of strategic necessity. The American military response in Korea was acutely handicapped by both the excessively rapid disarmament which had followed the victory in 1945 and the over-reliance on an atomic arsenal - a capability designed for "total war" rather than the "limited war" now being waged in Korea. What standing forces remained were designated, in similar fashion to the New Zealand armed services, for the priority "global war" commitment - in this instance the defence of Western Europe through NATO. Accordingly, Acheson told Berendsen, "although the 'build-up' of American ground forces would be fast it could not in the immediate future be large because there was a lack of further troops that could be despatched to Korea." (35) Moreover the shortfall in military personnel was in specific areas. "The broad base of infantry would be American", Dean Rusk stated, but there was a "shortage of specialised units, such as field hospitals, medical officers, ambulances, signals, transport and artillery." (36)

34. Ibid.
35. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.99, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 19 July 1950.
36. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.101, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 20 July 1950.
No doubt the Government was glad to learn that, should troops from New Zealand be sent to Korea, the form of assistance contemplated by the authorities in Wellington would be acceptable and practical. But agreement with the Americans over the substance of a New Zealand contribution did not alter the fact that it would take at least four months to prepare such a contingent. One way of overcoming this problem was suggested by Secretary General Lie when he advised Berendsen that in all probability the Americans would, in the first place, use any troops made available in response to the UN appeal for the relief of remaining US occupation forces in Japan, thereby enabling these troops to join forces already in action in Korea.(37) Under these circumstances the task of a New Zealand force would amount to little more than "guard duty", and as a result, the period of preparation of a volunteer force would certainly be reduced as it would entail at most, basic military training and not the lengthy and specialised instruction required in training an artillery unit. But this suggestion proved to be misleading. Acheson did not mention it and indeed gave Berendsen the impression that "he discounted the possibility of untrained troops relieving United States troops in Japan or elsewhere for combat duty in Korea."(38) Rusk later endorsed Acheson when he said, "no thought had been given to the idea of the relief of American troops in Japan."(39)

The Government, now certain that, if sent, a combat unit from New Zealand would see active service in Korea, believed with equal certainty that in order for such a unit to attain its maximum operational efficiency it had to work as part of, or in some way be linked with, a larger force.

37. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No. 74, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 July 1950.
38. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.99, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 19 July 1950.
39. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.101, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 20 July 1950.
That this force should preferably be a Commonwealth formation was self evident. But the initial response of New Zealand's Commonwealth partners to the appeal was cool. On 21 July the Government learned of Canada's decision not to send troops (40) and on 25 July South Africa declared that it too could not provide ground forces. (41) Australia shared New Zealand's reluctance to make an immediate decision. Until Prime Minister Menzies, who at that time was visiting Britain and the US, had had a chance to discuss the question fully with the British authorities and report to his Government colleagues in Australia, no definite action would be taken even though the Minister of External Affairs, P.C. Spender, felt that it was important to maintain the extremely cordial relationship which had developed between Australia and the United States, since the outbreak of the conflict, by making an immediate response. (42) It seemed likely at first that Britain would also follow the decision reached by Canada and South Africa. The British authorities, however, were circumspect in their handling of the UN request, deciding that it would be "impossible to form a final view or to

40. The Canadian announcement read,
"Having in mind other obligations for the employment of Canadian ground forces, the Cabinet has reached the conclusion that the despatch at this stage of existing first line elements of the Canadian Army to the Korean theatre would not be warranted." PM 324/2/7 part(i), Press Bulletin No.9, received from Canadian Embassy 21 July 1950. The Canadian Government later reversed this attitude when, on 7 August, it announced its decision to recruit a special brigade to serve in Korea under the UN Unified Command.

41. The South African announcement read,
"It is self evident, having regard to distance and other considerations, that it would be impractical and unrealistic for the Union Government to provide direct military assistance however small." PM 324/2/7 part(i), Memorandum 8/K-1, New Zealand High Commissioner in Canberra to Minister of External Affairs, 25 July 1950. After consultations with the US, the South African Government, on 4 August, "reluctantly accepted the course of sending a fighter squadron to Korea."

42. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Communiqué No.46/4, High Commissioner for Australia to Minister of External Affairs, 24 July 1950; Wood, 'Foreign Policy 1945-1951', p.105.
frame an answer until they had discussed the matter with the United States Government."

Anxious to clarify New Zealand's position, Holland advised Attlee, the British Prime Minister, that should New Zealand provide further military aid, this would probably take the form of a specialised unit such as a regiment of medium artillery or possibly a RNZAF Mustang squadron, but he stressed that the Government was "not yet in a position to make any decision and, indeed, would appreciate general information regarding the plans of the British Government before making a move." In particular, Holland said, "I have noted that you are proceeding now to have consultations with the United States authorities and take it that you will inform me of any important points which arise therefrom." (44)

When Attlee received this request, the UK, represented by Sir Oliver Franks and Air Chief Marshal Lord Arthur Tedder (45) and the US, led by Dr Philip Jessup and General Omar Bradley, had already concluded their "exploratory conversations" that had been taking place in Washington over the period 20-24 July. (46) Although consideration of the Korean question

43. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Attlee to Holland, 21 July 1950.
44. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50) M.2, 24 July 1950; PM 324/2/7 part(i), Holland to Attlee, 24 July 1950.
45. Sir Oliver Franks was the British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Tedder was Chairman of the British Joint Services Mission in Washington.
46. Four meetings were held on 20, 21, 22 and 24 July and the resultant document of the talks was an agreed memorandum titled 'Summary of United States-United Kingdom Discussions on the Present World Situation, July 20-24 1950, Washington D.C.' The discussions covered an examination of all the perceived 'world trouble spots' and a comparison of British and American interests in these areas. The talks did, however have a wider application as an attempt, if not to resolve, them at least to accommodate some fundamental differences of policy between Britain and the US that had become evident since the outbreak of the Korean conflict. The point at issue centred almost wholly on the question of the American 'insulation' of Formosa - an action with which the British could not agree. New Zealand was aware of these variances in policy and as evidence above suggests (pp.46-48) shared similar objections as the UK, although they were not made known to the US. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.312ff but especially 347-352, 396-399 and 462-465.
was but a part of a comprehensive discussion of the existing world situation, an opportunity was provided for the Americans to impress upon the British the importance with which they viewed a positive response from the UK in sending ground troops to Korea.

Apart from the basic need for more soldiers(47), the real significance of a British contribution of ground forces lay in the very favourable political repercussions resulting from the move. "The United States", wrote Franks in his assessment of the discussions, "see Britain as the key to the situation and consider a British commitment more important to them and their purposes than any other." There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the US knew that many other nations would follow the British decision in this matter, which in turn would enhance the UN character of the operation in Korea. Secondly, the authorities in Washington shared the expectation of the American public that their allies would show they stood behind the US in this issue. "Despite the power and position of the United States", Franks pointed out,

the American people were not happy if they felt alone. They would not understand if they found themselves alone on the ground in Korea, and they would think it showed coolness to them or even disapproval of what they were doing.(48)

47. Bradley stated that such reinforcement was of the utmost importance because the total forces required would be considerable not only to secure rapid and decisive results when the situation improved for the UN forces but also "when the counteroffensive was undertaken, it be carried out with very strong forces in order that the North Korean army could be destroyed to the maximum extent possible before our forces reach the 38th Parallel." Foreign Relations - KOREA, p.463; PM 324/2/7 part(i), Emergency Circular Q No.22, 25 July 1950.

48. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Emergency Circular Q No.23, 26 July 1950.
The general feeling in London concurred with Franks' belief that the repercussions from a negative decision on the part of Britain would endanger the long term relations between the UK and the US. Consequently, "the British Government, having regard to the wider political considerations", Attlee told Holland, "had come to the conclusion that it would be desirable for it to make an offer of ground forces." In making this decision, Attlee emphasised that he had received no direct request from the US Administration(49); rather, Britain would make a "spontaneous offer in accordance with British obligations under the Security Council resolution."

The composition of this force, he said, would be made up of three infantry battalions, one armoured regiment and a field artillery regiment. A public announcement giving effect to this decision would be made in the House of Commons during the debate on defence, at 3 pm on Wednesday, 26 July and the UN Secretary General would be notified the same day.(50)

This news of Britain's impending offer was the only indication given as to the direction the British would move in this question of supply of combat forces. Hence it was both sudden and unexpected to Britain's "old" Commonwealth colleagues. New Zealand, however, having already worked out the practical problems involved in sending ground forces, was at least in a position to immediately announce a similar favourable decision of its

49. The Americans were, however, seriously considering doing this because of Britain's importance as an ally and as a 'catalyst' for other Commonwealth offers. On 21 July, the State Department sought to transmit an aide-memoire to Oliver Franks conveying "the Department's strong feeling that the UK should make a commitment of ground forces to Korea as soon as possible." That this did not happen was because the US Ambassador to the UK, Lewis Douglas urged that "it would be far better if the British were to make an offer on their own initiative instead of as a result of an aide-memoire from us." An aide-memoire, he warned, "could probably not be withheld from the Commons and the feeling might begin in certain quarters of the Labour Party that we were pressing the issue." Foreign Relations - KOREA, Douglas to Acheson (495) 22 July 1950; p.447

50. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Emergency Circular Q No.22, 25 July 1950.
own; indeed, having the benefit of a difference in time zones (51), it was able to precede Britain in making public its decision.

At 5.30 pm on 26 July, the Prime Minister convened a meeting of the Defence Committee to discuss the course of action New Zealand would take in the light of the new British intentions. In considering a New Zealand contribution, Holland said there was no requirement at the moment for further naval forces, and neither had air forces been asked for. He therefore wished to know "whether the Chief of Staff's offer of an artillery regiment still stood." General Stewart said that it did. With this established, Holland said he wished to make a statement at 7.30 pm that evening, both because he did not want to be behind the United Kingdom Government and because he wanted to forestall Australia should that country also consider sending ground forces. (52)

The Committee, had little difficulty in agreeing on Holland's proposed statement. It was then necessary to obtain the consent of Cabinet and caucus, Holland wanted also, if possible, to consult the Leader of the Opposition, Peter Fraser, before announcing the decision.

When the Cabinet met at 6.30 pm, Holland, after outlining the message from Attlee, stated that the question of the provision of a New Zealand ground force had been considered at a special meeting of the Defence Committee where it was recommended for the approval of Cabinet, that New Zealand should provide an artillery formation consisting, with a small administrative element, of a total of one thousand volunteers on despatch from New Zealand.

51. New Zealand was eleven hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Thus the time Attlee was to make his speech, it was noted in Wellington, would not be before 2 am 27 July New Zealand time.

52. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50) M.3, Meeting of Defence Committee held at 5.30 pm, 26 July 1950 in the Cabinet Room; NA 08/11/26 part(i), Minute by Second Naval Member of the New Zealand Naval Board 27 July 1950, of Meeting of Defence Committee 26 July 1950.
Cabinet approved this recommendation.(53)

At 7.30 pm on 26 July Holland addressed the House of Representatives:

Though the question of the role and type of a New Zealand force is still under consideration, I feel that I should, without further delay, announce that the New Zealand Government is immediately offering to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a special combat unit for service with other ground forces. Subject to the outcome of consultations now proceeding, this will probably take the form of an artillery formation.

Army offices will be open to receive volunteers for this combat unit from 8 am tomorrow. I am sure that the course I have outlined will commend itself to both sides of the House, and to the country as a whole.(54)

In making this decision, the Government had, from the beginning, stressed the Commonwealth setting in which it was made and the professional consultations that were taking place. In an issue of such considerable importance, however, these "top level exchanges" are noticeably minimal. On no occasion did the American authorities directly approach the Government over this question, which left Berendsen to attempt to establish what significance the US placed on a further military contribution from New Zealand. Consultations amongst the Commonwealth governments were equally restrained. On this occasion Australia was the most vocal in criticising this lack of counsel, but it is not difficult to envisage Wellington uttering similar complaints had its professional military advisers not undertaken their examination of New Zealand's ability to provide a combat unit.

53. CM (50) 48, Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 26 July 1950. (Held at National Archives)

The announcement of the United Kingdom proposals without warning precipitated an Australian decision which had previously been withheld at the special request of the United Kingdom pending discussions by Mr Menzies with British and American authorities in Washington. The result was that the Australian decision and announcement were against a background of incomplete examination of the practical problems involved and method and implementation was, to say the least, uncertain...

In any event, local United Kingdom faces were a trifle red. (55)

Continuing in the same vein, the Australians raised a similar question with the New Zealand authorities.

Presumably the scanty consultation between Australia and New Zealand prior to the Australian and New Zealand announcements was due to the premature announcement in the United Kingdom and this explanation has been accepted by authorities here. (56)

Perhaps a more accurate explanation was revealed in Holland's comments to the Defence Committee where he sought to forestall a similar commitment by Australia, apparently in an attempt to gain some political points over the Australians.

Yet the evidence shows that regard for Commonwealth decisions, particularly those of Britain, dictated New Zealand's policy in the early stages of the Korean conflict. To be sure, it is clear that any action on the part of New Zealand to the appeal for ground forces would not be forthcoming unless there was a similar response from the rest of the Commonwealth. It was simply unprepared to undertake a military, and through it a political, commitment which required it to act independently of a familiar and secure British-led Commonwealth. And this attitude was maintained in spite of the known advantages; the goodwill and the "deep appreciation" that New Zealand would foster in the US if it acted positively and spontaneously to Lie's appeal. In fact, it is more likely that the Government, having regard to its prior commitments, the inconvenience and the

55. Australia made its announcement on the provision of ground forces on 26 July also, but later in the day. The press in New Zealand were quick to point out the fact that New Zealand was once again "first to answer the call." PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T.No.170, N.Z. High Commissioner, Canberra to Minister of External Affairs, 27 July 1950.

56. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No.170, N.Z. High Commissioner, Canberra to Minister of External Affairs, 27 July 1950.
disruption to existing armed forces recruitment and Compulsory Military Training programmes, would have preferred to decline the request for a combat unit. Berendsen could have been speaking for the entire National Government when he wrote,

If the rest of the Commonwealth decides to respond to Lie's appeal, it would seem that New Zealand would also have to endeavour to play its part. However, I am becoming very much disturbed at the extent to which democratic forces are being demanded and committed for what could, after all, be merely a side-show. The extent to which we are committed in Korea will weaken ourselves elsewhere and that may be the primary Soviet objective.\(^{(57)}\)

Knowledge that New Zealand would be fulfilling its duty or obligations to the UN, that it would be seen to be giving active support for the maintenance of peace and security in the Pacific region, and that it would find a welcome reception in the US by making a favourable decision, as indeed Berendsen was able to report to Wellington, no doubt sweetened the otherwise bitter pill of despatching troops to Korea. But it would be mistaken to attribute to these considerations an importance which obscures the decisive factor instrumental in the action taken by New Zealand on 26 July - the continued willingness to rely on the Commonwealth in general and Britain in particular to provide the operative decisions, and thereby the lead, in important foreign policy issues directly affecting New Zealand.

In the end, such ideas as reciprocation of American favours, attempting to use New Zealand's part in the Korean conflict as a means "to apprise the United States of its value as an ally";\(^{(58)}\) ensuring the UN would not go the same way as the old League of Nations; putting into practice the principle of collective security and taking a stand to make the point that naked aggression could not be carried out with impunity,

57. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T.No.74, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs 17 July 1950.

became more accurately justifications rather than motives for sending ground troops to Korea. (59) This certainly seemed to be the case when Berendsen told Wellington of the American reaction on hearing New Zealand's decision. "We all think this is wonderful", Assistant Secretary of State George Perkins told Berendsen, and commenting Berendsen wrote, "I am certain this renewed evidence of New Zealand's readiness to play its part will have widespread influence and will redound greatly to our credit and indeed, ultimately to our practical advantage." (60)

In formulating the commitment, however, the US did not figure as prominently in the Government's calculations as did the UK and the "old" Commonwealth. This in itself is noteworthy and offers a significant contrast when considering the changing attitude of New Zealand (and Australia also) toward its relationship with its Anglo-American allies as the conflict in Korea progressed.

60. PM 324/2/7 part(i), I.T. No. 107, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 26 July 1950.
CHAPTER V

ORGANISATION OF A MILITARY COMMITMENT: KAYFORCE AND THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH CONTINGENT

Whatever doubts the military authorities in New Zealand may have had as to whether a sufficient number of suitable volunteers would come forward to enable the formation of a ground force for Korea were soon dispelled. When recruiting began on 27 July, it appeared that "the spirit of 1914 and 1939 was still unquenched"(1); on that day alone, some 2018 men came forward. During the ten day recruiting period from 27 July to 5 August, 5982 volunteers had registered with Army offices throughout the country.(2)

Having the means to fulfil the newly undertaken obligation, however, solved only part of the problem of providing a combat unit. Of equal importance, was how that force could best be utilised and under what military framework it should operate. This decision, the Government and service chiefs resolved, would be made only after close consultation with other Commonwealth governments and, where appropriate, the American authorities.

These consultations did not, however, get off to the most auspicious start. On 1 August, the Australian deputy Prime Minister, Arthur Fadden, telephoned Holland concerning the content of a speech

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2. A.J.H.R., 1950, J-3, p.9. Clemow has produced some interesting evidence that the response was not wholly inspired by patriotic sentiment. "A bluder's job and opportunities for black marketeering were the objectives of an ex-airforceman and artilleryman who registered for 'K-Force' at Buckle Street, Wellington on 8 August. Other recruits, mainly labourers, gave a variety of reasons for joining up but most wanted a change from their daily job." Clemow, op cit, pp.73-6.
Menzies, who at that time was in the US, proposed to make to both Houses of the American Congress. Fadden had been instructed by Menzies to obtain Holland's consent to allow the Australian leader to announce in this speech that Australia and New Zealand would between them provide a three battalion ANZAC force, which could be available in three or four months time. Holland was less than enthusiastic. "I made it very clear to Mr Fadden", he wrote,

that whereas he had had all day to consult his colleagues and service chiefs, I was being asked to make a decision on the spur of the moment, which I was not able to do. I also made it clear, and emphasised it three times, that I thought it would be quite improper for Mr Menzies to make any announcement to America as to the part New Zealand would play.

While in favour of the New Zealand land force being part of an ANZAC or British Commonwealth force, he maintained that "a decision in that connection could only be arrived at after consultation with other Empire countries."(3)

The preference to have the New Zealand contribution operate as part of a larger Commonwealth formation was apparent from the outset in New Zealand's deliberations concerning a ground force contribution to Korea.(4) By early August the subject had been further explored in consultations at the service level with the UK and Australia, but no firm conclusions were reached. Although there was general agreement on the expediency of a combined Commonwealth force, problems arose when British and Australian conceptions of what form the New Zealand contribution to that force should take, differed from that held in Wellington. In New Zealand, it had already been considered that a field artillery unit would, in view of existing logistic capabilities, be the most appropriate offer.(5) But the UK authorities suggested a medium artillery regiment

3. PM 324/2/7 part(i), O.T. No.210, Holland to Berendsen, 1 August 1950, cf., O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, pp.80-84.
5. See above pp. 62-3; 67-8.
would be preferrable and the Australians, themselves wanting to provide the artillery component for such a force, attempted to persuade New Zealand that an infantry battalion would make a better contribution. (6) In view of this dissension, the Government decided that the matter could more usefully be discussed on a personal level and sent Major General Stewart to Melbourne to consider the question of integration with his Australian counterpart, Lieutenant General S. F. Rowell and, it was expected, a representative of the UK Services Liaison Staff in Melbourne. (7)

The result of these discussions, held over 8-9 August, was to provide the necessary agreement on the concept and framework for a Commonwealth joint effort in Korea.

In what amounted to a high-level Army exchange of views between Australia, New Zealand and the UK - the British representative, Major General A.J.H. Cassels, Head of the UK Liaison Staff, had been briefed on this subject by the War Office - it was concluded that the contingents from the three countries should be organised as an expanded brigade group under the command of a senior British officer. Initially, Rowell had asked whether New Zealand would reconsider supplying an infantry unit instead of artillery in order that a two battalion ANZAC brigade might be formed. But Stewart, as instructed by Holland, rejected this proposal. "The only solution, therefore, was to link both the Australian battalion and the New Zealand artillery regiment with the United Kingdom brigade group." (8)

6. PM 324/2/7 part(i), Note for file by Shanahan, 3 August 1950.
7. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.216, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 7 August 1950.
8. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.4, Record of Defence Committee meeting, 14 August 1950.
The composition of the New Zealand contribution to this formation would be a field artillery regiment, a signals troop, a light aid detachment, RNZEME, an artillery platoon, RNZASC, and, base and reinforcement details. (9) If, later, the Australian contingent should be increased to a brigade group, a divisional organisation would be established for which New Zealand would be expected to provide a proportion of the division headquarters staff and units. (10) The composition of the New Zealand force was determined on the basis that it would be fully equipped in New Zealand and its total strength, including sufficient reinforcements to replace three months battle casualties, would be 1086 all ranks. If, however, "significant battle casualties were incurred in action it would be necessary to send reinforcements every three months or so." Stewart considered a more realistic manpower commitment would be 1500, which would include any contribution of personnel to divisional headquarters if formed. (11)

The three representatives agreed that the formation should be supported from the existing British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) base in Kure, Japan (12), and that the Commander-in-Chief of that force,

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10. At the time these discussions were held the following offers had been made: UK, one brigade group and one armoured regiment; Australia, one infantry battalion; New Zealand, one artillery regiment and a small administrative unit.

11. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.4., Record of Defence Committee meeting, 14 August 1950.

12. The British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) was established at the end of the Pacific War to carry out the demilitarisation, disarmament and repatriation of Japanese forces, and Japanese post-war reconstruction. It was based in the Kure-Iwakuni area around the devastated city of Hiroshima. The strength of the force reached its peak in 1946 when some 46,000 men from Australia, India, New Zealand and the UK were engaged in occupation duties. By 1948, the aims of the occupation had been thoroughly achieved which enabled the reduction of the Force's size. By August 1950 the BCOF had all but completely wound down its operation and only a few Australian forces remained in Japan. See O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, pp.32-3.
Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson, be authorised to consult with MacArthur regarding the need for smaller forward base facilities in Korea. The higher operational command of the Commonwealth forces would be entrusted to General MacArthur, although General Robertson would be responsible for the non-operational control and general administration of the brigade. In respect to Robertson's appointment, it was considered that the service authority which should issue policy directions to him should be the Australian higher defence machinery in conjunction with the UK and New Zealand Liaison Staffs in Melbourne.

With regard to the combat readiness of the components of this force, Stewart was told that the Australian battalion would be ready for operations about the end of September; the UK contingent would not be ready to leave for Korea before the end of October. He estimated that the New Zealand force would not be ready to depart before the beginning of December at the earliest. (13)

These recommendations were endorsed by the New Zealand Defence Committee at a meeting convened on 14 August, although the question of the force's operational availability caused some difficulty. During the meeting, Holland told the Committee that the US Ambassador to New Zealand, R.M. Scotten, had called on him earlier that day to deliver a personal message from Acheson. Scotten had been instructed to impress on Holland the grave concern with which the US Government viewed Soviet attempts "in the Security Council and elsewhere to obscure the fact that the opposition to aggression in Korea was a UN rather than a US effort." To place the UN decision "in it's true light as a joint effort to meet aggression", Acheson requested that "all possible steps be taken to bring forward the date at which New Zealand's contribution would be effective." Additional ground

13. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)7, Stewart to Minister of Defence, 11 August 1950.
forces were, moreover, "urgently required to attain an early decision in the campaign".(14)

Despite this entreaty, Stewart restated the position that it would be impossible to despatch the New Zealand contingent before early December. The time required to train officers and men, and prepare equipment for the unit to a level efficient in all respects to allow for its operational deployment, simply precluded bringing forward its departure date. In fact, Stewart told the Committee that in the course of discussions between the Army and the War Office concerning the training programme of the New Zealand force, the British had "expressed some surprise that it could be got ready so soon." The Committee, therefore, accepted Stewart's advice.(15)

The recommendation concerning the higher operational command of the Commonwealth formation was also closely examined. Not only had this matter been canvassed in Melbourne, but it was also raised in a questionnaire, compiled by the UN Command "to facilitate the integration of military offers from UN members into the UN forces for Korea", and relayed to Wellington by Air Commodore J. L. Findlay, Head of the New Zealand Services Mission in Washington. Among other matters, the questionnaire asked, "Do you have any reservations in accepting the complete operational authority of General MacArthur?"(16) Since such an arrangement had already been agreed to by Cassels, Rowell and Stewart, the Committee found little difficulty in concurring, noting that it was

14. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.4, Record of Defence Committee meeting 14 August 1950; NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.225, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 15 August 1950.

15. Ibid.

16. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.121, Findlay to Chiefs of Staff Committee, 10 August 1950.
"impracticable in the case of a small unit such as the present force to seek to establish the conditions decided in respect to the operational employment of 2NZEF."(17)

Having obtained the necessary approval from the Government, the service authorities wasted no time proceeding with the organisation and training of the combat unit. On 29 August, those volunteers found to be suitable for active service overseas "marched-in" to camp.(18) The unit, officially titled "Korea Force" but more commonly referred to as Kayforce, did not come together in one location until early October. The initial induction procedures, starting with formal attestation and ending with the new recruits being instructed to a rudimentary level of basic training, were undertaken at the District Training Camps at Papakura and Linton in the North Island and Burnham in the South. By 5 October, the main body of the contingent entered Waiouru Camp, which had been designated Kayforce headquarters, and training began in earnest.

The principle command appointments for the various components which made up Kayforce had also been decided by this time. Overall command of Kayforce was given to Brigadier R. S. Park. Major J. W. Moodie was appointed commander of the artillery component, now called 16th Field Regiment, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Lieutenant R. R. Harding had command of the artillery (transport) platoon, and Captain J. M. Wilson the Light Aid Detachment.(19)

17. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.4, Report of Defence Committee meeting 14 August 1950.

18. Selection of volunteers for the force was confined to New Zealand citizens of European or Maori ancestry between the ages of 21 and 32. Officers and ex-officers were acceptable if under 40 years of age, and NCOs and ex-NCOs could be up to 38 years of age. S.32/29/GSD, New Zealand Army Quarterly Liaison Letter, No.7, 30 September 1950, p.2

19. Ibid.
After a further three months of intensive training and preparation, Kayforce was ready to embark for Korea.

Two ships were chartered to transport men and equipment to the battlefield. The freighter GANGES left Wellington on 25 November on a direct passage to Pusan carrying field guns, ammunition, vehicles, stores and a host of other logistic materiel as her cargo. The tourist liner ORMONDE was given the task of transporting the personnel of Kayforce.(20) At midday on 10 December, after a valedictory oration by the Prime Minister to the troops, ORMONDE set sail from Wellington and arrived, twenty-two incident free days later at Pusan, Korea.

On the political level, meanwhile, the New Zealand decision to accept the overall recommendations arising from the preliminary tripartite service talks in Melbourne coincided with a similar decision by Australia. On 16 August, Fadden informed both New Zealand and Britain of the Australian resolve, adding that detailed discussions should now proceed in an official level between the three countries with the aim of finalising administrative, support, and financial arrangements for the combined force prior to final agreement by the three Governments. He was also insistent that the respective elements within the proposed Commonwealth formation should "retain their national identity ... and their internal administration should be in conformity with their national regulations and conditions of service."(21) Holland was in complete agreement.(22)

20. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.6, Record of Defence Committee meeting 27 November 1950
21. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.121, Fadden to Holland, 16 August 1950.
22. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.86, Holland to Fadden, 21 August 1950.
It was not until 26 September that the UK Government notified the authorities in Canberra and Wellington that it, too, agreed in principle to these proposals. This agreement was, however, subject to certain conditions. Much had changed during the preceding month, especially the military and political circumstances which influenced British policy regarding its ground force commitment to Korea. Like New Zealand, and for that matter Australia, the UK had been pressured by the US to accelerate the departure date of their contingent. But whereas New Zealand and Australia kept to their original timetable - the Australian force arrived in Korea on 28 September - Britain acquiesced in the appeal from Washington and decided, in view of the urgency of the situation, to despatch as an interim measure two infantry battalions of the 27th Brigade which were then on garrison duty in Hong Kong. This advance British element arrived at Pusan on 28 August and was later joined by the Australian battalion upon its arrival in Korea to form the initial component of the Commonwealth force, the 27th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade. In addition, the contingent originally designated for deployment in Korea, the 29th Infantry Brigade, would be made ready a month earlier. Thus, by the time the authorities in New Zealand and Australia were advised of Britain's general acceptance of the recommended organisation of a Commonwealth contingent, UK forces had already been in action during the previous month as part of an American formation. (23)

This development no doubt persuaded the British to attach their own representative to General MacArthur's Headquarters. On 19 September, Air Vice Marshal C.H. Bouchier was appointed Senior British Military Liaison Officer on MacArthur's staff and was instructed by the UK Chiefs of Staff to keep them informed on theatre operations, particularly as they

effected the British forces. (24) While the UK authorities may not have intended Bouchier's appointment to supersede General Robertson's designated position, it was viewed by Australia as depreciating the role of the Commander in Chief, BCOF, if not the basic concept of a co-operative Commonwealth effort in Korea. The arrangement seemed to imply doubt on the part of the British as to the effectiveness of General Robertson's position to influence UN Command decisions which could be vital to the interests of the Commonwealth force. This concern was not entirely unwarranted. As it turned out, Bouchier's continued presence as a direct representative of the UK Chiefs of Staff served to diminish Robertson's standing and influence with MacArthur and his staff. (25) But the British apparently considered it necessary to have a representative who would be accorded the appropriate recognition by MacArthur and who could, at least until such time as effective consultative machinery for the Commonwealth force was established, advise the UK Chiefs of Staff of any important developments and decisions concerning theatre operations.

Of more importance, however, was the question of composition of the force which had once again surfaced, and the authorities in London considered that the proposals should take account of this development. They now thought it advisable that these arrangements should be flexible enough to allow for any modification "in the event of any other Commonwealth country besides Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom deciding to link its ground troops with ours." (26)


25. O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.90.

26. PM 324/2/7 part(ii), Message, Attlee to Holland, 26 September 1950.
Referring to the combined force, as constituted in late September, as a Commonwealth formation was, of course, misleading. There were a great many more Commonwealth member countries who were disinclined to provide any military assistance to the UN operation in Korea, let alone participate in any combined Commonwealth contingent. But two members were conspicuous by their absence - Canada and South Africa. Although South Africa had decided to contribute a fighter squadron to the UN Force on 4 August (27) and Canada had approved on 7 August, the formation of a specially recruited infantry brigade for Korea, neither gave any indication of their willingness to join with the Australian, New Zealand and UK contingents. These commitments, therefore, were not considered during the preliminary tripartite discussions in Melbourne. Indeed, the Canadian Government seemed more inclined to denounce such an arrangement. On 24 August, External Affairs Minister, Lester Pearson, told the British authorities that "the aim of Canada's involvement in the war was to discharge obligations under the United Nations Charter rather than to serve some British Commonwealth purpose." (28)

By late September, however, this attitude had changed to the point where Attlee was able to advise Holland that the Canadians "have told us that they are considering the possibility of grouping their special force for Korea with the Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom contingents." In view of this, Attlee suggested that "until we have reached agreement with the Canadian Government upon various points that arise, ... I think we should regard these arrangements as provisional, ...

27. See above p.69 footnote 41.
28. Cited in O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.93.
ie, as subject to confirmation with the Canadian Government in due course." Until that confirmation was forthcoming, the substance of the proposals would not be made public, nor would they be communicated to the US authorities. "This need not", Attlee concluded,

prevent study going forward on the official level of the proposals for a Commonwealth formation; indeed it is essential to press forward without delay and if we are all agreed on the foregoing principles, I suggest that further details should be discussed forthwith at the service level.(29)

The Australians were not slow to act on Attlee's suggestion and proceeded immediately to prepare, in consultation with the UK and New Zealand Liaison Staffs, a draft directive, and administrative and financial plan for the Commander-in-Chief, BCOF, defining his responsibilities as the non-operational and administrative commander of the Commonwealth force in Korea. The directive was given provisional approval, in accordance with Attlee's request, by all three Governments in late November and was immediately issued to General Robertson.(30) It encompassed all the recommendations formulated during the tripartite discussions in Melbourne and differed only in specifics rather than substance.(31)

The administrative and financial arrangements were approved by the New Zealand Government on 5 December. These proposals set down in detail the costs each country would be expected to bear in respect to transporting and equipping its own contingent. With regard to other stores and supplies required for the general maintenance of the joint force, these costs would be charged against the Korean Operations Pool

29. PM 324/2/7 part(ii), Message, Attlee to Holland 26 September 1950.
30. JSO 80/5/1 part(i), I.T. No.175, Minister of External Affairs, Canberra, to Minister of External Affairs, Wellington 10 November 1950; I.T. No.138, Holland to Menzies, 22 November 1950.
31. See Appendix III.
Account. This Account was administered by the Australian Treasury but financed by each of the participating countries. (32)

Like the decision to proceed with the formation of a combined force, the British again preferred "not to inform General MacArthur or the US Government, of the terms of General Robertson's directive until the position of Canada has been clarified." (33) By now one battalion of the proffered Canadian infantry brigade group was en route to Korea but there was still no indication that the Canadian authorities had given any further consideration to combining this element with other Commonwealth forces. And, the importance of grouping together the various Commonwealth units already in Korea or due to arrive there in the near future, took on a new urgency.

It had been recognised during the preliminary talks in Melbourne that the formation of a self supporting Commonwealth division would have a far greater political impact than if the various national contingents were to operate simply as part of US divisions. But there were insufficient Commonwealth forces on the ground in Korea to allow this formation, and with the dramatic change in the military situation during September and October favouring the UN Command, it seemed highly likely that it would be unnecessary to augment them with troop contributions that had yet to arrive in Korea. (34)

32. JSO 80/6/1 part(i), Joint Administration Planning Committee, Report, 'British Commonwealth Forces in Korea, Draft Financial Section and Administrative Plan', 24 October 1950.

33. JSO 80/5/1 part(i), I.T. No.145, Attlee to Holland, 18 November 1950.

34. For a discussion of the effect of the Chinese Communist entry into the conflict on Kayforce planning, see below pp. 141-143.
By November, however, there occurred the intervention of the Chinese Communist armies in the conflict, which caused an equally dramatic alteration in the military situation. The UK, in view of this new and grave development, consented to leave in Korea its two battalions in the 27th Brigade in addition to the more substantial 29th Brigade, which had arrived in Korea early in November. New Zealand too, confirmed its intention of despatching Kayforce as originally planned. If Canada were to commit the remaining two battalions of its originally intended contribution of an infantry brigade group, there would be adequate troop strengths once again to consider the formation of a divisional organisation. (35)

This question received a favourable hearing in New Zealand. In a memorandum to the Minister of Defence, T.L. Macdonald on 17 November, General Stewart stressed that in view of the available and projected Commonwealth strengths and the high probability of a protracted campaign in Korea, "there is no doubt that the grouping of the British Commonwealth contingent as a Division is now necessary from a military standpoint." Provision for an additional manpower commitment should a division be established had been made when the manning of Kayforce had been determined in August, but it would not be offered until a firm decision had been reached on the status of the British Commonwealth contingent. (36) This seemed wholly dependent on the attitude of the Canadians, with whom the British were conducting all negotiations in this matter.

Meanwhile, the preparation of Kayforce had almost been completed and the authorities in Wellington turned their attention to the drafting


36. NA 08/11/26 part(i), Memorandum, Army S.23/51/2/B, Stewart to Minister of Defence, 17 November 1950.
of a directive to the Commander of the contingent, Brigadier Park. This
directive, similar in principal to General Robertson's terms of appointment,
was in line with earlier Australian insistence that each component within
the Commonwealth formation retain its national identity and retain a direct
channel of communication with its own Government. It defined the
relationship between Kayforce and the UN Command and the Commander-in-Chief,
BCOF, as well as Park's responsibilities to the Army Board in New Zealand,
and his authority in disciplinary, financial and personnel matters.
The directive was approved by the Defence Committee on 27 November and
issued to Brigadier Park prior to the departure of Kayforce on
10 December 1950.(37)

It was also at this time that the Canadian authorities finally agreed
to combine their formation with the other Commonwealth ground forces in
Korea, initially as part of the 27th Brigade and later in a Commonwealth
division, should one be formed. The reality of the Commonwealth force
was further enhanced with the decision by India, also during December,
to attach its contribution of a Field Ambulance to the 27th Brigade.

It was this formation, later reorganised and renamed the
28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade, which Kayforce was attached when it
commenced operations on 22 January 1951. Until the formation of the
1st (Commonwealth) Division, United Nations Forces on 27 July 1951, the
27th, and its successor the 28th, Brigade operated as part of the 24th
US Division. During this period, Kayforce saw some of the most intense
action of the entire Korean conflict, notably the Battle of Kapyong
during the Chinese Spring offensive of April 1951.(38)

37. NA 08/11/26 part(i), DC(50)M.6, Record of Defence Committee meeting,
27 November 1950. See Appendix IV.

38. C.N. Barclay, The First Commonwealth Division, Aldershot, 1954,
pp.39-79.
By early 1951 then, New Zealand, as on each of the three previous occasions when it had despatched expeditionary forces abroad, was fighting alongside and operating under the familiar framework of a British led Commonwealth organisation. It had taken almost four months to the day from Holland's call for volunteers to form a special ground force until Kayforce arrived in Korea. It was no small achievement to enlist and train a specialist combat unit to an acceptable level of operational readiness in only twelve weeks. But the very fact that New Zealand was unable to provide military forces at short notice in an emergency such as Korea, highlighted the shortcomings of the concept which dominated New Zealand defence planning during this period, that of providing for a total war situation. This flaw did not go unnoticed. On 24 July, the Defence Committee directed the Chiefs of Staff to examine the possibility of reducing the time required to organise an emergency force which could meet any sudden demands for New Zealand armed assistance in international disputes.

The conclusions reached by the armed services Joint Planning Committee, the body delegated the task of carrying out this examination, were not encouraging. Although the Navy and Air Force were able to produce combat units at short notice, the Army could only produce an emergency force in the same time frame if there was an immediate revision of New Zealand's Defence Policy, a revision which the service authorities were reluctant to see introduced. There were, in the Committee's opinion, four possible courses of action:

(a) Maintain a "standing Army" unit, eg, an Infantry Battalion of approximately 1000 regular soldiers;
(b) Maintain a special reserve of volunteers who would undertake to serve overseas whenever required;
(c) Alter the Compulsory Military Training scheme so that a reserve of trained manpower for overseas service was
provided more quickly than was currently possible;
(d) Raise a force of volunteers as and when required.

Of these, the Joint Planning Committee was not in favour of the first option because of cost; "Its formation would add approximately £1,000,000 per year to the Army Vote." Adoption of the second course was argued against on reasons of practicality; "It is highly unlikely that sufficient men would volunteer in peacetime for such an undefined commitment." The third course was rejected because "alteration of the Compulsory Military Training scheme is justified only if it is necessary to accelerate the Army's readiness for a general war." The use of volunteers, "the method ... adopted for Kayforce," was considered the "only practicable means at present of providing an emergency force."(39) But, whereas the first three options, however impractical, overcame the problem of hastening the deployment of any such force, the use of volunteers did not. The Committee estimated that a period of six months would be required before a force so raised was made battleworthy, although it hastened to point out, that "this delay will be reduced to approximately three months after 1952 when reserves of trained men of an age for overseas service and who may be expected to volunteer, will be available from the Compulsory Military Training scheme."(40)

The Government after consideration of these submissions, was also unwillingly to alter existing Defence planning to enable the formation of a force capable of immediate deployment in international emergencies and concurred with the findings of the Committee.(41) It was on this background which the authorities in New Zealand were to consider calls for an

39. NA 08/11/26 part(i), JPC(50)12, Report by Joint Planning Committee on Provision of Emergency Forces, 4 September 1950.
40. Ibid.
41. JSO 50/2/1 part(i), DC(50)8, Chiefs of Staff Committee to Defence Committee, 12 September 1950.
expansion of New Zealand's ground forces in Korea during 1951.(42)

But the period during which the joint Commonwealth effort in Korea was organised also highlighted a development which had been noticeably lacking during the initial stages of the conflict; close Commonwealth consultation and co-operation at both the service and governmental level. This was in direct contrast with the level of communication with the Americans over the higher operational management of the War which had, as the events during September and October would show, been all but non-existent.

42. See below pp.224-8.
CHAPTER VI

DEFINING OBJECTIVES: THE QUESTION
OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH PARALLEL

While New Zealand's efforts regarding Korea during August and September concentrated mainly on recruiting, training and the procedural question of the operational command of Kayforce, the military situation in Korea was undergoing a series of rapid and critical transformations. Driven steadily southwards since the outbreak of the conflict, the remnants of the ROK Army and the first US-UN troops were at last able, by the beginning of August, to establish a foothold in an area of about four thousand square miles around the vital supply port of Pusan in the southeastern corner of the peninsula. For more than a month the North Korean Army launched a concerted effort to push the defending UN forces completely out of Korea. Indeed, the North Koreans proved so enterprising and fierce in their attack that at the beginning of September it appeared for a moment that they would yet beat the Americans in the race to break through the Pusan perimeter.

But the defences held. They were sound enough to enable troops from the US and from various other UN member nations to trickle through Pusan to reinforce its beleaguered defenders. Moreover, the increasing likelihood that the UN forces would hold the Pusan perimeter injected sufficient confidence in the US administration for it to endorse a plan conceived by MacArthur which would turn the tide of battle dramatically in favour of the UN forces.

Operation CHROMITE, as MacArthur code-named this plan, centred on a surprise amphibious assault on Inchon, the port on the west coast of Korea which services the Capital, Seoul. The securing of a beachhead on this part of the peninsula and the subsequent deployment of large
armoured and infantry forces was to coincide with a thrust northwards from the Pusan perimeter by UN troops, thus enveloping and (it was hoped) quickly neutralising the main elements of the North Korean Army in a pincer movement. Gaining the approval of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, the assault was set for 15 September.

Confident in his own mind that the landing would not fail and that "it was the only way out of a hopeless war of attrition". MacArthur nevertheless later confessed it was a "tremendous gamble."(1) But it worked. In one bold move MacArthur had decisively altered the whole complexion of the military situation. Inchon, the second largest port in Korea, was captured; the North Koreans were faced with a two front war; communications and supply lines to their Army around Pusan were cut; and the path of least resistance to Seoul was now opened. The liberation of the South Korean capital on 27 September was as much a crucial victory for the UN forces as it was a decisive defeat for the North Koreans, militarily, politically and psychologically. When General Walker's Eighth Army broke through the Pusan perimeter, drove northward, and linked up with General Almond's Xth Corps on 26 September, the tactical surprise was almost complete: the pincer was successfully closed, trapping more than half of the North Korean Army. The rest of the enemy forces made a precipitous retreat into the territory of the KPDR. By the end of September there remained little more to be done other than "mopping-up operations"

1. Rees, Korea - Limited War, pp.77-97; Spanier, Truman-MacArthur Controversy, pp.77-83. The storming of Inchon is covered in virtually every account on the Korean War. Besides Rees and Spanier however, the best works to consult on the political and military aspects of the attack are the official US Army histories, Roy E. Appleman's South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950), Washington 1961, and James F. Schnabel's Policy and Direction: The First Year, Washington 1972, both volumes in the series United States Army in the Korean War, Washington, Government Printing Office.
south of the 38th Parallel. In short, MacArthur had turned near-defeat into glorious military victory. Moreover, the success of Operation CHROMITE had simultaneously made possible the achievement of the political objective espoused both in the US and the UN Security Council as the *raison d'être* for intervention in Korea – the restoration of the ROK to the status it had before the invasion and the re-establishment of the peace broken by that invasion. Thus under the terms of the June Security Council resolutions the US had effectively operated, consciously abided by and completely fulfilled the expectations of these directives. Accordingly, it would have been reasonable to assume that the fighting in Korea had come to an end.

Yet military operations did not end, despite these achievements. Paradoxically the very success of Inchon made unlikely the limiting of the UN military offensive to the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*. Success on the battlefield brought openly into question the limited scope of these early Security Council resolutions and provided the US with the confidence to press for a modification of military, and through them, political objectives in Korea. This was done by implementing a plan for operations in Korea, consideration and formulation of which actually predated the Inchon offensive, "that would best serve the interests of the US and the rest of the free world".(2)

Before the Korean War was three weeks old (at the time American and ROK forces were falling back on Taejon), President Truman called on military and civilian advisers from several agencies within the Administration to tell him whether MacArthur should, when circumstances permitted, send forces

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across the 38th Parallel.(3) In the recommendations submitted in response to this request, it was evident that these advisers considered that the 38th Parallel, in itself, presented no moral, physical or even legal obstacle for an advance beyond this point by UN forces.(4) Whatever recognition there may have been for the "sanctity" of this line as a political boundary had been lost when the armed forces of the KPDR crossed it on 25 June. To now grant this "artificial barrier" the respect accorded an international frontier would serve only to benefit the "criminal aggressor", by leaving him a refuge from which he could, at some future date, repeat his aggression. Moreover, it would be an admission of the existence of a North Korean state, a recognition accorded neither by the US nor the majority of UN membership.

Typical of the sentiments held by the majority of official opinion in Washington on this subject, were the views of John Foster Dulles. "The 38th Parallel", he wrote in his capacity as Special Adviser to the Secretary of State(5),

was never intended to be, and never ought to be, a political line... If perpetuated as a political line and as providing asylum to the aggressor, it is bound to perpetuate friction and ever-present danger of new war. If we have the opportunity to obliterate the line as a political division certainly we should do so in the interest of "peace and security in the area". (UN Resolution)(sic)(6)

3. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (NSC), James S. Lay. Subject: 'Future US Policy With Respect to North Korea', 17 July 1950, p.410; Schnabel, Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.177; Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp.451-2.

4. For complete source documentation see Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.373-721 paxaim; See also Schnabel, op cit, pp.173-214.

5. Dulles, later to become Eisenhower's Secretary of State, worked in the State Department during Truman's Administration on the preparation of the peace treaty with Japan. See below pp.211-6; Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, p.354.

Dulles' reference to the UN injunction is significant. Because of this paragraph, the President's advisers saw no need to test the legality of crossing the parallel. The US Government, "in exercising the functions of Unified Command", had been directed under the terms of the 27 June and 7 July resolutions to conduct military operations so as to "assist the ROK in defending itself against armed attack and thus to restore international peace and security in the area". This directive was generally considered by American policymakers to be sufficient legal basis to enter North Korea.

Agreement on this point did not, however, necessarily guarantee the wisdom of such an act. The Department of State initially cautioned restraint in pursuing a UN offensive into the territory of the KPDR. There were too many unknowns. Concern was expressed over the possibility of provoking a counter-attack from neighbouring Russia and/or China thereby expanding the current hostilities to a wider, general war. "There is ample evidence", the State Department's Policy Planning Staff asserted(7) of the strategic importance to Russia of the Korean Peninsula. It is unlikely that the Kremlin at present would accept the establishment in North Korea of a regime which it could not dominate and control.

When it becomes apparent that the North Korean aggression will be defeated, there might be some agreement between the USSR and the North Korean regime which would mean in substance that UN military action north of the 38th Parallel would result in conflict with the USSR or Communist China.

It could be, it was argued, that, "while fighting is in progress south of the 38th Parallel, the Kremlin might bring about the occupation of North Korea either with its own or with Chinese communist forces."

Alternatively, "the Kremlin might initiate some move toward a negotiated

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7. The Policy Planning Staff, a branch of the State Department, was established on 5 May 1947 to "formulate and develop, for the consideration of appropriate officials of the Department, long-term programs for the achievement of US foreign policy objectives as well as undertaking studies and preparing reports on broad politico-military problems." Kennan was the body's first director. See Kennan, Memoirs I, pp.325-8.
settlement while hostilities are still in progress." In fact, the possible variations and uncertainties of communist responses to a reversal of combat fortunes in Korea, or an Allied incursion into the KPDR, were so great that the only recommendation the Policy Planning Staff felt they could give was that:

Decisions regarding our course of action when UN forces approach the 38th Parallel should be deferred until military and political developments provide the additional information necessary to enable us ... to base our decisions on the situation in Korea and in other parts of the world at that time.(8)

Policy planners in the Department of Defense, on the other hand, offered a far more definitive appraisal of recommended future US action in Korea. "In seeking only a limited military offensive by forcing the North Korean armed forces to withdraw to positions north of the 38th Parallel", their recommendations asserted,

... the United Nations would be back where it was on 25 June 1950; the former military instability would again obtain. The USSR could use this force in being as a striking force for a second attempt to gain control of Korea. Thus, a return to the status quo ante bellum would not ensure security.

To avoid the recurrence of such a threat the report urged that the "unified command should seek to occupy Korea and to defeat North Korean armed forces wherever located north and south of the 38th Parallel" and to achieve this end, "MacArthur should pursue military operations without regard to the 38th Parallel."(9) While quite aware of the possibility of Russian or Chinese entry into the conflict, the Pentagon did not believe that MacArthur should be held back from crossing the Parallel if he wished to do so for tactical reasons.


These recommendations went still further. If favourable circumstances prevailed, the report went on, "the President should proclaim, Congress endorse, and the UN adopt as our war aim a united, free, and independent Korea."(10)

This was a new question altogether. For one thing, it had not been a policy of either the UN or the US to enforce unification by military means. Furthermore, the purpose of the present UN action was for repelling the aggressor, not the unification of the two Koreas. Korean unity was a matter which concerned the UN General Assembly, not the Security Council. It was a political issue and on this occasion the Security Council directives were specifically limited to effecting, by strictly military means, a peaceful conclusion to the present hostilities on the peninsula; a return to the status quo ante 25 June. As far as the Pentagon was concerned, though, the immediate military question and the long range political objective were "so closely woven ... that the two could not logically be separated."(11)

This argument mirrored the views held by the UN Commander. MacArthur had espoused this course of action ever since the early days of the conflict. "I intend to destroy and not to drive back the North Korean forces", he told Army and Air Force Chiefs Generals Collins and Vandenberg in early July, adding that, "I may need to occupy all of North Korea". This contention was maintained even after MacArthur learned from "reliable sources" on 31 August that Chinese troop redeployments from Central China to Manchuria "suggested movements preliminary to entering the Korean theatre." It was estimated the strength of Chinese troops in this region now numbered "about 246,000 men organised into nine armies totalling thirty-seven divisions. 80,000 men were reported assembling near Antung, just across

10. Ibid; Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp.451-2.
the Yalu from Korea."(12) Still the UN Commander persisted in the belief that unless the North Korean armed forces were totally broken and, in addition, the whole of Korea brought under the control of Syngman Rhee, what he perceived as the objectives of the war would not be achieved.(13)

Formulated at a time when it seemed quite possible that the North Koreans might push the UN forces into the sea, the views of the State Department were decidedly more realistic than those offered by the Pentagon and MacArthur. By late August, however, changing circumstances called for a more decisive approach. Failing a concerted effort on the part of either Russia or China to aid the North Koreans, it was now possible that the UN forces would hold in Korea. As a result, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved, on 28 August, the Inchon plan and preparations for the offensive were nearing completion. The need for a comprehensive policy regarding future operations in Korea therefore became pressing. At the same time, pressure within the Administration called for the State Department to modify its position and "make the essential decision now as to whether the 38th Parallel should be crossed."(14)


14. Representatives of the Armed Services pointed out that "postponement of the essential decision would delay the military build-up which would be necessary in case of an affirmative decision". The Secretary of the NSC, James Lay, pointed out that "the President had asked for policy recommendations on what we do when we reach the 38th Parallel and he (Lay) said he could hardly understand how, in the light of the President's specific request, the State Department could reply to the President merely stating that it had no policy recommendations at this time." See Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.641-3, 646-8, 649-652.
On 9 September agreement was reached through the National Security Council(15) on a policy plan which dealt ostensibly with military operations to carry out the narrow interpretations of the 27 June and 7 July resolutions. It proposed that MacArthur should be authorised to conduct military operations north and south of the 38th Parallel for the purpose of "repelling the invasion and defeating the invaders." This was, however, contingent upon the "action or inaction of the Soviet Union or China." If neither of these possible belligerents entered the conflict or announced their intention of doing so, UN forces could enter North Korea to attain their military objective. But there was a caveat attached to this action. "UN operations should not be permitted to extend across the Manchurian or USSR borders of Korea" and, in conducting military operations up to this point, the UN Commander would be advised that "under no circumstances should he permit the use of UN forces other than ROK contingents."

Of course crossing the Parallel might not necessarily be regarded as an "essential ingredient of victory." If the military situation was eventually stabilised along the Parallel, the UN, instead of crossing, could offer terms of surrender to the North Koreans as soon as a UN victory was assured. Advancing surrender terms, if not accomplishing the laying down of North Korean arms, would at least show clearly that "every effort has been made to avoid carrying the military struggle into a new phase by a land offensive beyond the 38th Parallel." But, should the Unified Command consider it necessary for UN forces to enter North Korea failing such an appeal, the

15. The National Security Council (NSC) was charged with appraising the national security of the U.S. and dealing with national security problems of common interest to all segments of the Government. It was composed of the President and the heads of State, Defense, Army, Navy, Air, Munitions Board, Research and Development Board, and National Security Resource Board. See Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, pp.55-6.
inference was that this move had authority only so long as it was undertaken simply "to compel the withdrawal of the North Korean forces behind the Parallel."(16)

The reasons why this policy plan, referred to as NSC 81/1, was so specific in its application were as follows. It was, in part, an acknowledgement by those advisers closest to President Truman of the limited authority accorded to Unified Command, under the terms of the Security Council resolutions, in conducting operations in Korea without further referral to, and endorsement from, the UN. Operations north of the Parallel other than for the "tactical reasons" stated, did not have the necessary sanction from the UN. Hence an attempt to effect the broader political objective of Korean unification was, by implication, precluded as an appropriate aim of the limited military actions envisaged in NSC 81/1.

It went deeper than this, however. The thrust of NSC 81/1 also reflected the conditional approval of the actions contemplated in this paper by America's closest Security Council and NATO allies, Britain and France. Despite a popular impression to the contrary, the consideration of a policy dealing with the question of the 38th Parallel was not a unilateral undertaking, or "a Washington diktat", on the part of the US.(17) Even so Anglo-French agreement could only be obtained for pursuing the limited


military objectives of NSC 81/1 without additional UN assent. Actions to fulfill political aims, in their view, clearly had to be referred to the General Assembly whose approval was an essential prerequisite in executing such action. Thus NSC 81/1 stated:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff should be authorised to direct the Commander of the UN forces in Korea to make plans for the possible occupation of North Korea. However, the execution of such plans should take place only with the explicit approval of the President of the United States, and would be dependent upon prior consultation with and the approval of members of the UN.

Furthermore, and in accordance with Anglo-French stipulations, MacArthur's stated desire to place all "conquered" North Korean territory immediately under the jurisdiction of the Rhee Government was specifically ruled out as an aim of NSC 81/1. Again the policy paper stated:

Military actions north of the 38th Parallel which go beyond the accomplishment of forcing the aggressor behind this line to achieve, for example, the political objective of unifying Korea under the Republic of Korea, are not clearly authorized by existing Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, United Nations approval for such further military actions is a prerequisite to their initiation. Should such approval not be forthcoming, accomplishment of this political objective would not be feasible.


19. Foreign Relations - KOREA, NSC 81/1, 'Report by the NSC to the President. Subject: United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea', pp.712-721. Britain and France were quite clear on their stand regarding the authority of the Rhee Government. As the British delegation told their American and French opposites in the preliminary tripartite talks on 30 August, "The United Kingdom holds that the R.O.K. Government has no title to sovereignty to those parts of the country where free elections have not been held. Rhee's pretensions that all Korea is under his Government are accordingly unacceptable and any solution for Korea based upon these pretensions would split the democratic powers." France was in full agreement. See Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp. 667-671, 681-3.
Finally, the National Security Council plan was couched in such precise terms because there was every possibility, in the considered opinion of experts in Washington, of a direct but limited Soviet or Soviet-backed initiative to at least ensure the preservation of the KPDR as a political and geographic entity. "It is unlikely that the Soviet Union will passively accept the emergence of a situation in which all or most of Korea would pass from its control", the paper asserted. Therefore,

The Soviet Union may decide that it can risk reoccupying Northern Korea before United Nations forces have reached the 38th Parallel, or the conclusion of an arrangement with the North Korean regime under which Soviet forces would be pledged to the defence of the territory of the "People's Republic of Northern Korea". Alternatively, it was considered possible, "although politically unlikely", that Chinese Communist forces might be used to occupy North Korea, "even though the Soviet Union probably regards Korea as being in its own direct sphere of interest."(20) In other words there was, at bottom, an even chance that implementing the recommendations of NSC 81/1 would be forestalled by pre-emptive action on the part of the Kremlin.

Such moves, of course, failed to eventuate at that time, but this speculation serves to illustrate the preoccupation in American strategic thinking of the belligerent role the Soviet Union was likely to play in this conflict. These faulty conceptions were to find further expression in the directive to General MacArthur authorising him to cross the 38th Parallel, a move which ultimately met with such disastrous consequences.

In the meantime, NSC 81/1 was sent to President Truman for final appraisal. Without making any changes the President approved the policy proposal on 11 September. On 15 September, the day Operation CHROMITE was

20. Foreign Relations - KOREA, NSC 81/1, 'Report by the NSC to the President'. pp.713-4.
launched, MacArthur was advised of the substance of NSC 81/1. Although this information contained no more than recommendations upon which future policy might be based, it provided the UN Commander with an indication of the probable future course of US, and through it, UN action in Korea decided by the authorities in Washington. No further authority could be given to MacArthur at this time as this would only be relevant, in the short term, if the landing at Inchon was a success. (21)

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Operation CHROMITE was at one and the same time a success beyond all expectation and an operation failing to fulfil completely its primary objective, a failure which augured ill for the subsequent course of the war in Korea. It was a brilliant success for the obvious reason of turning the combat situation dramatically in favour of the UN forces. It was a partial failure because it did not completely destroy or neutralise all the North Korean forces south of the 38th Parallel. The North Korean defeat was no less a rout in spite of this, yet the escape of this remnant of the North Korean Army precipitated the portentous call for UN forces to move into the KPDR to "apprehend these criminals." (22) Not unexpectedly, MacArthur led the call. However, ROK Government officials

21. Lichterman. 'To the Yalu and Back', p.585; Acheson, Present at the Creation, p.452; Rees, Korea: Limited War, pp.99-100.
22. Rees, Korea: Limited War, p.94. So effective, in fact, was the Eighth Army and X Corps encirclement of the strong invading army (including subsequent reinforcements), it has been estimated that no more than 25,000 to 30,000 escaped over the frontier. In early November, UN General Headquarters in Tokyo claimed 135,000 prisoners in addition to 200,000 casualties inflicted. The North Korean Army had been virtually destroyed and never fought again above corps strength throughout the war. In 1953 it was estimated to number only about 50,000 men.
also demanded that the Parallel be crossed to ensure the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of the KPDR(23); and "the mood of victory" as evidenced in US public opinion, even the majority opinion of the Western world, "demanded a more positive and daring course: the destruction of North Korea's Army in its lair."(24)

By now, the authorities in Washington were thinking in the same way. The main obstacle to UN operations above the Parallel, Soviet intervention, had not occurred; indeed, Moscow was seen as adopting a "hands off" posture regarding Korea. Moreover, the agreed purpose for such actions, essentially to effect the re-establishment of the status quo, had been achieved without the need for "tactical operations" inside North Korea. It now seemed only logical to exploit the present favourable situation militarily and destroy completely the enemy's army. After all, total destruction of the North Korean forces would bring with it not only the "repelling of the aggressor" but also more assuredly the "restoration of international peace and security in the area".

On 27 September, the UN Commander received the necessary sanction to undertake this mission. The directive, sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was based on NSC 81/1 and "furnished in order to provide amplifying instructions as to further military actions to be taken by [MacArthur] in Korea". It read:


Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean armed forces. In attaining this objective you are authorized to conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations north of the 38° Parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operation there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. Under no circumstances, however, will your forces cross the Manchurian or U.S.S.R. borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean ground forces will be used in the northeast provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Furthermore, support of your operations north or south of the 38° Parallel will not include air or naval action against Manchuria or against U.S.S.R. territory.

The directive further instructed General MacArthur the action to be taken should such a move prompt Soviet or Chinese entry into the conflict.

In the event of the open or covert employment of major Soviet units south of the 38° Parallel, you will assume the defence, make no move to aggravate the situation and report to Washington.(25) You should take the same action in the event your forces are operating north of the 38° Parallel and major Soviet units are openly employed. ... If the Soviet Union or the Chinese Communists should announce in advance their intention to reoccupy North Korea and give warning, either explicitly or implicitly, that their forces should not be attacked, you should refer the matter urgently to Washington.

In the event of the open or covert employment of major Chinese Communist units south of the 38° Parallel, you should continue the action as long as action by your forces offers a reasonable chance of successful resistance.

Although MacArthur was given the "green light" to cross the 38th Parallel, the decision on the operational procedures employed to fulfil the objectives of the directive ultimately rested with the military authorities in Washington. "You will submit your plan for future operations north of the 38th Parallel to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for approval", the UN Commander was told.(26)

25. On 10 July 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted for NSC consideration a policy recommendation (subsequently adopted as NSC 76) setting out the action to be taken by the U.S. in the event that the Soviet Union engage or clearly indicated their intention of engaging in hostilities against U.S. and/or friendly forces in Korea. It resolved: "The U.S. should prepare to minimise its commitment in Korea and prepare to execute war plans. These preparations should include initiation of full scale mobilization". Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense. Subject: 'U.S. Courses of Action in the Event Soviet Forces Enter Korean Hostilities'. 10 July 1950, p.346.

Clearly this gave MacArthur somewhat greater latitude than did the preliminary directive despatched to Tokyo on the eve of the Inchon offensive. Yet in and of itself, it was both dangerously ambiguous and indecisive, even though it had the appearance of being still confined to the pursuit of purely military objectives. In the short-term, as a basic command directive, it "quite failed to provide against the highly likely contingency which in fact materialised - that only after MacArthur had been allowed fully to commit himself would there occur the intervention which was the condition on which the commitment was not to take place". (27)

But more important, the purpose of the intended action was unrealistic in its exclusiveness, for inherent in this redefinition of objectives was the need to consider the wider political issues fundamental to the whole question of Korea. Assuming the success of this military venture, what exactly would be the status of North Korea in the post-hostility period? There would be created a political and military void extending from the 38th Parallel north to the Yalu. Was this to be policed for some unspecified period by UN troops? Or would there be established an extensive demilitarised zone to ensure the future peace and security of the ROK? Such possibilities would not, of course, be feasible. As John Foster Dulles put it, "A military operation should be designed to achieve political objectives. The two are inextricably related." (28)

Not surprisingly, therefore, the US authorities once again turned to the UN to lobby for a mandate which would, in essence, give authority to the UN forces to prosecute military action necessary in fulfilling the long-range political objective in Korea - the establishment of "a free, independent and unified Korea."


The first indication the authorities in Wellington received that consideration was being given to a possible broadening of UN objectives in Korea, came on 8 September, when Doidge was given a copy of a "Foreign Office Memorandum on Korea", by the UK High Commissioner to New Zealand, C. R. Price.(29) The importance of this paper, Government officials noted, was two-fold. Not only did it provide the most recent views on Korea held by the British Cabinet - Price had told Doidge that the general lines of this memorandum "had been approved by United Kingdom Ministers" - but it also appeared to have been accepted by the Foreign Ministers of France, Britain and the US in their recent talks(30), "as a basis for future action in Korea."(31)

The memorandum discussed several possible courses of events in Korea, including the likelihood of Soviet and, to a lesser extent, Chinese intervention. But the dominant theme of the paper focussed on the need to build on the "impressive degree of unanimity" thus far achieved amongst UN members on the Korean question and to ensure that any further UN action commanded "the widest possible measure of support from the Governments and peoples of all non-communist states, especially those in Asia." In order to minimise the loss of this goodwill and support, it was considered essential "that some early statement should be made, setting out the broad objectives in Korea." Recognising that a return to the status quo ante 25 June "would satisfy neither world opinion nor the Korean people", the memorandum suggested that

29. PM 324/2/2 part(v), Letter F.153, Price to Doidge, 8 September 1950, enclosure, 'Foreign Office Memorandum on Korea', dated August 1950.

30. See above p.105 and footnotes 18 and 19.

31. PM 324/2/2 part(v), Memorandum by R.H. Wade, 'Future Policy in Korea', 26 September 1950.
the statement might perhaps ... take the form of a resolution in the General Assembly recommending that as soon as the military situation permits, all possible steps should be taken to implement previous General Assembly resolutions on the subject and to secure the holding under United Nations auspices of elections in Korea on a national basis with a view to the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic Korean Government. (32)

The successful implementation of this plan rested on three narrow assumptions. First, it was reasoned that such an approach could only be carried out if the Soviet Union or China did not intervene in support of North Korea. Secondly, implicit in this plan was the eventual victory of the UN forces over the North Koreans. At the time this memorandum was written, however, it was by no means certain that such an outcome would prevail, although reports from Washington during August indicated that there was "increasing confidence that UN forces would hold in Korea." (33) Indeed, it was suggested that the North Koreans appeared to be "so deeply committed in the South that their forces may be largely destroyed south of the 38th Parallel", in which case the North Korean regime "might disintegrated of itself." In any event, once the favourable military situation envisaged by the Foreign Office was achieved, it would be necessary at some point to make contact with the North Korean authorities. The third assumption therefore rested on the understanding that the North Korean regime, or any

32. PM 324/2/2 part(v), 'Foreign Office Memorandum'. It was felt it would be more appropriate for such a resolution to be passed in the General Assembly than in the Security Council "since the Assembly has hitherto been responsible for political arrangements in Korea; and since the resolution in the Assembly provides clearer evidence of wide support for a policy than does a resolution in the Security Council; and there is, of course, the important added advantage that a resolution in the Assembly could not be vetoed by the Soviet Union." Ibid. The Soviet delegate returned to the Security Council on 1 August 1950.

33. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No. 129, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 19 August 1950.
remaining representatives of it, would be willing to negotiate surrender terms with the UN Commander. Once this stage had been reached, it was suggested that a suitable body be established - an ad hoc Truce Commission composed mainly of representatives of Asian states - to undertake discussions with the North Korean authorities regarding the political future of Korea. Thereafter, and finally, a new UN Commission would be established for the purpose of supervising elections throughout Korea, a Commission which would preferably consist "predominantly of Asian members, perhaps with a first-class British Secretary-General." (34)

In the opinion of the British Government, no decision allowing the UN forces to cross the 38th Parallel should be taken at this time. In fact, it was felt that a resolution on the foregoing lines "would not necessarily commit the United Nations to the view that the United Nations forces should eventually pass beyond the 38th Parallel and occupy the whole of Korea." (35)

Within the Department of External Affairs it was considered that the Foreign Office memorandum, although "reasonable and objective", presented a "somewhat vague and tentative approach to the Korean crisis." (36) There was, for example, no evidence to suggest that the North Koreans, even when faced with total military defeat, would be willing to enter into negotiations to bring about the unification of Korea. Indeed, all their actions up to this time on this particular question, were marked by an attitude of complete intransigence and even open hostility to any UN initiatives. All the conditions on which the British plan could be implemented successfully were

34. PM 324/2/2 part(v), 'Foreign Office Memorandum'.
35. Ibid.
36. PM 324/2/2 part(v), Memorandum by Wade, 'Future Policy in Korea', 26 September 1950.
therefore unlikely to eventuate. This limitation was recognised in Wellington. Wrote one official, "The crucial question of whether or not UN forces are to cross the Parallel (if the North Korean regime does not collapse as a result of fighting in the south) is left for later decision."(37)

Reserving this decision would, in the opinion of Berendsen, be quite undesirable. As early as 4 July he had made plain his sentiments regarding future UN action in the conflict:

[It is my] hope that from now on the existence of the 38th Parallel be forgotten, that we do not limit our objectives to pushing the North Koreans back to the 38th Parallel, but that - if success allows us to do so - we move on to reunite all Korea and to supervise over-all elections for the whole country.(38)

The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, felt the question of whether or not UN troops should cross the Parallel if successful in Korea might, in the end, be incidental. In discussions with the New Zealand Cabinet on 22 August, he stated that he "doubted whether the forces could stop at the 38th Parallel, which was only a line on the map; the forces must almost certainly go on."(39)

Despite these submissions, the Government saw no urgency in reaching any firm decision on the problem of the 38th Parallel. So much would depend on the situation on the battlefield in Korea. But even the success of MacArthur's counter-offensive during September failed to bring about any immediate change in the New Zealand attitude. In fact, the Government decided that this improvement in UN fortunes had given rise to another and more urgent question: would a New Zealand combat unit now be required in Korea?(40)

37. Ibid.
38. PM 324/2/3 part(ii), Memorandum from Berendsen to Doidge, 4 July 1950.
39. CM(50)59, Record of a discussion at a meeting of Cabinet with the Rt Hon R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia 22 August 1950.
40. For a discussion of this issue, see below pp.135-43.
But the dramatic change in the military situation had an opposite effect on British attitudes towards this issue. By now the UK authorities saw the need to resolve the problem of future UN action in Korea as pressing. Unlike New Zealand, the British already had ground forces in Korea and any further military action would necessarily involve these forces. In addition, as leader of the Commonwealth, Britain was more sensitive to the views of that body's newer members - in particular those of India. The importance of carrying non-communist Asian opinion in all the major UN decisions concerning Korea had, from the beginning of the conflict, been recognised by the UK and, indeed, the US. Both countries recognised also that India was the most significant leader of that opinion, although when India endeavoured to play the part of mediator in July with an unsolicited and unsuccessful attempt to effect agreement between the Soviet Union and the US for ending hostilities in Korea, it was clear that India's actions were viewed with contempt by the Americans. (41)

When, in late September, the UK authorities considered in detail a policy for possible UN action in Korea, it is certain that due deference was paid to the attitudes of India, whose opposition to any extension of military operations beyond the 38th Parallel was known. On 23 September, the UK delegation to the UN handed to its American counterpart a draft

41. On 13 July, the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, sent personal letters to Truman and Stalin expressing his concern that the gravity of the present international situation could lead to world war unless the deadlock in the Security Council was broken and the way opened for a negotiated settlement of the Korean problem. Nehru suggested this could be achieved by allowing representatives of the Peoples Republic of China to take a seat in the Security Council, the return of the USSR to that body and the opening of conversations to resolve the problem. The US rejected this initiative, and advised the Indian Government that "it did not believe that the termination of the aggression from northern Korea could be contingent in any way upon the determination of other questions which were currently before the United Nations"; ie, the admission of Communist China to the UN. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.385-431 passim.
resolution concerning overall policy on Korea for consideration by US officials. The judicious language of this resolution no doubt reflected British recognition of Indian views on the Korean problem; certainly it was couched in terms designed to gain acceptance by the large majority of UN members, including India's. In any event, the US authorities, who had themselves been preparing a suitable proposal for submission to the General Assembly, acknowledged the "commendable initiative of the United Kingdom in this matter", and seized the opportunity this resolution provided. Senior US officials pointed out that not only did the resolution restate the objective of a unified independent Korea, while "avoiding specific reference to a unified Korea as a war aim", but it also "gave maximum flexibility to the military command" and "gave the United States the freedom it wished."(42)

After a suitable preamble, the draft proposal recommended that

(a) all appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea;

(b) all constituent acts be taken, including the holding of elections, under the auspices of the United Nations, for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Government in the sovereign state of Korea;

(c) all sections and representative bodies of the population of Korea, South and North, be invited to co-operate with the organs of the United Nations in the restoration of peace, in the holding of elections and in the establishment of a unified Government;

(d) United Nations forces should not remain in any part of Korea otherwise than so far as necessary for achieving the objectives specified in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) above;

(e) all necessary measures be taken to accomplish the economic rehabilitation of Korea.

42. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the United States Delegation to the UN General Assembly, 25 September 1950, pp.768-774. Among the 42 officials present at this meeting were Acheson, Dulles, Rusk, and Ambassadors Austin and Gross. The US delegation began work on their own resolution on 19 September, See Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.736-741.
Provision was also made for the establishment of a new UN body, the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), to replace the UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK). The aim of this change was to widen the scope of UN responsibilities towards Korea. The new body was to assume all the functions of the old, represent the UN in bringing about a unified, independent and democratic Korean Government and assist in the implementation of General Assembly policies on relief and rehabilitation in Korea. (43)

Though drawn up by the British delegation at the UN, the resolution clearly owed much in its approach to the earlier Foreign Office Memorandum on Korea. Like that paper, it was hopelessly vague as to how the UN was to elicit North Korean co-operation in achieving its stated objective. If that compliance was to be brought about by military means, which seemed certain unless there was a dramatic change in the North Korean attitude towards a negotiated settlement, then it was not explicitly called for. Rather, such authorisation to conduct military action north of the Parallel "to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea", was merely implied in the resolution. Accordingly, it did not prescribe any programme by which the UN Commander could pursue military operations to effect the implementation of the resolution. And it completely side-stepped the question of whether a specific decision would need to be taken by the UN as to whether UN forces should in fact cross the 38th Parallel. Under the terms of this resolution, therefore, the conquest and occupation of North Korea by UN forces would be authorised by implication rather than by specific directive.

But precisely because the resolution did not broach these understandably contentious issues, US officials found its composition most

43. Robert O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.119
appealing. Consequently, they actively encouraged other UN members to accept it and, because of the reasonableness of the resolution, they were confident of its successful passage through the General Assembly. It was no doubt with this thought in mind that the US Joint Chiefs of Staff transmitted, on 27 September, some 10 days before the resolution was adopted, their new instructions to MacArthur authorising him to conduct military operations in North Korea.

Thus, by the time the Government in Wellington received a copy of the draft resolution for consideration, the US had already determined its policy and set in motion its plan for the UN invasion of North Korea. New Zealand was quite unaware of this development. In fact, it was not until 29 September that the Government seriously addressed itself to the question of UN military operations in North Korea. "If you have views as to action beyond the 38th Parallel", Berendsen inquired in a telegram despatched the same day as the draft resolution, "it would be advantageous to us to have them." He then went on to expound his own thoughts on the question.

It seems to me that if possible, the best thing for the Assembly to do in this connection would be nothing, i.e., that the matter should be left entirely to the Unified Military Command. The Assembly would thus be free to decide the policies, as and when reactions become apparent, to any steps the military command may have taken. But if the matter does arise for a decision by the United Nations as it well might, then of course, there are weighty considerations on both sides. From the affirmative point

44. Both Acheson and Rusk found the language of the resolution "particularly clever and appealing". Dulles considered it "rather adroit drafting and thought the resolution constituted a good start." Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.768-774.

45. See above pp.109-111.

46. PM 324/2/2 part(v), I.T. No.G.A.3., Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 29 September 1950. The Government was told that the text of resolution had been "drafted by the British ... with the general agreement of the United States."

47. On 28 September, MacArthur submitted to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, his plan for the conquest of North Korea. The plan was approved the following day. Foreign Relations - KOREA, p.826, footnote 1. See below pp.126-7.
of view everything that has been done may be rendered useless if the 38th Parallel is allowed to remain as a dividing barrier between the two Koreas and a shield for the preparation of further intrigue and aggression.

The draft resolution assumes (though it does not declare) that the 38th Parallel should be ignored and in my opinion if the matter comes to a vote we should support this. On the other hand, any attempt to go beyond the 38th Parallel might perhaps provoke more direct Chinese Communist or Soviet resistance.(48)

Although detailed consideration was given to this issue, in the end, the Government's appreciation of the question differed little from Berendsen's. While it was felt "that there were no major legal, or indeed, moral objections to actions beyond the 38th Parallel should this prove necessary to eliminate the threat of further aggression", they agreed that the Assembly should, if possible, avoid making a positive judgement on the specific question whether the invasion of North Korea should be authorised and leave the ultimate decision to the theatre Commander. This, it was considered, would give the New Zealand Government "some freedom to decide in the light of circumstances whether United Nations forces should be irrevocably committed."(49) If, however, the Assembly was called on to make such a judgement, it was suggested within the Department of External Affairs that

    we should support any reasonable move to secure the objectives set out in the resolution by other than military means and take a decision to support military action only when such possibilities are exhausted and in the light of the then international situation.(50)

When the Government transmitted these views to Berendsen on 5 October it qualified them by stating that "the problem is full of uncertainties and difficulties upon which it is difficult for us at this distance and

49. PM 324/2/2 part(v), O.T. No.149, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 5 October 1950.
50. PM 324/2/23, Memorandum by R.H. Wade, '38th Parallel', 3 October 1950.
with the limited information at our disposal to offer any decisive views."

"Much will depend", the Ambassador was told,

on whether the North Korean authorities can be persuaded ... to submit to the order of General MacArthur to lay down their arms. It would seem desirable to give them some little time to reflect upon the situation, time which in any case it seems is necessary for the United Nations forces to mop up and consolidate the position below the 38th Parallel. This would not, of course, exclude military operations to the north of the Parallel which would most likely be limited in nature and to secure purely tactical objectives. A little delay would also give us the opportunity of judging general political reactions of members of the United Nations, particularly of the Soviet Union and China as well as other Asian countries. Despite the fact that in this matter the attitude of India has been both equivocal and disappointing, we are still hopeful that they may take a realistic view of the position and recognise that it may prove necessary, if the North Koreans cannot be persuaded to submit, for the United Nations forces to take some decisive action. There is always a possibility that the Soviet Union, with the object of securing greater freedom for themselves in Europe and elsewhere, might seek to provoke Chinese intervention in North Korea which would involve a much greater United Nations commitment there. This has doubtless been considered in the United Kingdom delegation and we would be interested to have their views on this point.(51)

While concurring with Berendsen's observation that it would be military and political folly to uphold the 38th Parallel as a political boundary and thus "rob us of a real opportunity to realise the major objective of the United Nations in Korea, ... the unification of the country on a democratic basis", the Government concluded that "it would be best if the United Nations were able to secure this result without the necessity of further military operations.(52)

51. PM 324/2/2 part(v), O.T. No.149, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 5 October 1950. On 3 October, the Government was given three Foreign Office telegrams by UK High Commissioner Price concerning British assessments of the likely Soviet response to the existing military situation in Korea. The British "did not consider that Soviet leaders would risk provoking a general war on this issue.... Such indications as there are suggest that they may well decide to cut their losses and take no military or political initiative and leave the whole responsibility for clearing up the mess with the United Nations." There was no similar assessment of possible Chinese intentions in Korea. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. Q29, S.S.C.R. to UK High Commission to New Zealand, 3 October 1950; I.T. Q30 and Q31, S.S.C.R. to UK High Commission to New Zealand, 3 October 1950 (text of telegrams 849 and 850, UK Embassy Moscow to Foreign Office, both dated 21 September 1950).

52. PM 324/2/2 part(v), O.T. No.149, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 5 October 1950.
No doubt hoping this could be brought about by the adoption of the resolution in the General Assembly, Berendsen was instructed to vote in favour of it.

In retrospect, it is clear that the need for such deliberations on the part of New Zealand had been overtaken by events. On the very day Berendsen despatched the telegram soliciting the Government's views on whether UN forces should cross into North Korea, the US Secretary of Defense, George Marshall, was encouraging the UN Commander "to feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of the 38th Parallel." The evident desire in the UN, MacArthur was told, "is not to be confronted with the necessity of a vote on the passage of the 38th Parallel rather to find you have found it militarily necessary to do so."(53)

But New Zealand was not alone in its ignorance of the already enacted US military initiatives. Not until 3 October did the British learn of the directive from the Joint Chiefs giving MacArthur freedom to conduct military operations north of the Parallel. Nor were they apprised, despite having discussed future UN action with the Americans during the earlier tripartite discussions, of the precise nature and scale of the American plan.(54)

The main concern of the British thereafter was to ensure there was a "gap between General Assembly action and any major move on the part of non-


54. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum of conversations between Dean Rusk Sir Oliver Franks and Lord Tedder, 4 October 1950, pp.859-862. Franks was instructed to seek confirmation from the US authorities that ROK forces had already crossed into North Korea and whether any non-ROK forces had been sent across the Parallel. Franks also sought confirmation of information they had obtained from a reliable source that MacArthur had received instructions to go north of the 38th Parallel.
Korean UN forces beyond the 38th Parallel." Such a gap was of considerable importance as it would not "bring into question the good faith of many delegations voting in favour of the resolution in the Assembly."(55) The implication here is obvious. Every effort would be made to ensure the prompt passage of the resolution through the Assembly so as to avoid any impression of what in fact was reality, that the resolution was merely sanctioning a policy which had long since been determined in Washington and was already set in motion.

On 30 September, the Head of the UK delegation to the UN, Kenneth Younger, introduced the British draft resolution into the First (Political) Committee of the General Assembly. This proposal, co-sponsored by seven other countries(56), was thereafter referred to as the eight-power resolution. As expected, it was carried by the Committee, but not before ensuing debate revealed a division in Commonwealth opinion. India was reluctant to endorse a resolution which implicitly allowed UN troops to cross the 38th Parallel and thus increase the chance of outside, but especially Chinese, Communist intervention.(57) They were more inclined simply to call on North Korea to cease fire and then review the situation if North Korea did not respond. In addition, they were anxious to find a compromise between this resolution, and a counter-proposal sponsored by the Soviet Union and four other nations which was also before the Committee.(58) In the event,

55. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum of conversations between Rusk Jessup, Franks and Graves(UK) concerning telegrams from the UK Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, 6 October 1950, pp.893-7.

56. Australia, Brazil, Cuba, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

57. See below pp.130-5, 143-58 for a discussion on Chinese Communist intervention.

58. The proposal was co-sponsored by Poland, Czechoslovakia, Byelorussia, and the Ukraine. It called for the cessation of hostilities, the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops, and the establishment of a joint commission consisting of an equal number of representatives from North and South Korea to conduct and observe nationwide elections. This motion was defeated in the General Assembly by a vote of 52 to five with three abstentions. Goodrich, op cit, pp.128-33.
they failed and, on 7 October, the eight-power resolution was introduced into the General Assembly for decision and was duly adopted by a vote of 47 to five with seven abstentions, including India. (59)

With this decision having been made, the UN had, in barely three weeks, changed its objectives in Korea from merely defending the ROK from armed aggression (containment), to the tactical incursion into North Korea to secure a specific military objective (the defeat of the North Korean armed forces), and finally to the unification of the Korean peninsula through full scale invasion and the occupation of North Korea (the overthrow of the Government of the KPDR). The adoption of the eight-power resolution also signalled the conclusion of that phase of UN action solely directed by the Security Council. Once again the initiative was passed to the General Assembly to attempt to achieve what it had long ago set out to resolve; the problem of Korean independence. On this occasion, however, the means to bring about a successful conclusion to the problem would be different.

The significance of this period for New Zealand was not so much that there had occurred a redefinition of military and political objectives in the conflict. Rather, it lay with the realisation that, in formulating policy on this issue, the US had singularly failed adequately to consult and inform other nations contributing to the UN effort in Korea, nations like New Zealand, which were entitled to be apprised of the intentions of the US authorities who were carrying out the higher operational direction of the war on behalf of the UN. While the US might have considered that the responsibility for informing New Zealand rested with the UK Government, it should have at least provided that Government with adequate information. But it is quite apparent that the UK was, for the most part, kept in ignorance of specific American intentions during this time.

Whether the Government in New Zealand would have adopted a different attitude in this matter had it been made privy to these American intentions, however, is doubtful. As Goodrich has pointed out, the case for following American leadership in this question was now stronger than ever since it was that country's successful direction of the military effort "which had been responsible for driving back the aggressor and creating a military situation which seemed favourable to the satisfactory solution of the Korean problem."(60) Moreover, the Government felt it had little justification to complain. After all, New Zealand at this stage did not have any forces on the ground in Korea that could be directly affected by these decisions.

What is certain is that by October the Rubicon of the Korean War had been passed and the nature of that war had been completely transformed.

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60. Goodrich, op cit, p.128
CHAPTER VII
FROM "THE THRESHOLD OF MILITARY VICTORY"
TO
TO "AN ENTIRELY NEW WAR"

In complying with the directive of 27 September, General MacArthur wasted no time in submitting to the Joint Chiefs of Staff his plan for conducting UN military operations north of the 38th Parallel. This plan called for General Walker's 8th Army to advance overland to the North Korean capital, Pyongyang. X Corps, still under General Almond's command was to be withdrawn from the Inchon-Seoul area for another amphibious landing at Wonsan, a port city on the east coast of North Korea. From there, it would drive westwards to join up with the 8th Army, thereby cutting off the retreating enemy forces. At that point, both forces would advance to and hold a line across Korea from Chongju on the west coast to the industrial city of Hungnam in the east. Mindful of the caveat contained in the Joint Chiefs directive, MacArthur assured Washington that he would use only ROK troops for operations above this line. The plan was approved by the President on 29 September and MacArthur was immediately notified of this decision by the Joint Chiefs.(1)

On 1 October the UN Commander broadcast from Tokyo a demand to the North Korean Commander-in-Chief "to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military supervision as I may direct." When this call for surrender went unanswered, MacArthur authorised two units of the ROK Army to cross the Parallel to pursue the retreating North Koreans.(2)

It was not until the General Assembly adopted the eight-power

resolution that the first patrols of the 8th Army commenced limited operations in North Korea. Two days later, on 9 October, MacArthur broadcast a final ultimatum to the North Koreans to surrender. Unless a positive response was immediately forthcoming, he would "at once proceed to take such military action as may be necessary to enforce the decrees of the United Nations."(3)

In a situation of rapidly changing military and political circumstances it was perhaps to be expected that legal niceties tended to be overlooked in the pursuance of important high policy objectives. This was a case in point. The General Assembly, in fact, had no legislative power to enact decrees. Even if it could, the UN Command had no authority to execute such "legislation". The UN Command was a creation and an instrument of the Security Council and the specific task it was set by that organ of the UN, the restoration of the status quo ante 25 June, had been accomplished by this time. Nevertheless, as Goodrich has cogently argued, the UN might, in the course of putting down an aggression and restoring international peace and security "in the area", take advantage of a situation created by armed force to carry out a programme which the General Assembly had recommended. While this went beyond a simple restoration of the status quo ante, it might be justified as a restoration of international peace and security in Korea on a more satisfactory basis than had hitherto existed.(4) Herein lay the means to circumvent any legal difficulties which could arise from MacArthur's interpretation; the UN Command was merely fulfilling the broad aims of the Security Council injunctions which coincidentally created the conditions favourable to fulfilling the General Assembly's recommendations. There was, however, never any call to clarify

the relationship between the military arm of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The North Koreans did not respond to MacArthur's ultimatum with such reasoning. They were once again silently defiant. Nor did the authorities in Washington consider the strict propriety of the UN action which was now being based on the eight-power resolution. Instead they saw in this resolution further legal and, of equal importance at this time, moral endorsement for the UN Command to conduct operations north of the 38th Parallel. In the flush of victory, no other participating UN member countries ventured to make any comment on the relationship of the UN Command to the General Assembly.

With the failure of the North Koreans to respond to MacArthur's demand, two American divisions, a ROK division and the 27th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade struck across the Parallel north of Kaesong and immediately encountered stiff enemy opposition. Nevertheless, by mid October, the North Korean defence was broken and organised resistance ceased. The road to Pyongyang was now open and the advance to what became known as "the first Iron Curtain capital to be liberated" was rapid. The progress of the two ROK divisions which had passed the 38th Parallel on 1 October, was even more spectacular, when ten days later they occupied the port city of Wonsan, the objective of X Corps amphibious assault. X Corps meanwhile had embarked for Wonsan on 10 October, but in addition to being forestalled by ROK forces in securing their objective, were held up on their arrival at Wonsan due to the North Koreans having laid extensive minefields in the harbour.

On 17 October, as the 8th Army approached Pyongyang, MacArthur issued new orders in an attempt to capitalise on the favourable military situation. Instead of combining the 8th Army and X Corps after Pyongyang and Wonsan had been taken as originally planned, he now considered maximum advantage would
be made of the situation if the two forces remained separate and pursued objectives immediately to the north of their respective positions. Walker's 8th Army would now advance operations along the western side of the peninsula to a line stretching from Sonchon on the West coast to Pyongwon in the centre of North Korea, a line which ran roughly parallel to the Manchurian border and at one point only 40 miles from the frontier. On the right of the peninsula, Almond would conduct operations quite independent of the 8th Army to a line extending from Songjon on the east coast to Toksil-li, a town approximately 20 miles east of Pyongwon. Thus the forward objective line was advanced 10 miles in the west and 50 miles in the east. (5)

Intent on using all forces at his disposal to carry out this general advance, MacArthur ignored the restriction imposed by the Joint Chiefs concerning the use of non-Korean forces above the Chongju-Hungnam line. This was not the only casualty of the UN Commander's new concept. The original intention to "cross and seal off" the peninsula between Pyongyang and Wonsan was abandoned, as was the possibility of establishing a solid defensible line across the so-called "waist" of Korea. More important, the plan "violated the US Army unity of command doctrine" as it forced the undesirable separation of the UN forces at a time when a unified force was most needed, especially in view of the considerable logistics and communications difficulties which had arisen from the UN's rapid advance. (6)

Again the prospect of total military victory overrode any such objections. On 19 October, Pyongyang fell to the 8th Army. A few days later, on 24 October, X Corps finally disembarked at Wonsan. That same day,

5. Schnabel, op. cit, pp.202-210, 216
6. Rees, Korea - Limited War, p.125
MacArthur ordered Walker and Almond to drive forward with all possible speed using all forces at their command. The order was in direct contravention of the Joint Chiefs directive of 27 September and MacArthur was so reminded. In defence he protested that he had been given quite explicit freedom from Secretary of Defense Marshall to feel unhampered in conducting operations north of the Parallel and his actions were completely in accordance with this instruction. His order was allowed to stand.(7)

In the drive to the Yalu both the 8th Army and X Corps made good progress. By 26 October elements of the ROK 6th Division under the operational control of the 8th Army, reached the Yalu at the frontier town of Chosan. The symbolic significance of the achievement brought to mind the words of US Ambassador Warren Austin when in a speech to the General Assembly on 30 September he declared that "the forces of the United Nations stand on the threshold of military victory".(8) The elation attendant in this accomplishment was shortlived. Almost immediately, a new force made its presence known south of the Yalu. China had entered the Korean War.

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The policymakers in Washington had seen China as a potential belligerent from the outset of the Korean conflict but, ironically, not as a direct participant in the peninsula war. The United States instead saw the North Korean attack as only the first of a series of possible Communist strikes on vulnerable areas not only in Asia but also in Europe and the Middle East. It was for this reason that Truman imposed the cordon sanitaire between mainland China and Formosa with the deployment of the 7th Fleet to that area.(9)

9. See above p.44.
The neutralisation of Formosa effectively postponed any Chinese plans for a final assault on the Kuomintang forces that had taken refuge on the island, and it was this act which occupied Communist Chinese political and military attention during July and August. While the US sponsored UN action in Korea was condemned, it was not until late August that a distinct change could be detected in Chinese polemics, when it became evident that the North Korean armies would not succeed in driving the UN forces out of Korea.

With the success of Operation CHROMITE, the official statements from Peking became decidedly belligerent in tone, no doubt to deter the UN from crossing the 38th Parallel and pursuing the war to total victory. But not until late September did Peking give overt warning against UN intentions regarding the issue of the 38th Parallel. These admonitions were not directly communicated to the UN by Peking but came instead through Indian good offices. On 26 September the acting Chief of Staff of the Peoples Liberation Army, General Nieh Jung-chen, told the Indian Ambassador to China, K.M. Panikkar, that China would "not sit idly by with folded arms" and allow non-ROK United Nations forces to come up to the Yalu. Panikkar insisted on the basis of this conversation and others he had had with high Chinese officials, that China had now decided on a more aggressive policy and he expected at least indirect Chinese intervention in North Korea.

The substance of this conversation, which Indian Prime Minister Nehru had passed to the UK authorities, was discussed by US and UK officials in Washington and dismissed as suspect. A senior British Embassy official stated that the UK authorities "do not take too seriously Panikkar's fears believing him volatile and an unreliable reporter."(10)

The British belief that China was unlikely to enter into hostilities was set out in more detail in a Foreign Office memorandum which concluded that although more likely than Soviet intervention, the Chinese "are not likely to intervene since they risk hostilities on an issue which would not appear to be vital to China."(11) The US held this view all along. Further warnings came from Panikkar on 29 September when he reported a strong sentiment among leaders in Peking favouring Chinese military intervention in the war if UN forces were to cross the 38th Parallel. This interpretation was confirmed by Dutch Embassy officials in Peking, but again was dismissed in Washington.(12)

On 30 September, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, issued the strongest warning yet. In an official speech in Peking he declared that the Chinese Communist Government "absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbours being savagely invaded by the imperialists."(13) These warnings went unheeded; on 1 October ROK units crossed the Parallel and MacArthur broadcast his demand that the North Koreans surrender. The Chinese political response to this move was swift. The following day, Chou En-lai formally summoned Panikkar to a dramatic midnight conference at the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Dismissing the ROK advance as inconsequential, Chou declared that should US troops move into North Korea, China would enter the war.(14) It was now quite clear that China had made the crossing of the 38th Parallel a casus belli.

There were, however, few who took Panikkar's report seriously. Coming at a critical time during the deliberations of the eight-power resolution in the General Assembly, US officials considered it a bluff directed at forestalling decisive action on this resolution. Moreover, the communication, coming though suspect Indian channels, tended to degrade the credibility of Chou's warning. Besides, it was reasoned in Washington, if China was going to enter the conflict it would have done so during August when such an intervention would have been decisive in assuring the success of the North Korean offensive. (15)

Undeterred, the US and UK delegation continued to press for the adoption of the eight-power resolution and, in achieving that aim, provided MacArthur with the desired endorsement to mount a full scale offensive above the 38th Parallel. The day following the successful passage of the resolution - 8 October - the Chinese leadership issued the instruction to intervene and, unbeknown to the UN Command, Chinese "volunteers", as the Peking regime described them, began crossing the Yalu into North Korea. (16)

In spite of the general feeling that Peking would not enter the conflict, the bellicose tone of Chinese statements, both public and private, persuaded Truman to direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to give the UN Commander instructions covering such an eventuality. On the day MacArthur broadcast his final surrender demand, he was issued with a crucial amendment to the earlier directive from the Joint Chiefs. That directive, which authorised the move north, was predicated on the absence of any external Communist threat. The failure of that threat to materialise encouraged

15. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp. 850-1, 868-73. Acheson, in a conversation with Kenneth Younger of the UK Delegation to the UN concerning Panikkar's report, said that the Chinese "had not made any statement directly to the UN or to the Unified Command and if they wanted to take part in the 'poker game' they would have to put more on the table than they had up to the present."; Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, p. 383.

Truman and the Joint Chiefs to modify significantly this condition and to instruct MacArthur to proceed with the invasion even if actual intervention occurred. The new directive stated that,

in the event of the open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should continue the action as long as, in your judgement, action by forces under your control offers a reasonable chance of success. (17)

At the same time, Truman considered it time to meet in person his Commanding General to discuss, among other things, "the final phase of United Nations action in Korea." For this historic encounter - neither the President nor the General had met each other before - the small Pacific island of Wake, situated approximately half-way between Hawaii and Japan, was chosen as the venue. The meeting took place on 15 October and, it has been pointed out, there was "sufficient time for each man to present his best side to the other but, unfortunately, not enough for MacArthur's uncompromising policy of ignoring Chinese sensitivities to obtrude fully." (18) MacArthur's total disregard not only of Peking's threats to intervene should non-ROK forces cross the Parallel, but also of Chinese military capabilities was, however, hinted at during the Wake conference.

During the discussions, Truman asked the UN Commander what chance there was of Chinese intervention. MacArthur replied,

Very little. Had they interfered in the first or second months it would have been decisive. We are no longer fearful of their intervention. We no longer stand hat in hand. The Chinese have 300,000 men in Manchuria. Of these probably not more than 100/125,000 are distributed along the Yalu River. Only 50/60,000 could be gotten across the Yalu River. They have no Air Force. Now that we have bases for our Air Force, if the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang there would be the greatest slaughter.

Confident that the war would soon end, MacArthur went so far as to assure General Bradley, who had accompanied the President to Wake, that he would make available one of the divisions currently in service in Korea to

17. Foreign Relations - KOREA, JCS 93709, Joint Chiefs of Staff to MacArthur, 9 October 1950, p.915.
alleviate the shortage of American forces in Europe.(19)

The conference at Wake lasted just on five hours. Yet in that time the UN Commander had done much to allay what remaining fears Truman and other service and US governmental officials held concerning Chinese involvement. Even if Peking were to intervene, MacArthur had given unequivocable assurance that any Chinese incursion would have little chance of breaching UN lines.

By this time, those lines were rapidly advancing towards the Yalu. Equally rapid, however, was the build-up of Chinese forces in the northern reaches of Korea. MacArthur's estimate of Chinese troop deployment was quite wrong. During the latter half of October, Chinese forces, totalling some 180,000 troops, had crossed the Yalu into Korea undetected by US intelligence services.(20) Their presence was made known on 26 October when part of this force ambushed elements of the ROK 6th Division at the frontier town of Chosan on the Yalu River.

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These military and political developments in Korea compelled the New Zealand Government to reassess its position regarding its commitment to the UN effort. The recent battlefield successes in Korea suggested to the authorities in Wellington that major hostilities in South Korea might soon be brought to an end and this raised the question as to whether the New Zealand ground force would be required there, at least in the role originally contemplated. While not wishing to "depart in any way from this

19. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Substance of Statements made at Wake Island on 18 October. Compiled by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley, pp.948-960.

obligation we have undertaken", the Government was nevertheless "anxious to avoid an effort which is costly both in materials and manpower which may in fact prove unnecessary." Although planning for the force would continue on the basis that it would be despatched to Korea as agreed, the Government wanted "the earliest possible advice as to whether any changes should be made and the nature of those changes."(21)

In transmitting these observations to Doidge, who at that time was in London, the authorities in Wellington requested that he raise this question with the appropriate authorities in the UK and canvass their views. Berendsen was also asked for his views on the matter.(22)

New Zealand was not alone in its concern over the despatch of ground forces to Korea in the light of the changed military situation. Doidge informed Wellington that when he discussed the matter with Field Marshal Slim and the Director of Military Operations, Major General H. Redman, he was told that the British had raised with the Americans "only last week" the question of their own continued participation. The US authorities quickly replied that the UK commitment should proceed. On the basis of that decision, Doidge continued,

Slim gave it as his opinion that we should proceed with our preparations and despatch the Force emphasising that they had the Australian battalion with them and they wanted to have the New Zealand Field Regiment also. If we wished to take the matter up with the Americans, there was no reason why we should not do so but he felt their answer would be the same as to the United Kingdom - ie, proceed.(23)

Slim's observation proved correct. Berendsen reported that there was no evidence of any change in the American attitude on this question. The US

21. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.1275, Department of External Affairs to Doidge, repeated O.T. No.144, Department of External Affairs to Berendsen 27 September 1950.

22. Ibid

23. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.1220, Doidge to Holland, 2 October 1950.
Government continued to stress the need of giving to the Korean activities as broad a UN base as possible and in fact was "increasing the urgency of its requests for armed forces from other members of the UN." He suggested the reason for this continued appeal for forces was to relieve the US forces of garrison duties since they had borne the brunt of the actual fighting. (24)

The British, on the other hand, considered that these additional ground commitments would have a more important role to play. General Redman told Doidge that additional forces were still required to take part in mopping up operations in South Korea. Alternatively, he felt they could become involved in any fresh situation arising from the crossing of the 38th Parallel. It was by no means certain, in Redman's view, "that China and/or Russia might not yet intervene in which case everyone would be in it". Even if this "extreme situation" did not eventuate, the presence of these forces "would act as a deterrent against the possibility of intervention." (25)

It is clear the Government had raised this matter on the understanding that UN action would cease once the North Koreans had been repelled from the territory of the ROK. Military operations above the 38th Parallel and the possible consequences of such action by UN forces were not given serious consideration in New Zealand until early October by which time the US had long since formulated and in fact put into effect plans for the invasion of North Korea. (26) The points raised by Redman therefore had more

24. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.117, Berendsen to Department of External Affairs, 29 September 1950.
25. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.1220, Doidge to Holland, 2 October 1950.
26. See above pp. 119-122.
significance than the conclusion reached by Berendsen over the possible utilisation of Kayforce on its arrival in Korea. This was probably just as well for as Berendsen aptly summed up, "it is, of course, undeniable that the force we are now preparing, while no doubt admirably suited to the purpose for which it was created, might not be equally suitable for garrison duties."(27)

There the matter rested. Much would depend on the fortunes of the UN forces now advancing into North Korea. Towards the end of October, however, the Government was again confronted with the same problem. Unless there was a dramatic change in the military situation, a change which at this time could only be effected by Chinese or Soviet forces intervening, there would no longer be any requirement for Kayforce. While it was considered highly improbable that the Soviet Union would become directly embroiled in the conflict, the actions of China during late October seemed to indicate to the authorities in New Zealand that Peking too, had accepted the occupation of North Korea by the UN forces as a fait accompli. On 25 October China invaded neighbouring Tibet. "This move" a senior External Affairs official commented,

taken at a time when negotiations are proceeding in Delhi between Chinese and Tibetan representatives is clearly designed to divert Chinese attention from the failure of the Chinese Government to take any action in either Korea or Formosa. To that extent, it indicates that the Chinese Communist Government does not intend to intervene in either Korea or Formosa.(28)

By this time, Doidge had arrived in the US and in view of the military situation, raised the question of the future of Kayforce during discussions with Truman and Acheson. Reporting his meeting to Holland, Doidge stated that Acheson

27. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.117, Berendsen to Department of External Affairs, 29 September 1950.

was strongly of the opinion that our unit should proceed but emphasised his view that troops would not be required in Korea for very long and that once the country was subdued, all Western forces could be withdrawn and that South Koreans would be fully capable of handling the situation. (29)

While this response provided a definite answer to the problem faced by policy planners in New Zealand, it did not offer a satisfactory solution to the question. Replying to Doidge’s report, the Government suggested that

No doubt in speaking to you Mr Acheson had the political considerations primarily in mind. At the same time, however, it is essential to have regard to the military situation which will primarily determine the need for an operational unit. We feel that the position should be discussed frankly with the military authorities and preferably with the US Chiefs of Staff themselves who will have the fullest appreciation of the requirements of the military situation in Korea.

... While we are as always willing and anxious to play our part, we cannot escape the feeling that there is now no need for a force of the type we have prepared. (30)

The Government was not alone in this belief. As far back as 15 October during the Wake Island conference, the need for forces additional to those already on the ground in Korea was considered doubtful. (31) By late October, it was argued by the US Army Department that the number of non US and ROK United Nations troops already in Korea or committed for service there, a total of some 36,000 soldiers, was too great and “the time was now ripe for reducing current and projected strength of such troops to about 15,000.” (32)

29. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.173, Doidge to Holland, 24 October 1950.

30. PM 324/2/7 part(iii) O.T. No.318, Department of External Affairs to Doidge, 25 October 1950.

31. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Substance of Statements at Wake Island, 15 October 1950, p.959. Asked by Bradley whether additional troops would be required in view of the UN Commander’s claim that hostilities would soon end, MacArthur replied, “They would be useless from a military point of view and probably would never see action.”

32. Schnabel, op cit, p.225
agreed with this conclusion and decided that, along with others, the request for "the New Zealand artillery battalion" be cancelled and that this country be asked not to send its unit. (33)

On 29 October, the State Department, after consulting with the Department of Defense, advised the New Zealand Embassy in Washington of this change of policy. In view of MacArthur's expectation that "the situation in Korea will be cleared up by 1 January", Embassy officials were told that there was now "no military requirement for the New Zealand force". If it was decided that it should proceed, such a contribution would be welcome, but it could be employed only for a short period. "The decision as to what should be done", these officials were told, is one for the New Zealand Government. In the face of the military situation the United States authorities, while they wish to preserve the international nature of the force engaged in Korea, are in no position to urge that plans for the despatch of further ground troops should be proceeded with. (34)

Berendsen was quick to point out that a decision by New Zealand not to send Kayforce would undoubtedly court adverse publicity. "We have already lost something in public repute", he told officials in Wellington by reason of the fact - in no way our fault - that (apart from the frigates which will be ignored by public opinion here) we have taken no part in the actual fighting in Korea. It is very widely and generally commented here that while there has been a great deal of talk of solidarity in opposition to aggression, nevertheless in point of fact all the armed resistance to aggression, other than the South Koreans themselves, has been by United States troops, with small contingencies from the United Kingdom and Australia who have gained considerable credit from the fact.

There was a danger, therefore, that although the UN Command and the US authorities fully appreciated New Zealand's endeavours, the American public

34. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.180, Laking to Shanahan, 29 October 1950.
would probably "lump together with some disfavour" a New Zealand decision not to proceed with Kayforce with those UN members who never had any intention of contributing to the UN effort. (35)

This counsel was not taken lightly in New Zealand. But it only added to the difficulties faced by the Government in reaching a conclusion on the question. And, to complicate matters further, the Government was now in receipt of the discouraging news of Chinese military action in North Korea. In the event, the Government finally decided to cancel the despatch of Kayforce although no statement would be made giving effect to this decision until it was publicly notified by the UN Command that Kayforce would no longer be required. "Such a statement", it was reasoned in Wellington, "which our own would follow, is necessary in order to remove any suggestion that we ... are avoiding in any way the obligations we freely undertook with the United Nations." (36)

The advent of Chinese intervention, however, had an immediate effect on US plans to reduce support to the UN Command. By 5 November, General C.L. Bolte, the Army Department representative sent to MacArthur's Headquarters and later to Korea to confer with staff officers and theatre commanders over the proposed troop reductions, had advised Washington that "any deferment, cut-back, or cancellation of requested units, individuals, or material would be premature." And, in Washington, intelligence reports indicating the seriousness of the Chinese action forced the Defense

35. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.179, Berendsen to Department of External Affairs, 29 October 1950.

36. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.183, Laking to Shanahan, 31 October 1950; O.T. No.327, Department of External Affairs to Berendsen, 31 October 1950; I.T. No.184, Berendsen to Department of External Affairs, 1 November 1950.
Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff to reconsider their earlier plans for reducing troop strengths. It was pointed out that, "the possible utilization of the enormous manpower of Communist Asia against the United States makes it mandatory at this time to provide General MacArthur with the largest possible United Nations force until the overall situation is better clarified." (37) This recommendation was passed to the Secretary of State and the move to retrench was halted. (38)

Meanwhile, the authorities in Wellington, awaiting advice from the UN Command as to what they wanted New Zealand to do, decided that embarkation preparations for Kayforce should be suspended. Advising Berendson of this, they instructed him to "convey advice of our action to the UN Command, at the same time making it clear that we will proceed promptly with embarkation plans and preparations upon receipt of a request from them to do so." (39)

The request was not long in coming. On 7 November, Berendson transmitted to the Government the result of a conversation he had had that day with State Department officials, and finally put to an end the "on-again off-again" character of the future of Kayforce. The Ambassador's report stated that Rusk, speaking for every US Government agency and service arm, as well as the UN Command,

37. Schnabel, op cit, p.237
39. NA 08/11/26 part(i), O.T. No.180, Minister of External Affairs to Berendson, 5 November 1950.
made what he himself described as an "unequivocal request" that our force should go forward as soon as possible. He said it would not only be very welcome, but that there would be a job for it to do, even if it were not available before the New Year. He made it plain that this quite definite conclusion had now been arrived at only as a result of the altered situation in Korea and that it applied to all forces offered.(40)

The authorities in New Zealand acted quickly on receiving this notice, and embarkation preparations for Kayforce proceeded "with all despatch." Holland made a public announcement to this effect on 9 November adding that Kayforce would leave New Zealand for Korea early in December.(41)

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While the problem of whether or not Kayforce should be sent was being resolved on the political front, there was a sudden deterioration in the military situation in Korea. The ambush of elements of the ROK 6th Division at Chosan was just the beginning of a series of attacks by Chinese forces all along the UN front. On 27 October, the main body of the ROK 6th Division as well as other divisions of the ROK Second Army Corps, were attacked by Chinese troops and forced to make a hasty retreat. On the night of 1-2 November, the US 1st Cavalry Division was attacked by a full Chinese division in positions near Unsan, and suffered heavy casualties. General Walker pulled back the entire 8th Army line, together with the badly mauled ROK divisions and established defensive positions along the Chongchon River. Advance units of the US 24th Division, including elements of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, already within fifteen miles of

40. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.195, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 7 November 1950.

41. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), O.T. No.140, Minister of External Affairs to S.S.C.R., repeated O.T. No.188 to Berendsen, 9 November 1950.
the Yalu, retreated fifty miles down the west coast. Then suddenly, the Communist attacks ended and Chinese forces melted back into the hills whence they had come.

Meanwhile similar action flared up on the east coast. On the day of the Yalu River ambush, ROK forces ran into Chinese fire near the Changjin Reservoir some 75 miles below the Yalu. On 2 November the US 7th Marine Regiment arrived to relieve the ROK troops and fought a five-day battle with the Chinese 124th Division, Chinese casualties forced this division to withdraw and the engagement ended in victory for the UN forces.

At this point the entire front became quiet. No Communist attacks occurred for two weeks, nor did reconnaissance uncover enemy positions along the prospective line of UN advance. (42)

It was hardly surprising that this brief but intense incursion by the Chinese Communist Forces produced a flurry of diplomatic activity in the capitals of those countries contributing to the UN effort in Korea. One thing was now certain; there was no longer any doubt that the Chinese were fighting in Korea, "not as mercenaries or as casual adherents, but with retention of some definite link to their home authorities." (43) The difficulty which now confronted these interested UN member Governments was how to calculate from this limited but nonetheless determined Chinese intervention, the intentions of the Peking Government.


43. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK Deputy High Commissioner, Wellington to McIntosh, 8 November 1950.
There were, in fact, a number of "hypothetical alternatives" which could explain the nature and purpose of the Chinese incursion. Berendsen suggested that it was perhaps little more than "a last flurry by the North Koreans" with organised but limited Chinese assistance. Possibly the move signalled the opening of limited hostilities by Communist Chinese forces with the object of either holding a corridor south of the Yalu or protecting the Korean hydro-electric installations on the Yalu on which Manchurian industry depended for electricity supplies. Perhaps it was a combination of all the above. More seriously, it could be prologue to the opening of all-out hostilities by the regime in Peking to push the UN forces out of North Korea or, indeed, drive them from Korea altogether. Lack of more detailed information from the battlefront, however, prevented him from deciding which of these suppositions was likely to obtain.(44)

Despite having forces on the ground as well as an operative intelligence network in Korea, the US were equally in the dark as to Chinese intentions. Elaborating further on the possible objectives of the Chinese intervention postulated by Berendsen, US Government officials and Service Chiefs considered that Peking could merely be engaged in a face-saving exercise to indicate to the rest of the Communist world that it had not abandoned North Korea without making at least some effort, however token, in providing military assistance to the Northern Government. It was suggested further, that Peking may have believed that UN forces were in fact aiming at Manchuria and the present intervention could be based on the fear of that territory being attacked.

The extreme interpretation that could, in their view, be derived from Peking's actions, was that the offensive "offered a springboard for World War III"; the Chinese move in Korea might be "part of a more general

44. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T. No.144, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 6 November 1950.
military programme hatched up by the Kremlin affecting the entire Far
Eastern area, or even involving new moves in other parts of the world." (45)

Speculating on this issue was, of course, a simple task. The
problem was deciding which one or combination of the many possibilities
was the correct one. Surprisingly, these officials did not consider the
Chinese intervention had arisen primarily out of concern for the protection
of the hydro-electric plants on the Yalu, a factor which in the view
of most UN members was the reason for Peking's entry into the conflict.
"In Communist ideology", a senior State Department official wrote,
"political factors generally are given precedence over the economic, and
Chinese intervention in the present instance would not have been determined
upon for economic factors alone - even where the economic factor was so
important an element as the Yalu power installations." (46)

Nevertheless, the US, in concert with other UN members, endeavoured
to allay any fears which might have been held in Peking that the UN
intended to threaten Chinese "vital interests", or indeed to use a
conquered North Korea as a base from which to launch an attack into
Manchuria. On 8 November, the Security Council invited a representative
of the Chinese Government to be present during the discussion of a special
report of the UN Command on the presence of Chinese troops in Korea.
Chou En-lai insisted on linking such participation to the question of
Formosa and the matter proceeded no further. The US, on 10 November,
then sought through a draft resolution jointly sponsored with five other
Security Council members not only to call for the immediate withdrawal

45. Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.1023-1236 passim, but especially
   pp.1038-41; 1050-2; 1101-7; 1150; 1220-4.; PM 324/2/7 part(iii), I.T.
   No.195, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 7 November 1950.

46. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by Director of Office of Chinese
    Affairs (O. Edmund Clubb), 'Communist Intentions: Korea',
    1 November 1950, pp.1023-4.
of Chinese forces from North Korea, but also to reassure Peking of UN intentions by affirming "that it is the policy of the United Nations to hold the Chinese frontier with Korea inviolate and fully to protect the legitimate Chinese and Korean interest in the frontier zone."(47)

The credibility of this resolution was lost before it was even tabled in the Security Council. On 6 November, MacArthur ordered his Air Force Commander to launch an air strike against the international bridges which crossed the Yalu between Antung and Sinuiju. He hoped, by destroying these bridges, to prevent or at least slow down the flow of Chinese military strength into Korea. This was a new development altogether and, in fact, a volte face by MacArthur regarding the significance of Chinese involvement. Up until this time he had dismissed as unlikely the possibility of full scale Chinese intervention. Indeed, he cautioned Washington only two days earlier against precipitate judgement on the question of Chinese involvement stating that "a final appraisement should await a more complete accumulation of military facts."(48) It was to be expected that this change of attitude would be viewed with the utmost concern in Washington when the Joint Chiefs of Staff were notified of the UN Commander's intentions. The Joint Chiefs, therefore, immediately directed MacArthur to countermand his order and "to postpone all bombing of targets within five miles of the Manchurian border until further orders." Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs sought an explanation of this volte face.(49)

47. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK Deputy High Commissioner to McIntosh, 9 November 1950.


49. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by Acheson, 6 November 1950, pp.1055-7; JCS 95878, Joint Chiefs to MacArthur, 6 November 1950.
MacArthur replied that, on the basis of intelligence estimates he had received in his Headquarters by 7 November, he felt that organised Chinese units now in Korea were of sufficient strength to have "seized the initiative in the west sector and to have materially slowed the offensive in the east sector." To allow the Chinese free access into North Korea across these bridges, thus enabling them to supply and reinforce their units already in Korea would, MacArthur argued, "not only jeopardize but threaten the ultimate destruction of the forces under my command."(50) In view of this, the Joint Chiefs lifted their ban and allowed the bombing of the bridges to proceed. By this time, of course, China had already moved more than 180,000 troops across the frontier. Moreover, with the onset of winter and the freezing of the Yalu in late November allowing unrestricted passage across the River, the bridges would no longer be of any immediate strategic value to the Chinese Communists. In the end, the bombings achieved only limited success and on 5 December, were suspended.

How the six-power resolution was meant to allay Chinese fears in the light of this action is, in retrospect, difficult to comprehend. But the US authorities believed that by restricting the bombings to the Korean end of the bridges only, and insisting that Manchurian airspace not be violated, Peking would be apprised of the UN operations as well as the UN intention that the conflict would be confined to Korea.

If destroying the bridges achieved the stated objective, MacArthur told the UK representative in Japan, it would "enable him to resume the offensive and clear up North Korea within a reasonable space of time."(51)

50. Foreign Relations - KOREA, C68396, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs, 6 November 1950, pp.1057-8; C68465, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs, 7 November 1950, pp.1076-7.

51. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Q33, S.S.C.R. to UK High Commission, Wellington, 10 November 1950.
This assessment was based on the belief that China had, by 3 November, almost 415,000 regular forces in Manchuria ready to cross into Korea if ordered. The destruction of the Yalu bridges would effectively rule out the ability of China to mount a large scale offensive into Korea with these troops. And, there would be little difficulty for the 100,000 UN forces and 67,000 ROK troops to deal with the remaining North Korean forces of around 47,000 and the 34,000 Chinese troops which were estimated to be in Korea at this time. (52)

In the face of no further military action on the part of the Chinese MacArthur gradually regained confidence and devoted his attention to planning the final drive to the Yalu. Peking was, however, far more active on the political front, admitting on 11 November that Chinese "volunteers" were fighting in Korea and stating categorically that the UN action would be actively opposed by Chinese forces. These threats were dismissed as bluff by MacArthur and this view coloured Washington's appreciation of the situation in Korea. By late November, there was general acceptance in MacArthur's Headquarters and in the US that the intentions of the Chinese were restricted to achieving limited objectives in Korea; to halting the advance of the UN forces and to keep a Communist regime in being on Korean soil, however limited and tenuous that foothold would be. Although there would be a further build-up of Chinese military strength in Manchuria, this would not be used in an all out attack on UN Forces, but instead, as reinforcements for a protracted war against the UN forces. At the same time, Peking would "seek to obtain UN withdrawal from Korea by intimidation and diplomatic means." In short, it was considered most improbable that the Chinese would launch a large scale offensive in Korea. (53)

52. Schnabel, op cit, pp.240-1; PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK Deputy High Commissioner, Wellington to McIntosh, 8 November 1950.

As Schnabel has commented, "American ears were attuned to victory and the ominous harbinger of military disaster wrought no change in General MacArthur's plans to advance to the border with all speed and with all forces."(54)

The British, however, did not share this optimism. Had the intelligence network of the US Far Eastern Command been even a little more accurate in its estimates of Chinese military strength in Korea, the intentions of the Peking Government would have been self evident. It was this suspect aspect of the estimates coming out of MacArthur's Headquarters as well as the initial identification of the Chinese south of the Yalu which precipitated a particularly profound feeling of unease in Britain with the Korean situation. The British reaction to the Chinese moves of late October, as conveyed to the New Zealand Government by this country's Joint Services Liaison Mission in London, showed a decidedly more realistic assessment of Chinese capabilities than that offered by MacArthur. The report stated that,

elements of four Chinese armies have been identified as fighting with the North Koreans - official US estimates put the number at 30,000. But from successes achieved by the North Koreans with Chinese assistance in north-west Korea, it is difficult to believe that considerably more Chinese or North Koreans trained in China are not employed. If the full four Chinese armies are engaged, the figure would be in the neighbourhood of 100 to 120,000 troops.

Although it was acknowledged that US reconnaissance conducted over a long period had not indicated any unusually heavy troop movements which would confirm so great a number of Chinese ground forces, the British intelligence authorities assumed, quite correctly, that the Chinese "commenced crossing in force in mid October and that due to the long periods of darkness, it was possible for them to do so without detection."(55)


55. JSO 161/7/1, NZJS/UK/Ops. 3, Annex, 'The Chinese Communist Threat to the Far East and South East Asia on 7 November 1950', New Zealand Joint Services Liaison Mission, London to Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 10 November 1950.
For the UK authorities, therefore, this show of Chinese force compelled them to reassess the UN military objectives in Korea. Like the Americans, they too sought to determine the reason for this limited intervention. But, unlike their counterparts in Washington, they concluded early on that the Chinese action was but a precursor to a large scale intervention if the UN forces proceeded with a general advance beyond their present position. In their view, Peking, in suddenly breaking off hostilities, provided the UN with an opportunity to pull back its front line in the face of this determined show of force. In not taking this course of action, the imminent danger was to force China's hand and risk expanding the Korean conflict into a wider, more general war.

These were the concerns which the UK authorities conveyed to the Government in Wellington early in November. And, unquestionably as a mark of the extreme seriousness with which Britain viewed the Chinese action, New Zealand was for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities, fully informed and closely consulted on important political issues which affected the conduct of the war.

It was this anxiety also, which persuaded the UK, on 13 November to propose a solution to the Korean problem "which would not result in the hostilities dragging on in Korea with the ever growing risk of extension beyond Korea." Doidge received an outline of this proposal three days later from the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. "What we have in mind", Bevin wrote, "is a fresh approach to the problem which might be embodied in a resolution in the Security Council." The operative paragraphs of this resolution were to propose the establishment of a demilitarised area from which all foreign forces and combatants would be withdrawn. This area would extend from a United Nations line (running roughly from Hungnam in the east to Chongju in the west) to the existing Manchurian-Siberian-Korean frontier; and
reaffirm the objectives of the United Nations already declared in relevant United Nations resolutions and reassure the Central Peoples Government of China that there is no intention to damage their interests.

A resolution on these lines, Bevin continued, "might afford us a means not only of terminating the whole Korean campaign earlier and thus liquidating a costly military commitment, but also of satisfying the Chinese that the United Nations have no aggressive intent against Manchuria." Concluding, he stated that from the military viewpoint there were considerable advantages in this proposal, the most immediate being a contraction of the UN line from 400 miles, the length of the North Korean frontier, to one of 150 miles between Hungnam and Chongju.(56)

At the same time the New Zealand Government was informed of this plan, they were told that State Department officials, in an effort to reassure the Chinese authorities that UN action was not intended to threaten Chinese sovereignty, were "turning over in their minds" a proposal for a non-belligerent band north and south of the Yalu. How Washington was going to persuade Peking to neutralise part of Manchuria was not explained. In the circumstances, therefore, the UK proposition, although a retrograde step militarily, was politically far more realistic.(57) This was the view which was transmitted to Berendsen when the Government solicited his views on the matter. "Our own immediate reaction, which has been communicated to the UK High Commissioner", the Ambassador was told, is that we appreciate and share their anxiety and we feel that they are justified in placing their proposals before the Americans. There seems to us, however, little prospect of the early termination of the Korean campaign by having the Chinese and Koreans obligingly accept the conditions proposed, but the alternative of pushing on, and thus increasing the danger of widening the conflict, in our present unprepared state is one which should be avoided if at all possible.

56. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, Bevin to Doidge, 16 November 1950; Foreign Relations - KOREA, Message from Bevin to Franks, 13 November 1950, pp.1138-40.

57. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK Deputy High Commissioner Wellington to McIntosh, 16 November 1950.
The Government went on to point out that "unless we can liquidate this costly military commitment in an area of little strategic importance", the Western powers could find themselves over-committed to the extent that they would be "unable to withstand a major attack in more vital theatres." In this respect the New Zealand authorities recognised what the UN Command and the US Government failed to acknowledge, that the proposal was "calculated to gain time and forced upon us by the weakness of our own hand."(58)

Berendsen, while in agreement with the Government's comments was not entirely happy with the tenor of the British plan. "The proposal", he said, "does very nearly approach appeasement or still worse, offers positive advantages to the aggressor and we must be extremely careful to avoid this aspect as far as possible." Its usefulness, he argued, depended solely on Chinese intentions. If these objectives were limited, for instance, to the protection of the Yalu hydro-electric installations or to fend off what Peking might perceive as an imminent invasion of Manchuria, then the proposal would be worthwhile. If, however, their intentions were to launch a full scale attempt to drive the UN forces out of Korea, or alternatively,

and this is the thought which is most commonly in peoples minds here, to keep open a running sore in Korea which will sap our strength and disable us, as you put it, from withstanding an attack in more vital theatres, then the proposal, whether accepted or not would be of no advantage to us.(59)

Berendsen was not alone in his view that the intended resolution smacked of appeasement. The UN Commander, who had earlier learned of the British proposal, issued a vitriolic attack on its purpose. "The widely reported British desire to appease the Chinese Communists by giving them

58. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), O.T. No.196, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 16 November 1950; Letter, Doidge to UK High Commissioner, Wellington, 16 November 1950.

59. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.150, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 November 1950.
a strip of Northern Korea", he told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "finds its historic precedent in the action taken at Munich on 29 September 1938 by Great Britain, France and Italy." He charged that any such appeasement of the Communists carried the germs of ultimate destruction for the UN. "To give up any portion of North Korea to the aggression of the Chinese Communists", MacArthur declared,

would be the greatest defeat of the free world in recent times. Indeed, to yield to so immoral a proposal would bankrupt our leadership and influence in Asia and render untenable our position both politically and militarily. We would follow clearly in the footsteps of the British who by the appeasement of recognition [of the Peking Regime] lost the respect of all the rest of Asia without gaining that of the Chinese segment.(60)

For MacArthur, anything short of total victory was unacceptable and, by this time, inconceivable.

Yet even he had to concede that the UN forces would not achieve that victory easily. Conducting military operations, particularly air operations, so close to Chinese territory presented the UN Commander with some serious tactical difficulties. A highly contentious issue was raised in mid-November, therefore, when MacArthur, in an effort to overcome these problems, endeavoured to gain approval from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to apply "the recognised doctrine of aerial hot pursuit". Although the US authorities acquiesced in MacArthur's request, in view of the serious implications inherent in applying this "doctrine" it was considered appropriate to advise other participating UN member Governments of their intentions. The US Government was not asking for the concurrence of these members, it had made its decision. Instead, Washington considered this to be their definition of close allied consultation in action.

60. Foreign Relations - KOREA, C68572, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 November 1950, pp.1107-10.
The New Zealand authorities were advised of this decision on 15 November when Ambassador Scotten delivered to the Department of External Affairs an *Aide Memoire* explaining the problem and the American resolve. "The US Government", the memorandum stated, "considers that the UN forces in Korea are confronted by a grave problem arising from the use by the enemy of Manchuria as a privileged sanctuary from which to attack them." The problem arose in two respects. First, ground forces could move into Korea and supply themselves from bases and lines of communications which were sheltered by the immunity of Manchuria. Secondly, enemy aircraft operating from Manchurian airfields, were able to undertake sorties on UN forces and then quickly return to Manchurian airspace. Thus, for the foregoing reasons, the US Government wishes to record the fact that it may soon become necessary to permit UN aircraft to exercise self-defence in the air above the Yalu River, to the extent of allowing them to fly in hot pursuit of attacking enemy planes for two or three minutes into airspace over Manchuria.(61)

The New Zealand reaction to this memorandum was typical of those UN member Governments advised of the American decision. "At the moment", Doidge told Berendsen and UK High Commissioner C.R. Price, "we are inclined to voice our apprehension as to the possible consequences of this action which, however justifiable on military grounds, must nevertheless be regarded politically as very dangerous."(62) Again, Berendsen concurred with his Government's sentiments. Although ultimately it might be necessary to undertake air operations north of the Yalu, he was of the opinion that such a course of action

61. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Aide Memoire, US Ambassador, Wellington to McIntosh, 15 November 1950.

62. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), O.T. No.196, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 16 November 1950; Letter to Doidge to UK High Commissioner Wellington, 16 November 1950.
should certainly not be done yet nor until the matter has been carefully considered by all concerned. MacArthur is so unpredictable that it seems to me that an expression to the American Embassy in Wellington of your own sympathetic understanding of their difficulties but your uneasiness in the matter in the circumstances of today might be useful. (63)

This advice, which was in line with the British reaction to the US memorandum Sir Oliver Franks had conveyed to the State Department on 17 November, (64) was quickly acted upon in Wellington. On 22 November, the Secretary of External Affairs, A.D. McIntosh, sent an Aide Memoire to Ambassador Scotten which stated that although the New Zealand authorities were "not asked to comment on the course of action referred to in the communication, they nevertheless feel that it is incumbent upon them to make some observations." Scotten was requested to advise the American Government that the New Zealand authorities "sympathise with the difficulties and understand the anxiety of the military authorities in Korea", but, at the same time, "they cannot but feel apprehensive least the course of action proposed should at the present time lead to the spreading of the conflict." (65)

It soon became clear that there was unanimous opposition to the US memorandum from all those Governments advised of the intended action. The authorities in Washington, therefore, reconsidered their proposal and decided to shelve, for the time being, the idea of carrying the air war into Manchuria. (66)

63. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.150, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 November 1950.

64. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK High Commissioner, Wellington to Doidge, 18 November 1950; Foreign Relations - KOREA, Message, Bevin to Franks, 16 November 1950, p.1172. Franks advised Acheson that "the UK Government regret that they cannot endorse the US suggestion that violation of the Manchurian border may be necessary." Ibid.

65. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Note by J.V. Wilson on I.T., No.150 from Berendsen, 20 November 1950; Aide Memoire, McIntosh to US Ambassador, Wellington, 22 November 1950; Foreign Relations - KOREA, Scotten to Acheson, 22 November 1950, p.1213.

66. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK High Commissioner to Doidge, 23 November 1950; Schnabel, op cit, p.250.
The UK was not so successful, however, in persuading the Americans to agree to the withdrawal of the UN forces to form a defensive position along the Chongju-Hungnam line. The failure of Peking to engage in any significant military action during November, indicated "a lack of serious Chinese purpose", according to State Department officials. In the face of this apparent irresolute Chinese attitude, the Americans argued that it did not make military sense to consider withdrawing or even holding the UN forces at their present positions. From a political viewpoint, the US authorities considered the British proposal had little to recommend it. To establish this line as the northernmost limit of UN occupation would mean abandoning considerable areas and population which had already been brought within UN protection. The effect of such a move on the morale of the Koreans and on public opinion in the US which had furnished the great bulk of the troops would, in their opinion, be disastrous. In view of this, the US Government "looked with no enthusiasm on the demilitarisation proposal." Acceptance of such a policy would only serve to "encourage the Communist Government to draw the obvious conclusion and take stiffer action to secure even larger concessions."(67)

This attitude was persisted with in spite of attempts by Bevin on 22 November, to communicate directly with Chou En-lai to apprise him of "the pacific nature" of UN intentions and on an informal level, to broach the idea of a demilitarised zone with the Peking Government, attempts which the UK Chargé in Peking later reported were being considered with some interest by the Chinese.(68)


But by this time, the US had made the decision to press forward with the offensive which had been brought to a premature halt by the intervention of Chinese forces in late October.

On 24 November, the UN Command took up the gauntlet cast down by the Chinese and the 8th Army commenced its final drive to the Yalu. X Corps began its thrust to the River three days later. No sooner had these forces begun to advance when they were halted by violent and major counter-attacks falling in the first instance on South Korean troops attached to the 8th Army which tore a huge gap in the UN front on the left of the peninsula. Through this the attackers poured rolling up the front to right and left. MacArthur reported that the enemy attack force numbered some 200,000, all of them apparently Chinese and there was no doubt that the Chinese had opened a general offensive. To the east, X Corps had scarcely begun its advance before it met fierce resistance. On 28 November, Chinese forces slipped southeastward past these X Corps units, and cut their supply lines and threatened total encirclement. (69)

That day, MacArthur told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that these developments made it clear that

All hope of localisation of the Korean conflict to enemy forces composed of North Korean troops with alien token elements can now be abandoned. The Chinese military forces are committed in North Korea in great and ever increasing strength. No pretext of minor support under the guise of volunteerism or other subterfuge now has the slightest validity. We face an entirely new war. (70)


70. Foreign Relations - KOREA, C69953, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 28 November 1950, pp.1237-8.
CHAPTER VIII

THE RETREAT AND ITS AFTERMATH:
THE TRUMAN-ATTLEE DISCUSSIONS

The opening episode of the Chinese offensive had reversed the course of the war in Korea. MacArthur was immediately forced to change his tactics and the final drive to the Yalu by the UN forces was rapidly transformed into a desperate holding operation. But this manoeuvre was short lived. On the last day of November, the UN Commander gloomily informed the Joint Chiefs that it was "quite evident that the 8th Army will successively have to replace to the rear." (1) After a brief but valiant effort to hold a line along the Chongchon River, the 8th Army was forced to retreat in the face of overwhelming Chinese opposition. In order to save this force from a far worse mauling, MacArthur gave the order to make a rapid withdrawal to the south. Despite the chaos caused by the Chinese attack, the retreat was orderly. It was also extensive. General Walker's troops fell back from Pyongyang on 5 December and the following day, "the first Iron Curtain capital to be liberated by the West" was once again in Communist hands. The erstwhile liberators withdrew further south and halted at a familiar line - the 38th Parallel.

Although the number of casualties suffered in the withdrawal were moderate, the tactical loss was enormous. (2) In the two weeks following the battle at the Chongchon River, the 8th Army had retired some 120 miles. In the event, such a dramatic disengagement was not necessary as the six days of

1. Foreign Relations - KOREA, C50107, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff 30 November 1950, p.1260.

2. Compared with some World War II operations (Ardennes 80,000, Okinawa 65,000, Iwo Jima 20,000), the 13,000 allied casualties suffered in the retreat from North Korea were relatively light. Rees, Korea: Limited War, p.176.
intensive combat along the Chongchon had exhausted the Chinese supply system and they were unable to maintain pressure on the 8th Army for more than a few days. Thus by the end of the first week in December, these forces lost contact with the enemy and the last stage of their withdrawal was free from harassment.

To the east, the 1st Marine Division, which was under threat of being cut off from the main body of X Corps, fought its way to safety to regroup with the remaining elements of X Corps. A solid defensive position was then established in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. Once this perimeter had been made secure, it was decided in Washington that an amphibious evacuation of these forces would be carried out from the port of Hungnam. On 12 December, X Corps, meeting surprisingly light pressure from the attacking Chinese forces, commenced its retreat. By Christmas Day, rearguard UN troops departed from the last UN beachhead above the 38th Parallel. North Korea was once again under Communist control.(3)

The reaction to these dramatic developments was understandably one of extreme anxiety not only in the US, but also in the capitals of those UN countries contributing forces to the Korean action. There was, however, a difference in emphasis in the way in which the participating governments viewed the new situation in Korea. In Washington, civilian and military officials considered that "strategic and tactical considerations are now paramount", their immediate attention focussed on the plight of the UN forces whose very survival in the face of the Chinese onslaught was under grave threat.(4) For America's partners in Korea, however, the preservation of the UN forces while of great importance, was overshadowed by more acute concern for the peace of the world as a whole.


Anxious that the struggle in Korea might develop into a wider, more general conflict, these allied countries, in particular Britain, France and Canada, favoured a restrained and moderate approach to meet the new situation with more emphasis on conciliation and less on enforcement. But in the words and actions of the US during late November and early December, these allies perceived little to reassure them that the Americans would be willing to set as their principal objective, containment of the conflict to the Korean peninsula.

There were fears, fuelled by reports of MacArthur's apparent desire to carry military action against the Chinese into China itself, that the UN Command would conduct bombing missions into Manchuria. In the event they proved unfounded. To embark on such a course would not only run contrary to the "sacrosanct principle of American policy not to fight China"(5), but also to the decision taken by the National Security Council on 28 November to reject any strategy which might widen the war.(6) Apparently America's allies were not aware of this decision. Even if they were, they would doubtless have questioned its sincerity for on the same day, the US Representative to the UN, Warren Austin, sought from his UK and French counterparts in the Security Council support for an amendment: to the already tabled six-power resolution(7), calling for the condemnation of Chinese action and the withdrawal of their forces from Korea. The British Government vigorously opposed such a move and instructed Franks to impress on the State Department their concern that "the introduction of a charge of aggression against the Chinese would have incalculable

5. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.212, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 29 November 1950; O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.144; Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, pp.405-6.


7. See above pp.146-7.
consequences." "We cannot be rushed into a grave step of this kind", the Ambassador was told, "without further consultation and Cabinet consideration here." (8) The suggested amendment was therefore dropped and, instead, the US pressed for the adoption of the resolution as it stood which, mild though it was in the existing situation, at least contained the essential part of calling on the Chinese to withdraw. (9) Not that Britain or the US were under any illusion that the resolution, even couched in such mild terms, would be acceptable to the Soviet Union. Accordingly, when the Security Council met on 30 November to conclude its discussion of the Korean question for the year, no one was surprised when the resolution was defeated by the application of the veto by the Soviet Representative.

No sooner had these apparent differences been outwardly resolved when a far more serious issue surfaced and threatened allied unity. On the same day the six-power resolution was defeated, President Truman made a somewhat ambiguous remark at a press conference which gave the impression that the Administration was considering the possible use of the atomic bomb against the Chinese. Although Truman had merely asserted that the use of the atomic bomb was "as always under consideration", the first crude press reports of the statement represented the President as saying that MacArthur might be given discretionary power to use this weapon independently of the UN. (10)

Already apprehensive, America's allies, understandably now became

8. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), Letter, F88, UK High Commissioner, Wellington to Doidge, 30 November 1950.
9. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.213, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 29 November 1950.
10. For the substance of what was said at this press conference, see Foreign Relations - KOREA, Editorial Note, pp.1261-2.
panicky. So seriously in fact did the British Cabinet view this development that they decided Prime Minister Attlee should make an immediate trip to Washington to confer with President Truman.(11)

The extent to which Attlee intended to impress upon his American counterpart British dissatisfaction with, and disquiet arising from, American direction of the UN effort in Korea was communicated to the New Zealand Government in a despatch from the New Zealand High Commissioner to the UK, W.J. Jordan. On 1 December, he reported on the outcome of a meeting of all High Commissioners in London which had been convened by Attlee that day to explain the purpose of his visit. Although Attlee had emphasised the forthcoming talks would cover a wide range of issues, including a general survey of the international political and economic situation, the immediate problem of Korea loomed largest in the Prime Minister’s considerations. "In connection with this problem and with future world political problems", Jordan stated,

the Prime Minister would discuss the set-up of the United Nations in the field of what might be called political strategy. In other words, to put it bluntly, the United Kingdom Government are not entirely satisfied with the method of giving directives to General MacArthur. He would emphasise the position that this was a United Nations problem and that the Korean force was really a United Nations force even though unfortunately the United States was bearing the major part of the burden.(12)

With so many potentially divisive issues emerging, it was hardly surprising that the news of Attlee’s intended visit was well received in New Zealand. Recognising immediately the serious divergence in British


12. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.1556, Jordan to Minister of External Affairs, 1 December 1950.
and American appreciations of the changed strategic situation arising from the new developments in Korea, the Government realised that all was not well in the Anglo-American alliance. Acutely sensitive to any significant cooling in relations between its two most important allies, the New Zealand Government was greatly alarmed with this apparent rift between London and Washington. Such a situation, if prolonged, could it was felt, easily lead to New Zealand being confronted with the so-called 'ANZAC dilemma' and this was to be avoided at all costs. For the authorities in Wellington, therefore, the Truman-Attlee talks assumed a special significance.

But the problems to be resolved were not confined to the specific issues of atomic weapons and operational directives. Far more fundamental questions concerning overall allied strategy in the light of the UN reverses in Korea were also at issue. These were examined at some length by Berendsen in a despatch to Wellington written after he had learned of the 8th Army's rout at the Chongchon River.

He began by restating his earlier fears that the situation in Korea could lead to the "democratic forces" becoming enmired in "a running sore which would ... correspondingly weaken them for another blow elsewhere." If that was indeed Peking's intention, then the case for "cutting our losses in Korea" and withdrawing from that theatre warranted serious consideration, even though such a move would in his view, be "a most cruel abandonment of the Korean people." But as with the initial Chinese intervention in late October, the full intentions of Peking in pressing the current offensive were still unknown to the West and "possibly they were not definitely known or fixed in Peking itself." For this reason, Berendsen instinctively felt that

we should hold our present course unless and until we are definitely and unquestionably forced off it. I think it would be deplorable to abandon Korea at this stage unless and until
we are convinced for the most fundamental and inescapable reasons that we must do so.(13)

For Berendsen, there were only two such reasons which would be morally acceptable to allow the UN to withdraw from Korea. Either the Communists would have to push the UN forces out of Korea, "and I think we must admit at once that it is entirely within their powers to do so", or present "us with the alternative of immediate abandonment of Korea or immediate and possibly fatal defeat elsewhere" by provoking serious incidents in areas of greater strategic significance to the West, ie, Europe and/or the Middle East. Anything else would amount to nothing more than appeasement and that is the one solution I would eliminate in all circumstances; ... it is just not possible to placate the implacable or to buy safety from people who we know full well will never stay bought.

Berendsen therefore expressed utter dismay at the reports of UK and European reluctance to recognize the Chinese action for what he insisted it was, "open and notorious aggression". "I cannot understand", he protested, how emulating the ostrich in present circumstances can possibly be of help to anyone, and even pretending to pretend that it is not Chinese Communists who are killing American, British, Australian and other UN troops seems to me to be so stupid as to be indefensible.(14)

That Chinese forces were committed to the struggle in Korea was now an unquestionable fact, "however unpalatable it may be", and in selecting this course, China, he insisted, like all those who chose the

13. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.161, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 30 November 1950.
14. Ibid.
path of aggression, should also pay the price for their action. Thus in reference to the question of extending air operations into Manchuria, he asserted in his typically convoluted prose,

...surely the question of provocation, including the bombing of supply lines, airfields etc, north of the Yalu has now become academic. It could not seriously be suggested either that the Chinese Communists will be grateful to us (and therefore presumably accommodating) if we do not bomb, or, on the other hand, that they can be more actively opposed to us than they are now if we do, and, indeed, the question becomes exactly similar, and the necessity, in order to save United Nations lives, just as clear and compelling, to attack lines of supply for the forces of aggression wherever they may be as it was in respect of the similar situation on the 38th Parallel.

As far as he was concerned the desperate situation now confronting the UN in Korea called for wide ranging measures which could not be implemented prior to this large scale Chinese attack. (15)

Having made clear his views on the way the Chinese should now be dealt with, Berendsen addressed himself to the question now being asked by all those involved in the UN effort in Korea; "how was it that we have come to this situation at this time and this completely unexpected way?"

Clearly there were some grave tactical errors made by the UN Command in conducting operations in Korea during October and November. The most obvious was the decision to continue with the policy of a divided command on the ground in Korea. But there were others as Berendsen was quick to point out.

I have constantly been astonished, and have never been able to ascertain the answer from the American authorities, at the ability even of the North Koreans to maintain their lines and supply their troops despite the fact that throughout the whole of the conflict - and it still seems to be true - the United Nations Forces have had complete command of the air. I would have expected to see every bridge, every railway and every road completely denied to the forces of aggression

15. Ibid.
which should by every logical process have been condemned to inanition from lack of nourishment, and the explanation that these people move at night and largely by hand power does not seem to me entirely to explain the facts.

Nor was he able to find a satisfactory answer to the apparent lack of "timely military intelligence ... of the present very massive Chinese attack" even though the UN had command of the air in Korea.(16)

Who or what was responsible for the failure to anticipate the massive Chinese intervention became a principle subject of debate during December, amongst those UN members directly involved in the Korean operations. Most laid the blame squarely on MacArthur's shoulders. And, to a large extent this apportioning of responsibility was justified. By his own admission, MacArthur had, when requesting permission to bomb the Yalu bridges, declared that the Chinese forces already in North Korea were capable of threatening the survival of the forces under his command.(17) Yet within a fortnight of this alarm he chose to ignore this and other signs which made it plain that China had committed large forces to support the North Koreans. But whereas a number of UN members considered MacArthur's somewhat cavalier and inconsistent attitude had provoked Chinese entry into the Korean struggle and as a result was responsible for the critical situation now confronting the UN in Korea, Berendsen took different view. He rejected as being "entirely without foundation", the suggestion that it was MacArthur's decision to strike for the Yalu which precipitated the Chinese offensive. In fact, he claimed that "there is evidence to show that this attack has long been planned and in the course of mounting even perhaps at the time of crossing the 38th Parallel." Even if the UN Commander's action had caused Peking to

16. Ibid.

17. See above pp.147-8.
intervene, in Berendsen’s opinion that was of incidental importance. What did disturb him though, was the fact that they were able to mount their counter-attack with such devastating success. In his view, therefore, MacArthur was guilty not of precipitating Chinese intervention, but rather of failing to adequately prepare for such an eventuality. (18)

In making this point, however, the Ambassador immediately warned against the highly destructive recriminations now evident in the statements, both public and private, of those governments contributing to the UN action regarding American conduct of the higher operational aspects of the war. In conclusion, therefore he stressed the imperative necessity, as I see it, that we, all of us I mean New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, and indeed all the democracies – should keep closely alongside the United States in these critical times. We may – no doubt we shall – disagree with them from time to time in which case we should privately discuss any such differences with them. But continued niggling at American policies, which is having a most unfortunate effect here, must cease and certainly, and essentially publicly, we must now of all times stand firmly alongside the United States, which provided one hundred per cent of the initiative and has supplied, and must continue to supply a very large proportion of the money, material and the manpower upon which in the last resort the survival of us all depends. (19)

Clearly the Ambassador was more sympathetic towards the stronger American line over Chinese intervention than the circumspect and conciliatory approach favoured by the British and Western Europeans. The Government, however, adopted a line between the two extremes. While it agreed that the UN should not abandon Korea unless it was forced to for the reasons stated by Berendsen and that there could be no appeasement,

18. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), I.T. No.161, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 30 November 1950.

19. Ibid.
there was concern that the US might become completely embroiled in an exhaustive war with China, a war which "must lead to a general conflict as it would almost certainly be the case that Soviet Russia would intervene." For this reason it could not support, for the present, any extension of UN military action outside Korea, ie, it was against any bombing of military targets in Manchuria. "Action by the US Forces in or over Chinese territory", Doidge told Berendsen, "will ... precipitate such formal involvement of [China and the Soviet Union]. For the moment our feeling is that because we are unready for such conflict the way should be kept open for negotiation." Nevertheless, having made this point Doidge added, "It seems to us that with the Attlee-Truman talks pending, the major countries have first to settle their differences before we take it upon ourselves to offer an opinion. Above all", and here the authorities in Wellington made clear their total agreement with Berendsen's concluding comments on allied support of the US,

we should be anxious to avoid saying anything in public which could be indicative of any divergence of views or any split between the United Nations [countries] chiefly concerned. For this reason we deplore attacks on MacArthur's conduct of operations.(20)

The reference to MacArthur was directed not only at public but also diplomatic criticism of the UN Commander's, indeed the wider US, management of the UN effort in Korea. But New Zealand was in minority company in keeping to itself any misgivings it had on this subject. This, it appears, was due partly to the fact that it did not have any troops on the ground in Korea at that time and was thus not directly

20. PM 324/2/3 part(iii), O.T. No.216, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 4 December 1950.
affected by MacArthur's tactical decisions, and partly an acknowledgement that the US could not be held solely responsible for the disastrous situation on the peninsula. New Zealand, at least, recognised that in voting in favour of extending the war into North Korea, the overwhelming majority of UN membership had been willing accomplices in the action which provoked Chinese entry into the conflict. In the bitterness and frustration accompanying the sudden reversal of fortunes, however, all too many of America's allies were forgetful of their support of the eight-power resolution of 7 October.(21)

Even so, the US had been remiss in not fully consulting its UN allies when making important decisions concerning the higher operational direction of the war. Although some of the UN members, notably Britain, Canada and France, had been consulted from time to time on military developments in Korea, their advice had not been actively sought or followed on the crucial issue of whether the UN Commander should be bold or cautious in his advance to the Yalu. Those other countries contributing forces were not consulted at all. While the New Zealand authorities remained silent over this American failing, the Australian Government was quite blunt in making known to the State Department it was dissatisfied with the general lack of consultation.(22)

21. See above p.133.

22. PM 324/2/3 part (iii), I.T. No. 212, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 29 November 1950. The Australian Ambassador to the US, J.O. Makin, told the State Department, "While the Australian Government did not wish to shackle the UN Commander unduly, they considered that there should be full consultation among the Allies on policy and objectives and in particular they were of the strong opinion that it should be ensured by advance consultation that MacArthur took no action which would precipitate and involve other countries in a full scale war." Ibid. See also, Foreign Relations KOREA, Memorandum by Merchant, Subject: 'Visit of Australian Ambassador', 29 November 1950, pp.1257-8.
Recognising the disaffection among the participating members, on 30 November the State Department began to hold weekly briefings in Washington of representatives of those countries contributing forces to the Korean operation. (23) At these sessions of what later became known as the "Committee of Sixteen" or "Rusk Committee", the allied participants in the war were kept more fully advised of military developments, but they were not informed in advance of operations being planned by the US and thus were unable to make known to the US their views on the political consequences which might follow such operations. The New Zealand representative at the majority of these meetings, F.H. Corner, made this point when he later reported on the nature of the briefings. "No pretense has been made", he wrote to McIntosh, that this gathering has any control over the military or political direction of the Korean campaign, and though the United States through the able and tactful instrument of Mr Rusk have given an impression of co-operativeness and willingness to join in any discussion which might develop in the group, they have made it obvious enough firstly that they, who are contributing the great bulk of manpower and supplies and who have been named by the United Nations as the Unified Command, expect to be left largely free to run the campaign; and, secondly, that while they are prepared to receive - and welcome ... any views or representations by individual governments, they do not regard the briefings as a kind of supreme Allied War Council.

This observation was not meant as a criticism. None of the representatives, Corner was quick to point out, "had suggested that it should be otherwise." All who took part recognised that the briefings were little more than a convenient and time saving means by which the US authorities could inform participating nations of the "general military situation in which their troops found themselves day by day in Korea." (24) Issues of greater political significance continued to be discussed through normal diplomatic channels or were

23. PM 324/2/3 part (iii), I.T. No. 213, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 30 November 1950.

24. PM 324/2/3 part (vii), Memorandum, Subject: 'Korea: Briefing Sessions at State Department', Corner to McIntosh, 3 July 1951
the subjects of direct high level inter-governmental consultations of the type about to begin in Washington between Britain and the US.

President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee met at the White House on 4 December and on each day thereafter for five days. The first round of the talks was largely exploratory. Attlee was given a summary of the military situation in Korea as seen by the American authorities which described the position of the UN forces as "very critical". Both sides then proceeded to explain their respective appreciations of the issues now facing the UN in the light of China's entry into the conflict. (25)

First to be discussed was the question of allied strategic planning. Attlee and Truman agreed that it was necessary to place the Korean conflict in its proper perspective. Although it was of great symbolic importance in representing the determination of the West to resist Communist aggression, Korea was of minor strategic consequence to the Allies should the present hostilities expand to a wider 'global' war. Now that China had intervened in force, both sides agreed that the possibility of such an expanded conflict had greatly increased. In view of this, Attlee argued that it was essential to avoid becoming fully engaged in a war with China as this would only drain the resources of the Allies fighting a war they could not win in an area of secondary strategic importance. "The object" he later told Commonwealth Heads of Mission in Washington at a meeting held immediately before the final session of talks,

25. For full documentation on the proceedings of the talks see Foreign Relations - KOREA, pp.1323-1479 passim, but especially pp.1361-74; 1392-1408; 1426; 1449-61; 1468-79.
was to uphold the principles of the United Nations and to avoid appeasement without making the utter mistake of entering into outright war with China; especially having regard to the broad background and the obvious objections to playing the communist game by involving ourselves in a full-scale conflict in Asia and thus leaving Europe open.(26)

The Americans agreed with this interpretation. At the same time, however, they felt that Korea could not simply be abandoned. "We naturally consider European defense primary", Truman said, "but we equally have responsibilities in Korea, Japan and the Philippines. It must be clear that we are not going to run out on these obligations even though these are hard to meet."(27) It was not only a question of fulfilling America's moral obligation to Korea; it was also essential to maintain a consistent policy which would find acceptance with American public opinion. "No Administration in the United States", Acheson explained,

could possibly urge the American people to take vigorous action in its foreign policy on the one ocean front while on the other ocean front they seemed to be rolled back and to accept a position of isolation. The public mind was not delicate enough to understand such opposing attitudes and even if it were that difference would be wrong.

It was therefore not possible, Acheson continued, to voluntarily back down in Korea simply because the UN now faced something it had not bargained for, the intervention of a much larger and stronger adversary in the conflict. Such a retreat would completely undermine the credibility of US strategic commitments elsewhere not only in the eyes of the American people but also those of America's allies.(28)

As General Bradley argued, "if we take this aggression in the East,

26. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No.219, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 9 December 1950


people will wonder whether we are going to take the same kind of treatment in the West. It would be hard to see the difference." (29)
The British, ever conscious of the crucial importance to European security of US commitment to the 'Europe first' strategy, accepted the logic of this argument.

Thus in spite of the gravity of the situation in Korea, as well as the danger to the Allies of being drawn into a protracted struggle in the Far East, both heads of state agreed that the UN should stand and fight should the Chinese continue their advance and cross into South Korea. Informing the New Zealand Government of this decision, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations Patrick Gordon-Walker told Holland that both leaders believed that voluntary evacuation from Korea would convey the impression that the United Nations were willing to deal with aggression by a small country (North Korea) but were unwilling to oppose aggression by a big country (China). If the United Nations were nonetheless driven from Korea, they would at least have failed honourably. (30)

The new military objective, therefore, was to regroup the UN forces into three beachheads; one in the Inchon-Seoul region, the second around the two North Korean industrial cities of Hamhung and Hungnam from where X Corps would be evacuated to Pusan, and the third in the area of Pusan itself. This plan was modified, when, on the last day of the talks US Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins, who had only a few hours earlier returned from a four day tour of the Far East, briefed the two delegations on the latest military situation in Korea. On the basis of conversations he had had with MacArthur and visits to the front lines in Korea, Collins was optimistic that the 8th Army could hold a line across Korea, albeit

30. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Message, Gordon-Walker to Holland, 7 December 1950.
to the south of Seoul rather than having to withdraw into beachheads.(31)

The talks also produced agreement on short-term action to be followed in the UN. To "avoid seeming not to know what to do next", both Attlee and Truman agreed that the six-power resolution calling on China to withdraw, which had earlier been vetoed in the Security Council, should now be submitted to the General Assembly.(32) This move would be taken in accordance with the provisions of the "Uniting for Peace" resolution which the General Assembly had adopted on 3 November.(33)

Ironically, two issues which had played a large part in prompting Attlee to go to Washington, the question of the atomic bomb and dissatisfaction with MacArthur's direction of the war effort, were not formally discussed during a full meeting of the two delegations. The problem of MacArthur was raised on an informal basis at a dinner held on 6 December when Attlee told Truman and senior American officials that there was "a feeling in Europe that General MacArthur was running the show and ... that the other participating countries had little to say in what was done." One way of overcoming this difficulty, he


33. This resolution was introduced when it became clear that the return of the Soviet representative to the Security Council prevented that organ from taking further decisions in connection with collective measures in Korea. Sponsored by the US, it proposed that the General Assembly explicitly assume the responsibility for dealing with threats to the peace, and acts of aggression, in case the Security Council was prevented by the veto from acting. In such a situation, the General Assembly was able to make appropriate recommendations for collective measures, including the use of armed force in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression. See Leland M. Goodrich, The United Nations in a Changing World, Columbia University Press, 1974, pp.71-3.
suggested, would be the formation of a committee to direct the war.\(^{34}\)
The Americans regarded this proposal as completely inappropriate in
the existing circumstances. Such an approach would be too cumbersome
at a time when "decisions with reference to the Korean War had to be
handled with great despatch." Besides they could see little cause for
complaint amongst the allies with the existing command arrangements.
It was argued, for example, that there had been adequate consultation
over questions like the bombing of Manchuria and aerial "hot pursuit".
Moreover, they were quick to point out that it was the UN which had
asked the US to set up a Unified Command to direct the war and not the
reverse. Their attitude was therefore uncompromising. "If others did
not like what was going on", Attlee was told, "they should say so and
they would be given assistance in withdrawing."\(^{35}\)

Truman was equally brisk over assurances regarding the possible
use of the atomic bomb. In a private discussion during the 7 December
session of talks, Attlee raised the issue and was "reminded" by the
President that their two Governments had always been partners in this
matter and that he "would not consider the use of the bomb without
consulting with the United Kingdom." Asked if this assurance would
be put in writing, Truman said no, adding that "if a man's word wasn't
any good it wasn't made any better by writing it down"\(^{36}\)

When the President's senior advisers learned of this verbal
undertaking, however, they were alarmed at the extent of this concession
to the British. Such an assurance was, in fact, contrary to recently

\(^{34}\) Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by Special Assistant to the
Secretary of State (Lucius D. Battle), 6 December 1950, pp.1430-2.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by the Ambassador-at-Large,
(Phillip Jessup), 7 December 1950, p.1462.
established US policy concerning the deployment of that country's atomic weapons. (37) Truman was thus persuaded to modify his "word" to that of a non-committal statement which was later incorporated in the Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the talks. In what was to be the "official United States position" Truman merely stated that he hoped "world conditions would never call for the use of the atomic bomb" and that "it was also his desire to keep the Prime Minister at all times informed of developments which might bring about a change in the situation." (38)

Although fully aware of this change in Truman's initial undertaking regarding the bomb, Attlee nevertheless declared himself quite content with the less definite assurance embodied in the communiqué. Furthermore, he stated that the problem of MacArthur's direction of the war effort had been resolved to his complete satisfaction. (39)

Such professions of satisfaction were less evident after the two leaders discussed what steps should now be taken, short of all-out war, in dealing with China. Attlee initiated discussion on this point.

37. Under the terms of the 1943 Quebec Agreement, the US was required to obtain UK consent before using the atomic bomb. Unhappy with such a restrictive commitment, the US renegotiated this arrangement with the UK at the end of 1947 and as a result the provision concerning UK consent was revoked on 7 January 1948. See Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (R. Gordon Arneson), 16 January 1953, especially footnotes 6 and 7, pp.1462-4.


39. NA 08/11/26 part(i), I.T. No. 219, Berendsen to Doidge 9 December 1950.
He argued that there was little choice in the existing circumstances but to negotiate with Peking with the immediate aim of obtaining a cease-fire and then the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Korea.

His concern to get China to the negotiating table was prompted not only by short term expediency but also longer term pragmatism. In the first place, the UN was now forced to "play from a weak hand"; time was required to enable the UN forces to regroup and for morale to be built-up after the long retreat from the Yalu to ensure that they could hold on in Korea. Secondly, the British saw the need to look beyond the present hostilities to the wider issues of great power alignments and the global balance of power. At the heart of this question was the allied interpretation of China's intervention in Korea. The British considered that the Chinese

were only acting from injured pride (resulting from their exclusion from the United Nations) and fear (resulting from a misunderstanding of the intentions of the United Nations and in particular the United States; this misunderstanding was intensified by their enforced isolation from the outside world).(40)

Unlike many Western governments the British felt that the Chinese were nationalists first and communists second; certainly "they were not fully imbued with Soviet ideas". "They can be Marxists", Attlee declared,

and yet not bow to Stalin. It was true that the Chinese were hard-shelled Marxist-Leninists but it was quite possible that they were not Soviet imperialists. There was a chance of Titoism.(41)

The danger was in not recognising the independence of Chinese political action and treating China as no more than a Soviet


satellite. Such an attitude would only force Peking to look to the USSR as their only friend; "If we say that China is just part of the USSR", the Prime Minister continued, "we link them together and play the game of Russian imperialism."(42)

To achieve both short and longer term objectives therefore, the allies would have to grant some concessions to Peking. Attlee felt that US recognition of the Communist Chinese regime, that regime’s admission to the UN and the settlement of the Formosan question would serve as bargaining points to get Peking to agree to a cease-fire.

The Americans were not so conciliatory. Convinced that the Chinese Communists were "satellites of Russia and will be satellites so long as the present Peiping regime is in power", they were not swayed by Attlee’s argument that China would eventually act independently of Moscow and serve as a buffer to Soviet expansionism in the Far East.(43) With regard to Korea, they were willing to accept a cease-fire but would not pay any price for it. The problem as they saw it was similar to that encountered in the earlier discussion on whether the UN should voluntarily abandon Korea. The American people, Attlee was told, would not understand if such concessions were granted to China. Not only would this be seen as an admission of defeat, but also an admission that aggression paid positive dividends. Recognition of the Peking government and the admission of that regime to the UN would not therefore be countenanced by the US.(44)

42. Ibid.

43. Foreign Relations - KOREA, US Delegation Minutes, 1st Meeting, 4 December 1950, p.1365

Nor would they agree to the surrender of Formosa as the price for a negotiated settlement in Korea. Although this island was not considered to be of great strategic significance to the US, it would become so if the Chinese Communists were to gain control there. "It might be all right if it were neutral with Okinawa and the Philippines on each side", Secretary of Defense Marshall explained, but it would be intolerable to have it in enemy hands. If we came out of negotiations with Formosa in hostile hands, we may have irreparably damaged our position in the Far East and in the world at large.(45)

In the face of this American determination to yield nothing to Peking, Attlee suggested that perhaps any negotiations could be limited to the question of keeping the Chinese behind the 38th Parallel. On this proposal he received a favourable response. Although not obvious at the time, this was the most significant policy agreement of the Washington talks as far as the Korean War was concerned. Abandoned was the attempt to promote by force of arms the political objective of the 7 October resolution, the establishing of a unified and independent Korea. In its place would be the original war aim of solely preserving South Korea. North Korea was thus written off.(46)

In accepting this limited objective, however, the Americans were not deferring to any expressed British anxieties, rather they were merely acknowledging realities now confronting the UN Command on the ground in Korea. But even this objective, given the prevailing military situation, seemed somewhat ambitious. Despite General Collins' reassuring report during the final session of talks, there was widespread doubt in the ability of MacArthur's forces to prevent a now

45. Ibid.

rampant China from driving the UN completely out of Korea. Indeed, throughout the remaining days of 1950 and early into the New Year the question of whether the UN forces would have to be evacuated from Korea was continually debated in Washington. (47)

The two leaders concluded their talks on 8 December. Before Attlee left Washington for London he declared his satisfaction with the conversations over the previous five days and that as a result of these "frank discussions" British anxieties regarding Korea had been considerably lessened. (48) Certainly a closer identity of view had been achieved as a result of the exchanges but not for the reasons implied in Attlee's declarations. In reality, the British had been less than successful in modifying US policy in Korea. Those issues on which agreement was voiced, overall allied strategic planning, confining military action to the Korean peninsula, standing and fighting until forced to evacuate, and resubmitting the six-power resolution to the General Assembly, the UK simply moved towards and accepted the US position. On the subject of the atomic bomb and the problems relating to the higher operational direction of the war, the US conceded nothing. But perhaps the most telling sign that there was still a fundamental divergence of view were the discussions over the vexed question of allied policy with regard to China. On this point the two leaders could only agree to differ, as is evident in the wording of the communique issued at the end of the talks. (49) The decision to limit UN action to restoring the *status quo ante* 25 June was the only agreement which was wholly a product of the talks and the significance of this agreement

47. On the question of contingency planning for evacuation of UN forces from Korea see Schnabel, *op cit*, pp.298-314.
48. *Dominion*, 16 December 1950
was not evident until well into 1951 when the UN forces once again stood at the 38th Parallel. It can be said therefore, that Attlee merely heard first hand from Truman and senior US officials American policy on Korea which had been decided in Washington some time before the talks commenced, policy which they were not prepared to change. While this, in itself, was important in that it dispelled much of the confusion existing before the summit, the talks did not constitute a deliberate turning point in the Korean War.

The conspicuous achievement of the conference, therefore, was its calming affect on the emotive and inflamed public and governmental opinion of the allies over what they perceived US action to be in the light of the Chinese successes. Above all, and this was especially important from the antipodean viewpoint, the talks relieved much of the tension in Anglo-American relations. For New Zealand, such an outcome was satisfactory to say the least. Indeed the Truman-Attlee communiqué was "a *via media* which might almost have been tailored by design" to accommodate the privately stated views of the authorities in Wellington on the new military situation in Korea in general and the Washington talks in particular.\(^{50}\) As one observer has noted, "it was not the measure of their [Attlee's and Truman's] agreement on specific issues but the extent to which they had improved the prospects of agreement on all issues, current and future which was welcome."\(^{51}\) In other words, enough had been done in Washington to reconcile those differences, at least in the short term, which had threatened the Anglo-American alliance. The ANZAC dilemma had, for the moment, been avoided. It was, however, only

50. Clemow, *op cit*, p.286

51. Ibid.
a superficial reconciliation. Until the question of allied policy towards China was resolved, New Zealand still faced the prospect of being forced to make a choice between two approaches to finding an acceptable settlement of the Korean conflict.
CHAPTER IX

THE SEARCH FOR POLICY: THE COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND THE CONDEMNATION OF CHINA

The closing days of 1950 and the early part of January 1951 marked the nadir of the military fortunes of the UN Command forces in Korea. Although the initial Chinese onslaught had expended its force and an uneasy lull had descended over the battle front, all knew this would be only temporary. Before the UN forces could take full advantage of this brief respite in the fighting to consolidate their new positions, however, further tragedy befell the UN Command. On 23 December the 8th Army's commander, General Walker, was killed in a vehicle accident. The moral collapse of the UN forces was, it seemed, complete.

Walker was succeeded by Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway, a soldier with a fine combat record in World War II and currently serving as Army Deputy Chief of Staff in Washington. It proved to be a singularly suitable appointment. Not only was he thoroughly familiar with the operational problems of the 8th Army owing to his position in Washington, but in the following months he was able to stabilise the front and restore confidence amongst his subordinates and resume offensive operations. But until Ridgway was able to rally his new command, there was a succession of tactical retreats by the UN in response to renewed Communist pressure.

On New Year's Eve Chinese and North Korean forces, in greater strength than their offensive of 28 November, launched a new drive against the UN lines north of Seoul. Against these tremendous odds the 8th Army pulled back and retreated in fairly good order across the Han River abandoning Seoul for the second time on 4 January. These forces now waited anxiously for the attacks with which the Communists hoped to
"drive warmonger MacArthur into the sea". A further disintegration of ROK divisions in the centre of the peninsula exposed the flank of X Corps which, after evacuation from Hungnam, had joined the 8th Army on its eastern flank. By 8 January the situation deteriorated further when Chinese forces drove a deep wedge into the 8th Army's line east of the town of Wonju, forcing the US 2nd Infantry Division out of the town and threatening to isolate the Division and its attached units. Clearly the whole UN effort now turned on whether Ridgway could halt the new Chinese offensive.(1)

There was, of course, considerable doubt as to the outcome of the battles now begun, but this was equalled by uncertainty at the political level over the course the UN should follow in its attempt to find a solution to the present crisis. The problem now confronting the UN Command was thus not entirely military in nature; it was equally one of defining a policy on which all could agree.

At the UN, it soon became apparent that action similar to that taken by the Security Council in June in meeting the initial North Korean attack was unacceptable to most member countries as a way of dealing with the Chinese intervention in Korea. A different approach to the problem was advocated in the General Assembly and leading the call, not unexpectedly, was India. Indeed, even before the Truman-Attlee talks had concluded, much attention had been diverted from that conference to Indian led efforts in the UN to find the basis for a negotiated settlement to the current hostilities. On 5 December the representatives of 13 Arab and Asian countries(2) issued an appeal to the North Korean and Peking governments to declare immediately that their forces would not proceed

1. Rees, Korea - Limited War, pp.178-9; Schnabel, op cit, pp.305-10.
2. Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, The Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen.
south of the 38th Parallel. On this occasion both the US and UK authorities supported this proposal believing such an appeal would add force to their decision to re-introduce the six-power resolution which had earlier been vetoed in the Security Council. (3)

When, however, the same 13 Arab and Asian nations, again led by India, introduced into the Political Committee of the General Assembly a motion calling for the appointment of three persons to investigate the basis for a cease-fire in Korea, the Americans viewed the proposal with some disfavour. They feared that such an approach would be seen as an appeal by the weaker to the stronger side. Instead they preferred to unite their allies in condemnation of Chinese aggression in Korea or failing that, then to at least have the six-power resolution adopted by the General Assembly. The British, on the other hand, were more receptive to the Arab-Asian cease-fire initiative. Still concerned about the possibility of the Korean conflict developing into a wider war, they felt that all possible avenues should be explored in an attempt to achieve a satisfactory negotiated settlement. Moreover, they were conscious of the need to retain Far Eastern and Middle Eastern support for the UN objectives in Korea, support which might not be so forthcoming if their cease-fire efforts were merely disregarded. (4)

Few countries were as conscious of these opposing allied viewpoints than New Zealand. Here was yet another potentially divisive issue which could seriously damage the already fragile relations between the allies. To the Government in Wellington, the comfort it was able to draw from the outcome of the Truman-Attlee conversations, particularly as it affected


4. PM 324/2/3 part (iv), I.T. No. 178, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 11 November 1950.
the Anglo-American alliance, seemed short-lived indeed. Once again it was placed in a difficult position with the likely prospect of having to make a choice between two conflicting policies, one American, the other Arab-Asian but endorsed by the UK.

But the problem was more than just reaching a decision on whether to support the 13-power proposal or not. Any serious attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement depended, of course, on whether the Chinese would be willing to come to the conference table and they had already made it clear that a cease-fire was conditional on resolving the wider issues of Formosa, recognition of the Peking regime and the admission of that regime to the UN. The 13-power motion therefore brought back into sharp focus those issues which had not been resolved during the Truman-Attlee talks.

For Berendsen, however, the choice was a simple one. "I cannot convince myself", he told Doidge, "... that it can be other than wrong, both morally and logically, for the United Nations, whose forces are being killed by the aggressor, to negotiate in any way with the aggressor while the aggression continues." (5) To seek a solution to the present crisis in the manner suggested by the Arab-Asian proposal would, he asserted, not only result in humiliating failure, it would also amount to nothing less than "inexcusable appeasement". He favoured the condemnation of the Chinese "whether or not they cross the 38th Parallel", and considered that the recognition of the communist government and its admission to the UN would be "appeasement of the worst form" if the UN was to grant these concessions under pressure of defeat in Korea. To return Formosa to China would, he protested, be "unthinkable" particularly if it was the "price of Chinese abandonment of aggression in Korea." In the Ambassador's view, the "moral aspect was supreme"; to abandon it would be a clear

5. Ibid.
sign of weakness and such a lack of resolve was "the clearest invitation to further aggression and ultimately to World War III." He was therefore persistent in his view that the Americans, in calling for the condemnation of China, were unquestionably right, and the 13 Arab-Asian nations - and therefore the British - in seeking to placate the authorities in Peking with their cease-fire proposal were unmistakably wrong.(6)

The attitude in Wellington to the whole issue of a negotiated cease-fire was not as clear-cut. As always, the Government sought to identify and promote those policies which would bring about Anglo-American accord. But on the 13-power proposal, as indeed on the wider question of China, the US and the UK stood apart with little apparent sign of any compromise being reached. It was a situation where there seemed little room in which to manoeuvre. If Berendsen's counsel was to be acted upon there would, it was felt in Wellington, be no room to manoeuvre at all. One thing was certain, if the UN was to salvage something from its efforts in Korea it would have to show that it was at least willing to negotiate with China. There was, after all, still the possibility of reaching a cease-fire on the basis of the status quo ante 25 June and, as a senior External Affairs official pointed out, "it seems perhaps silly to throw away so substantial an achievement as the expulsion of the aggressors from South Korea for the sake of a moral reluctance to compromise with an aggressor."(7)

Berendsen was thus informed by Didge that the views he expressed "may be too uncompromising and that a categorical refusal to negotiate would be unwise." Indeed, the Government's response to Berendsen's assessment


7. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Memorandum by R.H. Wade, 'Cease-Fire in Korea', 13 December 1950.
showed that it was more in sympathy with the view held by Britain on the wider issue of how to deal with China. "... Is it realistic", the Ambassador was asked,

to look at the Korean problem in isolation as the Americans desire? Can we avoid giving consideration to the overall problems of China and the overall strategic requirements of the world? The question of Formosa and the recognition of Communist China seem to us part and parcel of any settlement.(8)

Despite this conclusion, the underlying issue of Anglo-American unity prevented the Government from providing Berendsen with clear instructions as to how he should vote when the 13-power proposal came before the General Assembly for decision. If the Americans and British were in agreement there was no problem - Berendsen was to follow their lead. If, however, the two allies failed to agree, the best advice Wellington could give the Ambassador was that "we would have to decide in the light of the circumstances with whom we should vote and we would necessarily be guided by your own advice."(9)

In the event, and obviously much to the Government's relief, an open breach between the allies did not occur. The serious implications for allied unity of pressing for the acceptance of their approach over the Arab-Asian proposal persuaded the authorities in Washington to moderate their stand. While they believed that the adoption of the six-power resolution was the "minimum action that must be taken" and that they "could not permit any unwarranted delays" in bringing it to a vote in the Political Committee, at the same time they "did not want to move so fast that other members would have a basis to believe that any opportunity for UN processes had been precluded." The Americans therefore accepted the General Assembly's decision to defer further discussion of the six-power

8. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), O.T. No. 225, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 13 December 1950.
9. Ibid.
resolution and agreed that the motion for a cease-fire group should be debated as soon as possible, although they doubted that a basis for a cease-fire would be found.(10)

On 14 December, the Political Committee of the General Assembly, after three days of debate, adopted the Arab-Asian proposal by a vote of 52 to 5 with one abstention. Known as the 13-power resolution, it requested the President of the General Assembly, Nasrollah Entezam of Iran, to constitute a group of three including himself "to determine the basis on which a satisfactory cease-fire can be arranged and to make recommendations to the General Assembly as soon as possible." Later that afternoon Entezam announced that he along with the Canadian foreign minister, Lester Pearson, and India's Sir Benegal Rau would form the three member cease-fire group.(11)

Since the British and the Americans were agreed on this resolution, Berendsen, although personally loath to do so, voted in favour of it. He also had mixed feelings regarding the composition of the group. While he regarded Entezam as "a first-rate man", he was not quite so enamoured with Rau, his policy or that of his country towards the Korean problem. Pearson he considered "a very fine person" despite his disappointment over the stand Canada was taking over the cease-fire issue, a stand "which has been widely characterised here as favouring appeasement."(12) Berendsen


11. Higgins, U.N. Peacekeeping, p.167. Not willing to allow the political initiative to pass completely to the 13 Arab-Asian nations, the US Representative at the UN, Ernest Gross, was instructed to make it known to these powers that Washington preferred the cease-fire committee to be made up of Rau and Pearson in addition to Entezam. Foreign Relations - KOREA, Memorandum by Director of Office of UN Political and Security Affairs (Bancroft), 11 December 1950, pp.1517-8.

12. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. 183, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 16 December 1950.
was, however, later told by Pearson that, for his part, "he never had any belief that it would be possible for the group to achieve a cease-fire and that his primary object had been to do everything possible to play for time."(13) As for the prospects of the group achieving their aims, Berendsen rated them very poor from the outset and, as it happened, his scepticism was borne out.

The group first consulted representatives of the Unified Command regarding the acceptable basis for a negotiated settlement. The conditions which the US authorities considered as being "indispensable elements and not a point of departure for bargaining purposes", were:

(a) a complete cessation of hostilities applicable to all Korea. This was to occur before any negotiations were to be entered into and those negotiations were to be confined solely to Korea and not include the wider issues of Formosa, recognition of the Peking Government and that government's admission to the UN;

(b) the establishment of a demilitarised area approximately 20 miles in depth with the southern limit following generally the 38th Parallel;

(c) disposition of armed forces away from the demilitarised area so as to assure respect for the cease-fire;

(d) supervision of the cease-fire by a UN Commission which would have free and unlimited access to all Korea;

(e) cessation of reinforcement and replacement of armed forces in Korea;

(f) exchange of prisoners of war on a one-for-one basis pending final settlement of the Korean question; and

(g) confirmation of the cease-fire arrangements by the General Assembly.(14)

When the group approached the Peking Government it encountered a completely negative attitude. "It had never been, or even appeared to be, possible to get any distance at all with the Chinese Communists",

13. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. 2, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 3 January 1951.

Pearson explained to a group of UN representatives, including Berendesen.

When finally the cease-fire committee was able to obtain a reply to their direct communications to the Chinese Communist Administration which had throughout professed to look upon the group and its proposals as a trap, it was a most uncompromising refusal. (15)

Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai responded on 22 December with a lengthy denunciation of the committee and the terms it put forward as the basis for a cease-fire. His government considered UN resolutions dealing with major problems, especially on Far Eastern matters, as "illegal and null and void" since it had not participated and concurred in their adoption. Consequently the Peking Government would not establish any contact with the "illegal 'three-man committee'". According to Chou, the sponsoring Arab-Asian nations, while undoubtedly motivated by a desire for peace, had "failed to see through the whole intrigue of the United States Government in supporting the proposal for a cease-fire" and therefore "they had not seriously considered the basic proposals of the Chinese Government concerning the peaceful settlement of the Korean problem." Chou, pressing home the advantage of China's present military ascendancy, declared that

as a basis for negotiating a peaceful settlement of the Korean problem all foreign troops must be withdrawn from Korea, and Korea's domestic affairs must be settled by the Korean people themselves. The American aggression must be withdrawn from Taiwan, and the representatives of the Peoples Republic of China must obtain legitimate status in the United Nations. ... To put aside those points would make it impossible to settle peacefully the Korean problem and the important problems of Asia.

Moreover, in a statement indicative of future intentions as well as ironically reminiscent of statements by Berendsen, Dulles, MacArthur and many others - and eventually equally ineffectual - Chou declared that the 38th Parallel had been "obliterated forever as a demarcation line of political geography." (16)

15. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.2, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 5 January 1951.

Thus rebuffed, the group reported to the Political Committee of the General Assembly on 3 January that it could make no useful recommendation as to a possible basis for negotiation for a cease-fire although it would submit to the Committee a full report of its efforts to date.(17)

Meanwhile the Americans, convinced that the Cease-Fire Committee would achieve nothing positive, were confidentially taking soundings amongst their allies regarding a motion which called for sterner measures against the Chinese if they continued their attack against the UN forces. The New Zealand Government was approached on this matter on 12 December when the US Ambassador in Wellington, R.M. Scotten, passed a memorandum to Doidge which set out the existing policies and attitudes of the US Government concerning the present situation in Korea. The operative paragraph of the memorandum called on "the support of the nations which approved the original United Nations action in Korea for a resolution branding the Chinese Communists as aggressors" if they "pressed their attack below the 38th Parallel".(18)

While not unduly alarmed by the general line the US wished to pursue, officials in Wellington were concerned by one aspect of this approach. "The implication of the United States memorandum", it was noted, is that Chinese aggression should be treated on the model of North Korean aggression across the 38th Parallel. In that case a condemnatory resolution would by analogy be followed by military action against the whole territory of the aggressors. This would involve the bombardment of Chinese cities and military installations and would inevitably result in war between the free world and China.(19)

17. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.2, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs 3 January 1951.

18. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Aide Memoire, Scotten to Minister of External Affairs, 12 December 1950.

Such a development would, of course, run contrary to the stated policy of the US to avoid a war of this kind and for this reason the Government was "inclined to feel that the aide memoire was more in the nature of a State Department kite than a firm line of action."(20) Thus while the Government's reply to the Ambassador was prompt, it was non-committal. "Before stating their considered views", Scotten was told, "the New Zealand Government would wish to consult the United Kingdom and other members of the Commonwealth." All that they could provide were "provisional and preliminary observations" which emphasised the risk of an expanded conflict should such a resolution be adopted at the present time.(21)

The Americans did not press the matter further deciding instead to wait for a more opportune time to canvass for support. This was presented at the beginning of January 1951. By then the Entezam group admitted that it had failed in its attempt to bring about a cease-fire, and the Chinese had recommended with increased ferocity their assault against the UN positions. In the circumstances the US strongly believed that

the United Nations should face the facts of the situation squarely by promptly taking steps along the [following] lines: (1) brand the Chinese Communists as aggressors; (2) call on governments to apply collective measure with the aim of halting further Chinese aggression; and (3) keep the Entezam group or some other agency available to effect mediation.(22)

Once again, however, the majority of the UN did not favour such a condemning injunction at this time. Indeed, this proposal, if anything, persuaded the UN to try one last time to effect a resolution of the crisis by conciliation. When the cease-fire group presented its report to the Political Committee, therefore, they were asked whether any principles

20. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Q.T. No. 296, McIntosh to NZ High Commissioner to Australia (Gabites), 23 December 1950.
21. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Memorandum, Holland to Scotten, 13 December 1950.
22. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Memoranda, Scotten to Minister of External Affairs 4 and 5 January 1951.
for a settlement had been discussed and, if so, whether they could report on them. The group had, in fact, agreed on five principles for a peaceful settlement in Korea: a cease-fire; a political conference to restore peace; withdrawal by stages of all foreign forces; establishment of an administration for the whole of Korea; and a general conference of China, the Soviet Union, the UK and the US on the Far East, including discussion of the future of Formosa and China's representation in the UN. When these principles were submitted to the Political Committee it was decided to adjourn that body for 48 hours to study the group's report and prepare a statement on its findings. (23)

Against this complex background of events yet another attempt would be made to resolve the conflicting policies and attitudes not only of the leading protagonists in Korea but also those of the principle allies which had supported the UN in its determination to restore "peace and security" on the peninsula.

On 4 January 1951, the leaders of the nine British Commonwealth nations gathered in London to attend the fourth postwar Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference. The meeting, which has been described as marking "the climax of tension in inter-allied relations during the Korean War", had been called at Attlee's suggestion in October 1950, following his concern at the direction in which international affairs were then moving. (24) When the conference got under way, however, it was expected that the greater part of the discussions would be devoted to the Korean crisis.

New Zealand was represented at the conference by Holland who,

23. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. 2, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 3 January 1951; O'Neil, Australia in the Korean War, pp.171-2.
accompanied by McIntosh, had departed for London on 28 December. For Holland, the Korean crisis was the central issue that had to be considered by the Prime Ministers. His brief was therefore quite specific: the disturbing divergence of policy between the Commonwealth and the US on how best to deal with China had to be resolved, as did the differences in outlook among the Commonwealth states themselves on this issue.

The first meeting on 4 January was devoted mainly to a general discussion of the international situation with all the representatives taking the opportunity to speak. Attlee, and Nehru even more, were critical of US actions and of the possible consequences of its policy in the Far East. Holland was clearly disturbed by this trend. "The tendency on the part of the UK", he told Doidge,

to criticise and oppose the United States especially publicly was, in the situation we are all now facing, unwise and for the Conference to adopt a similar line would be equally so and untimely.

In his address he therefore concentrated on the need for maintaining US-Commonwealth unity. "The need today", he emphasised, "was faith in ourselves and our friends and unity amongst those who think alike; ... Russia would pick us off one by one if we allowed ourselves to be divided". What was required was the creation of "an atmosphere of goodwill" between the allies which would be conducive to cooperation rather than the negative and destructive criticism which was presently in evidence. To achieve this end, Holland suggested that "a mission might be sent to the United States as a gesture of goodwill and appreciation of the courageous American effort on the joint behalf." He declared that he would be happy to serve on such a mission.(25)

The following day discussion centred on a plan which British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin had put forward to the Conference as a possible basis for negotiation with the Chinese. Bevin's intention was to get general

25. PM 153/31/4 part(i), I.T. No.PM.4, Holland to Doidge, 5 January 1951.
approval from the Commonwealth heads and then consult the US but "without suggesting to the Americans that the proposal represented the considered views and policies of other Commonwealth Governments."

The proposal called for a cease-fire agreement and invitation to China to be a member of the existing UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK), or to set up a new Commission with Chinese representation. This Commission would supervise a no-man's land - 'a safety belt' - which would ultimately cover all Korea once all non-Korean forces were withdrawn. It would be responsible for the maintenance of law and order and would supervise elections to establish a unified Korean Government. The plan also made provision for Chinese Communist representation in the UN as well as acceptance in principle of the Cairo Declaration on Formosa and the establishment of a UN Commission to study the problem.

In order that sufficient time be given to consider these proposals the Commonwealth leaders agreed to try and obtain a deferral of any further action on the part of the General Assembly's Political Committee "for at least a week". Commonwealth representatives at the UN acting on these instructions successfully gained the required adjournment.

Holland viewed these proposals less sympathetically than most other Prime Ministers. He felt that they might buy temporary peace but doubted whether they would permanently placate the Chinese. "Above all and apart from the question of the morality of the proposals", he explained

26. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.PM.5, Holland to Doidge, 5 January 1951.
27. PM 153/31/6 part(i), P.M.M.(51)7, 'Policy in Regard to Korea and the Far East', 5 January 1951.
28. PM 153/31/6 part(i), P.M.M.(51), 4th Meeting, 5 January 1951; PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.P.3, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 8 January 1951.
to his Government colleagues in Wellington, "I fear that this time they might cause in the United States a revulsion of feeling with long term effects on the security of us all." (29)

Doidge informed Holland that he also had little sympathy with the UK proposals which he asserted "place the United Nations and the Chinese Communists on a basis of moral equality which we would have the greatest difficulty in entertaining and which in any case, would seriously affront the United States." He considered that the Formosan question should not be linked to proposals for a settlement in Korea and that nothing should be done to prejudice the willingness of the US to maintain support for the free world. (30)

Both Holland's and Doidge's rebuke of Bevin's plan were, however, mild by comparison with the vitriolic attack Berendsen launched against its purpose. Expressing his views to both his Minister and Prime Minister he stated, in language similar to that used by MacArthur against another British proposal in early November 1950, (31) that

As I see it (and as I would expect the Americans to see it) this is not appeasement. It is much worse than appeasement, it is a very solid surrender to the aggressor and it proposes a very substantial reward for aggression and a constant bait for future blackmail. It will be the greatest possible encouragement to communism and a very severe blow to the United Nations and the cause of collective security. If I have to (though I would prefer not to) I would be prepared to accept another attempt by the cease-fire group on the lines of the principles which they are contemplating. ... But I could not in any circumstances prevail upon myself either as a matter of logic or a matter of ethics to accept the proposal now advanced which seems to me to completely overpass our few dismal errors of the past (amongst so much that was inspiring) such as those relating to Abyssinia, the Burma Road, and Munich. (32)

29. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.PM.5, Holland to Doidge, 5 January 1951.
30. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), O.T. No.PM.2, Doidge to Holland, 7 January 1951.
31. See above pp.152-3.
32. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. 3, Berendsen to Holland; Repeated as I.T. No. 9 to Doidge, 6 January 1951.
When the Conference reconvened after the weekend break on 8 January, the UK Chiefs of Staff submitted an appreciation of the military situation with regard to Korea which concluded that UN forces would not now hold any line there. For this reason, it was felt that Bevin's proposals had been overtaken by events and were now outdated. They were therefore not discussed any further much to Holland's relief.

Discussion then turned to consideration of what alternative courses of action were open. Once again the proposed American condemnatory resolution came under scrutiny. No objection was raised to an argument advanced by the UK, India, and Australia delegations that to declare China an aggressor and to contemplate a limited war against China would be in the highest degree unwise because it might precipitate or inevitably involve a major war. Attlee made the point that although the future of the UN might depend on passing a resolution of the kind proposed by the US, "nevertheless to pass a resolution that could not be implemented would be to put the United Nations even more deeply in the mire." It was agreed that the meeting should, as its first step, "seek to evolve some way of holding the United States back from taking any precipitate action." Consideration was then given to the cease-fire committee's 'principles', particularly the last, which asked the US, China, Russia and the UK to meet and discuss outstanding Far Eastern questions. Holland was doubtful that a cease-fire based on this proposal would gain general acceptance. "It does not seem to me", he stated in his daily despatch to Wellington,

that a resolution limited to this will be sufficient to satisfy the Americans especially since the cease-fire committee seem to contemplate a discussion only of Formosa and admission to the United Nations.

The meeting then adjourned without any conclusive policy being adopted. It was hoped that some new line of approach to the Americans might reveal
If the Commonwealth leaders were expecting some suggestions from the US or perhaps the cease-fire group at this juncture, they would have been disappointed for none were forthcoming. Instead Bevin offered a further plan in the form of a three point resolution which would refer to previous UN resolutions on Korea, disapprove of China's action and recommend a four power group (the US, UK, Soviet Union and France) meet in conference with the Peking Government to discuss all outstanding questions relating to the Far East. This approach was transmitted to the British representative at the UN, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, for him to submit to the US authorities. The Americans, however, would not accept this proposal because of its failure to include any reference to a cease-fire, which was, in their view, the one condition that had to precede any further negotiation.

At this point, the political initiative passed from the Commonwealth leaders back to the cease-fire committee which meanwhile had formulated revised principles for a settlement. All that the Prime Ministers could now do were to make suggestions as to the framing of the committee's set of principles. In their final form these read as follows:

(1) In order to prevent needless destruction of life and property, and while other steps are being taken to restore peace, a cease-fire should be immediately arranged. Such an arrangement should contain adequate safeguards for ensuring that it will not be used as a screen for mounting a new offensive.

(2) If and when a cease-fire occurs in Korea, either as a result of a formal arrangement or, indeed, as a result of a lull in hostilities pending some such arrangement, advantage should be taken of it to pursue consideration of further steps to be taken for the restoration of peace.

33. PM 153/31/6 part(i), P.M.M.(51), 4th Meeting, 8 January 1951.
34. PM 153/31/6 part(i), P.M.M.(51), 7th Meeting, 9 January 1951.
35. PM 153/31/6 part(i), P.M.M.(51), 10th Meeting, 11 January 1951.
(3) To permit the carrying out of the General Assembly resolution that Korea should be a unified, independent, democratic, sovereign state with a constitution and a government based on free popular elections, all non-Korean armed forces will be withdrawn, by appropriate stages, from Korea, and appropriate arrangements, in accordance with United Nations principles, will be made for the Korean people to express their own free will in respect of their future government.

(4) Pending the completion of the steps referred to in the preceding paragraph, appropriate interim arrangements, in accordance with United Nations principles, will be made for the administration of Korea and the maintenance of peace and security there.

(5) As soon as agreement has been reached on a cease-fire, the General Assembly shall set up an appropriate body which shall include representatives of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the People's Republic of China with a view to the achievement of a settlement, in conformity with existing international obligations and the provisions of the United Nations Charter, of Far Eastern problems, including, among others, those of Formosa and of representation of China in the United Nations. (36)

The success of this approach of course depended initially on its acceptance by the United States and, to the surprise of Holland but more so of Berendsen, they agreed to it. Acheson, later explaining the reason for the American acquiescence, wrote:

The choice whether to support or oppose this plan was a murderous one, threatening on the one side, the loss of the Koreans and the fury of Congress and press and, on the other, the loss of our majority and support in the United Nations. We chose after painful deliberation in the Department - and after I recommended to the President what may well have been, even without hindsight, the wrong alternative - to support the resolution. We did so in the fervent hope and belief that the Chinese would reject it (as they did) and that our allies would return (as they did) to comparative sanity and follow us in censuring the Chinese as aggressors. The President - bless him - supported me even in this anguishing decision. At once the political roof fell in, and the Senate ... attacked us with great violence. (37)

While Holland considered the cease-fire groups 'principles' had moved almost too far "towards meeting Indian arguments (and hence Chinese)", he agreed that New Zealand too should vote in favour of this approach and

37. Acheson, Present at the Creation, p.513.
Berendsen was so instructed. (38) On 13 January, the cease-fire group's proposals were accepted by the Political Committee of the General Assembly after a long debate by a vote of 50 to 7 with one abstention and were subsequently transmitted to Peking. (39) The Chinese Government rejected the proposals on 17 January on the grounds that a cease-fire before negotiations would simply give American forces a breathing space in which they could prepare further aggression. (40)

By now the Commonwealth Prime Ministers as a group were no longer part of the drama. On 12 January the Conference was formally concluded, although some Prime Ministers, including Holland, stayed on in London for further talks. A formal communiqué was issued next day in which the Prime Ministers welcomed any "frank exchange of views with Stalin or Mao Tse-tung" and declared:

it has been our privilege to be able to work closely with the United States of America whose efforts in the direction of assisting many war stricken nations are warmly regarded and whose practical support of the United Nations has contributed much to the strength of that organisation. (41)

Meanwhile, prompted by the Chinese rejection of the cease-fire resolution, the US intensified its pressure for immediate steps to be taken in the UN to censure China. On 18 January US Ambassador Scotten called on Doidge and presented him with a memorandum containing "the Points for Resolution re Korea". The Government had already received this document from Berendsen who had earlier been given a copy by the US.

38. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. PM.5, Holland to Berendsen; Repeated as I.T. No.12, Holland to Doidge, 11 January 1951.
39. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. P.6, NZPDUN to Minister of External Affairs, 13 January 1951.
40. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.11, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 January 1951.
41. O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.178.
Mission at the UN. In essence, it called for the UN to find China guilty of aggression and to consider urgently what additional measures should be employed against the aggressor. In the ensuing discussion, Scotten was told that no firm response could be given by the Government to these points until the Prime Minister, who was still in London, had had the opportunity to examine them, but reference was made to the views expressed by Holland during the course of the London Conference which were consistently sympathetic to the American position. (42)

Berendsen had no reservations regarding the correctness of this resolution and told officials in Wellington that he would "be glad to see us co-sponsor such a resolution." (43) Holland's view, however, was more circumspect. Although he had not seen a copy of the American document when he responded to Wellington's call for guidance on the matter, he nevertheless provided his Government colleagues with a clear indication of where his sympathies lay. "My immediate reaction briefly is this," he wrote,

We induced the Americans to hold their hand while the United Nations tried to persuade the Chinese to accept a cease-fire and negotiate. This has failed and I do not see how we can ask the Americans to agree to yet another attempt at negotiation. ... I know that the United Kingdom and probably other members of the British Commonwealth will be very much averse to supporting the United States in a resolution branding China as an aggressor. Nevertheless my own feeling is that we must now give the Americans the support they are seeking for the reason that their friendship and assistance as Berendsen says are so essential to all of us. Holland reached this conclusion "somewhat reluctantly" and not without some trepidation. "I cannot estimate what will be the course of events which this resolution will set in train, [but]" he continued, "I think we have to face up to the fact that this action may very well precipitate a major war." As for the call for further collective measures, including

42. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), Memorandum by Shanahan, 'Korea', 18 January 1951.
43. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No. 11, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 17 January 1951.
sanctions, he not only doubted the value of such action but also feared such moves would greatly increase the risk of an expanded war. For these reasons, he could not endorse Berendsen's suggestion that New Zealand should co-sponsor the resolution, rather "we should content ourselves with voting for it." Finally, he recommended that his views be considered in Cabinet and a decision be made to enable Berendsen to vote in the General Assembly, when the resolution came up for decision.(44)

On 19 January, an urgent meeting of Cabinet was called to consider the American resolution. Doidge presented his colleagues with a copy of the cable containing Holland's views which were "unhesitatingly shared by Cabinet".(45) In the discussion which followed it was decided that Berendsen should be instructed to vote in favour of the resolution and this advice was transmitted to the New Zealand Permanent Delegation at the UN. But it was not an easy decision for the Government to reach and this was reflected in the wording of the despatch. "The finding that the Chinese Peoples Republic is guilty of aggression", Doidge pointed out,

seems to us to be a correct statement since their forces have without United Nations sanction invaded territory which is not theirs and are operating against United Nations forces, including our own, engaged in the performance of lawful duties. We realise that to support a declaration of aggression may divide us from some of the other members of the Commonwealth, and while it would be our hope that this could be avoided, we feel that in the situation now before us we cannot honestly give another answer.(46)

The same reasoning was not, however, applied by the UK and their refusal to condemn China made all the more acute the Government's expressed

44. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), I.T. No.PM.25, Holland to Doidge, 18 January 1951.
45. PM 324/2/3 part(v), Letter, Doidge to Holland, 25 January 1951
46. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), O.T. No. 12, Minister of External Affairs to NZPDUN, 19 January 1951
concern. Indeed, Britain, along with India, made a further attempt to revive the dialogue with China. In the event, this was unsuccessful and Britain subsequently agreed to accept in principle the American proposal proposal.(47)

The draft resolution was introduced to the Political Committee on 20 January. Once the fundamental demand for the condemnation of China had been accepted by most of the allies, the debate settled on the appropriate steps to be taken following its adoption. While the Government was willing to have China branded as an aggressor, it was less inclined to support any move to introduce sanctions against China. In particular, it did not favour an initial US suggestion that each member country should decide for itself the measures it would take against China. By the time the resolution was submitted to the General Assembly, however, the clause relating to sanctions was substantially modified. The responsibility for imposing further collective measures would now rest with the General Assembly where a two-thirds majority vote would be required before any further action could be taken. But even then Cabinet was still uneasy with the tenor of the clause and Berendsen was at once instructed to abstain from voting on this aspect of the proposal.(48)

Britain shared this unease and went about trying to persuade the US to accept two amendments which would moderate the call for the imposition of sanctions. When the Americans agreed to these revisions, the British authorities indicated their willingness to support the resolution in its entirety.(49)

47. O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.182.
48. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), O.T. No.12, Minister of External Affairs to NZPDUN, 19 January 1951.
49. PM 324/2/3 part(v), Letter, F.88, UK High Commissioner, Wellington, to Doidge, 26 January 1951.
These developments understandably altered New Zealand's stand on the question of sanctions. No longer in danger of departing from old Commonwealth allegiances or compromising its newly formed relationship with the US, the Government instructed Berendsen to give his complete support to the resolution. (50)

The US resolution was put to the vote in the Political Committee on 30 January but not before a final effort by the Arab-Asian group (less the Philippines) to introduce a motion urging further attempts to negotiate with China was rejected by the Assembly. It was adopted the next day by a vote of 44 to seven with eight abstentions. The final text approved by the General Assembly was:

The General Assembly,

Noting that the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, has failed to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in regard to Chinese Communist intervention in Korea,

Noting that the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China has not accepted United Nations proposals to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Korea with a view to peaceful settlement, and that its armed forces continue their invasion of Korea and their large-scale attacks upon United Nations forces there,

1. Finds that the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, by giving direct aid and assistance to those who were already committing aggression in Korea and by engaging in hostilities against United Nations forces there, has itself engaged in aggression in Korea;

2. Calls upon the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China to cause its forces and nationals in Korea to cease hostilities against the United Nations forces and to withdraw from Korea;

3. Affirms the determination of the United Nations to continue its action in Korea to meet the aggression;

4. Calls upon all States and authorities to continue to lend every assistance to the United Nations action in Korea;

5. Calls upon all States and authorities to refrain from giving any assistance to the aggressors in Korea;

50. PM 324/2/3 part(v), O.T. No.27, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 27 January 1951.
6. Requests a Committee composed of members of the Collective Measures Committee as a matter of urgency to consider additional measures to be employed to meet this aggression and to report thereon to the General Assembly, it being understood that the Committee is authorised to defer its report if the Good Offices Committee referred to in the following paragraph reports satisfactory progress in its efforts;

7. Affirms that it continues to be the policy of the United Nations to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Korea and the achievement of United Nations objectives in Korea by peaceful means, and requests the President of the General Assembly to designate forthwith two persons who would meet with him at any suitable opportunity to use their good offices to this end.

General Assembly President Entezam established a Good Offices Committee to attempt to negotiate with China, but, after three months of endeavour the Committee failed to evoke any positive response from Peking. The way then stood open for consideration of further measures against China by the United Nations.

The successful passage of the resolution condemning Chinese aggression brought to a close two months of frenetic diplomatic activity not only amongst those countries contributing to the UN action in Korea but also the broader membership of the UN.

For New Zealand it was a period at once both notable for the Government's initial indecision and later its resolve to take a decisive stand regarding the policy it would support. In essence, New Zealand was confronted with what was now becoming a familiar dilemma - should it follow a policy line formulated within the traditional and familiar Commonwealth framework or should it support that approach expounded by its newer ally the US and in so doing run the risk of endangering Commonwealth unity?

51. The Collective Measures Committee was established under the so-called 'Uniting for Peace Resolution' of 3 November 1950. This 14-member body was responsible for reporting on methods that might be collectively used for maintaining peace. See above p.175 footnote 33.

Until the end of 1950, the Government elected to follow the path of conciliation advocated by the majority of the Commonwealth. In the circumstances prevailing, the US attitude was, in fact, considered too inflexible. However, with the coming of the New Year, which saw the renewal of offensive operations by China, their persistent refusal to accept a cease-fire, but especially the meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, the Government moved decidedly in support of the United States policy. The shift was in part due to Chinese intransigence but it also came from Holland’s annoyance with the attitudes expressed by the majority of the Commonwealth Leaders, excepting Menzies(53) but including Attlee, which he considered unduly influenced by the Indian and, therefore Chinese view. But it was the consideration of New Zealand’s longer term relationship with the US which ultimately persuaded the Government to accept the US position. After all, with discussions about to begin in Canberra between New Zealand, Australia and the US which were crucial to New Zealand’s future security, it was necessary, as Holland and before him, Berendsen had said, to foster American friendship and assistance which in the end "were essential to all of us."

53. For an examination of Australian policy during this period see, O’Neill, Australia in the Korean War, pp.170-84.
CHAPTER X

OLD ISSUES, NEW COMMITMENTS

When the Government transmitted instructions to Berendsen as to how he should vote on the American condemnatory resolution, these remarks were prefaced with a qualification which read,

A matter of first importance to our mind is that there is a determination on the part of the United Nations to hold a line in Korea. All other action of the United Nations is in relation to that objective. (1)

On the basis of information then available regarding the military situation it was not unreasonable for the Government to ponder whether the UN would in fact be capable of maintaining a foothold on the peninsula.

But New Zealand was not alone in its uncertainty over the events occurring on the ground in Korea. In Washington both government and military authorities realised that the broader political issues to which so much consideration had been given in the UN and in allied capitals during December and January were relevant only if the UN Command could stem the Chinese offensive. Recognising that the rapid pace of the campaign during November and December had long outstripped the currency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directives which had governed MacArthur's advance northward, these authorities issued the UN Commander, on 29 December, with a new directive. He was informed that he could expect no immediate reinforcements, and that he must fight a series of defensive battles along the Korean peninsula if Chinese pressure proved too great to contain. If his forces could hold a line in Korea, the Joint Chiefs pointed out, Chinese military and political prestige would be deflated. (2) MacArthur responded by accusing the administration of losing the will to win. He called for a blockade of the Chinese coast, destruction by aerial and naval

1. PM 324/2/3 part(iv), O.T. No. 12, Minister of External Affairs to NZPDUN, 19 January 1951.
bombardment of China's industrial capacity to wage war and use of troops from Nationalist China, both to reinforce the front in Korea and to raid the Chinese mainland.(3) When the Joint Chiefs rejected these proposals, MacArthur replied that his only option was to fight on to destruction in Korea, thereby hoping to pass all responsibility of the disaster to the President.(4)

MacArthur's pessimism was not shared by his new field commander, General Ridgway. While the position of the UN forces in Korea could not be described as secure, at the same time it was not as precarious as MacArthur would have had the authorities in Washington believe. Already by mid-January Ridgway's command was having a significant impact on the morale and operational effectiveness of the 8th Army. Under threat from a serious breakthrough by Chinese forces at the town of Wonju during the first week of January, Ridgway quickly regrouped his forces and launched the first of a series of successful counter-attacks against the enemy. His overall strategy was different from that pursued during the earlier offensive operations below and above the 38th Parallel. Unlike his commanding General in Tokyo, Ridgway recognised that there was no likelihood of driving the enemy back the length of North Korea and winning a complete military victory over the Chinese under the conditions of limited warfare established in policy agreements reached during the Anglo-American talks in Washington and later by the UN. He was determined therefore to match the enemy's manpower with his own superior firepower and mobility and thus inflict such damage on the enemy as to force him to agree to a peace settlement. The gaining of ground was therefore incidental to the depletion of enemy manpower.

3. Foreign Relations - KOREA, CS2391, MacArthur to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 30 December 1950, pp.1630-5.
The first concerted application of this strategy came on 25 January when the UN forces went on the offensive across the entire battlefront. Successful coordination between ground and air forces produced heavy enemy casualties and drove the Communist forces back. After a brief but ineffective counter-attack by the Chinese in early February, the Communist offensive was completely halted and on 16 February, the enemy began a general retreat.(5)

With the stabilising of the Korean situation both at the military and political levels during January and February, the authorities in New Zealand turned their attention to the up-coming tripartite discussions between New Zealand, Australia and the US concerning negotiations for the peace settlement with Japan. It was an old issue but one which embraced the broader and vital question of New Zealand's present and future defence policy and security requirements. Moreover, it was an issue which was to impose on New Zealand new obligations and new commitments in the shape of a formal security alliance with Australia and the US, the ANZUS Alliance.

The conclusion of the Japanese Peace Treaty and what was essentially one of its adjuncts, the ANZUS security arrangement, were not legacies of the Korean War. The need for a peace treaty with Japan had been established at the end of the earlier Pacific war and would have been settled irrespective of the fighting in Korea. Nevertheless the advent of the Korean conflict significantly influenced the form that settlement would take and the speed with which it was finally brought to a conclusion.

The central issues relating to the peace treaty that remained to be settled had been canvassed within US government agencies long before the outbreak of war in Korea. Of these, one stood out and influenced all other

considerations: what kind of treaty would be imposed, harsh or conciliatory? The Americans were not in favour of a punitive treaty fearing that it would alienate the Japanese or even push them into the communist camp. But there were few of Japan's former wartime enemies, including New Zealand and Australia, who would readily accept a 'soft' treaty with Japan, which would, as the US preferred, allow for partial Japanese rearmament without some form of guarantee that would prevent any possible resurgence of Japanese militarism. Acheson has written that in preparing the treaty a number of groups "had therefore to be reckoned with"; the Communists (the Soviet Union and China), America's allies and the former enemy. "Of these", he writes, "the Communists gave the least trouble. Their opposition to any tenable ideas was predictable and irreconcilable. It could only be ignored."(6) Such an attitude could not, however, be adopted against the allies or Japan itself. A special effort would have to be made to reconcile the interests and desires of these remaining groups while not prejudicing at the same time the practicability of a non-punitive comprehensive peace settlement.

The overall responsibility for achieving such a result was given to one person. On 18 May 1950, as part of the Truman Administration's efforts to bring about a bi-partisan involvement in US foreign policy matters, the President appointed John Foster Dulles, a member of the Republican Party, to prepare and negotiate the peace settlement with Japan.(7) Dulles had barely commenced his new duties when the war in Korea occurred. But rather than complicate matters, this event assisted Dulles' endeavours to conclude the settlement.

The impact of a war "at Japan's doorstep" produced a new urgency not only for reaching a settlement but also in the form that settlement should take. For the US, it underlined the need to allow Japan to rearm. In addition, it was now considered "essential to negotiate some kind of agreement under which United States armed forces would have the right not only to maintain military bases in Japan but to move freely around the Japanese islands." Before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, Japan was not well disposed towards either of these propositions. Dulles found Japanese leaders anxious to obtain a neutral status for Japan in any treaty and there was little sentiment in favour of Japanese rearmament. A definite change of mood followed the North Korean attack, however. The possibility of a similar attack on "an unarmed and neutral Japan forced the Japanese to consider the impracticability of their earlier stand and emphasised the need for some guarantee of the security of Japan."(8)

The events in Korea even had an effect on Australasian thinking. While still unwilling to allow a lenient treaty for Japan without some guarantee for their own future security, the governments in Wellington and Canberra could as a result of the "communist aggression", at least understand the dangers which would confront a Japan made weak by a harsh peace settlement.(9)

Above all, the Korean conflict urged the authorities in Washington to take decisive action on this issue. On 8 September 1950, President Truman took the initiative and authorised the formal process of negotiating the final peace settlement without Soviet participation.(10) The arrival of Dulles

9. Ibid.
10. Acheson, op cit, p.434.
in Canberra on 14 February 1951 to participate in discussions with the foreign ministers of both Australia and New Zealand was part of that process.

Dulles' mission was quite simple; he had to soften antipodean views on the settlement and persuade them to accept treaty terms preferred by the US. Achieving this objective was not, however, quite so straightforward. Long before Dulles arrived in Canberra, he was well aware of the conditions on which Australia at least, would consent to lenient treaty terms. The Australian Foreign Minister, P.C. Spender, as early as September 1950 had informed the American authorities that it would be politically impossible for the Australian Government to enter into a 'liberal' Japanese peace treaty without firm guarantees against Japanese aggression. He expressed "the intent of his Government to hold out for a Pacific Pact as the price for a liberal treaty with Japan". (11) This position remained unchanged when the talks commenced in Canberra.

New Zealand, on the other hand, was not as determined to tie the US to such a formal undertaking. Although preferring some form of American guarantee against a rearmed Japan, it wanted neither multinational treaty obligations nor any commitment which would restrict its capacity to provide forces for the Middle East. Above all, the Government did not want any linkage with the US which omitted the British Commonwealth and the NATO powers. It preferred instead, a simple presidential declaration of intention to assist in the event of an attack on New Zealand or Australia. (12) Indeed, Doidge thought that, as a result of the Korean crisis, the US was so firmly committed to act as policeman in the Pacific that a pact was scarcely

necessary. Nevertheless, if Australia was to press for a security pact as a *quid pro quo* for its agreement to a non-punitive peace settlement, New Zealand was willing to be part of that compact providing it was limited to "a three cornered arrangement" between New Zealand, Australia and the US.

When the talks, which were conducted over four days, opened on 15 February, discussion focussed initially on the Japanese peace settlement but quickly shifted to the question of a security treaty. For New Zealand, the problem was clear enough. The Government recognised the dangers of alienating Japan by imposing unreasonable conditions on it by way of a harsh peace settlement and agreed that there should be a measure of Japanese rearmament to "protect Japan from the communist threat". At the same time, there had to be adequate safeguards to protect the smaller Pacific nations from any renewed danger of Japanese militarism. At first, Doidge refloated his earlier suggestion of a presidential declaration to underwrite Australasian security, but that was soon abandoned in favour of the Australian call for a formal alliance.

Spender made it clear from the outset that Australia could only agree to a moderate peace settlement if the US offered a specific guarantee


15. Full documentation of these talks can be found in published form in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951,* Vol VI, *ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,* Part I, Department of State publication No. 8889 Washington 1977, pp.156-75. For a full analysis of the discussions see O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War,* pp.187-90.

of Australia's future security in the form of a tripartite treaty. He persisted with this line until he gained Doidge's support and, by the third day of the talks, Dulles's assent. The talks concluded with the initialling of a draft security agreement by the three representatives and this was to form the basis of the treaty signed later than year. With the agreement of all parties to this precondition for Australasian consent to a 'soft' peace settlement the way was now clear, at least as far as Australia and New Zealand were concerned, for the peace treaty to be concluded.(17) On 1 September 1951, at San Francisco, the ANZUS Security Treaty was confirmed by the three participating powers and seven days later, the Japanese Peace Treaty was formally signed.(18)

The conclusion of the ANZUS Alliance owed little to the war in Korea; it was a product of a different issue, the Japanese peace settlement. Consequently its purpose was directed at that issue; it was to act as a bulwark against the possible resurgence of Japanese militarism. Had ANZUS been inspired by the Korean crisis, its purpose would have been quite different. It would have been viewed as a shield against communist expansion. As the strategic circumstances in the Far East changed, this was precisely how the Alliance came to be seen, but such an interpretation evolved long after the fighting had ended in Korea. When the tripartite talks in Canberra were concluded, however, the fighting was far from over. In fact, it was reaching one of the most crucial stages of the entire campaign.

Pressing home the tactical advantages won by their successful counter-attacks during February, the UN forces moved gradually and cautiously north towards the 38th Parallel. The advance was marked by the tremendous casualties suffered by the enemy, losses which were far out of proportion to

17. Ibid.
those inflicted on the UN forces. By 6 March, the UN line ran from the south bank of the Han River immediately below Seoul on the west of the peninsula to a point on the east less than twenty miles south of 38th Parallel. Nine days later, Seoul was retaken for the second, and last, time, an event which did not pass unnoticed in Wellington. "This is the fourth time", a senior External Affairs official wrote, "that Seoul has changed hands since the start of the Korean War and it has now lost much of its significance as a military and political objective."(19) After the recapture of the South Korean capital, enemy resistance in South Korea all but collapsed and there occurred a general retreat across the 38th Parallel into North Korea. By the last week of March, the UN Command was once more confronted by the question of six months before: was the Parallel to be crossed?(20)

On that earlier occasion, the decision had gone in favour of a general advance, a decision made and acted on unilaterally by the Americans but soon after supported by the majority of the UN membership. That advance ended in disaster for the UN Command and almost for the whole UN cause in Korea. In March 1951, when the UN army once again stood poised at this "artificial boundary", that same UN membership were in no mind to make the same mistake again.

Rising concern about a possible recrossing of the Parallel had become evident, however, some time before Ridgway's 8th Army forged its way back to this line. In early February the British, ever conscious of the broader implications of the changing military situation, informed the New Zealand authorities of its desire to have a firm policy adopted which set the limits of future UN military operations in Korea. Over a period of a week, from

19. PM 324/2/9 part(i), Summary of Events - Korean Situation, Note by R.H. Wade, 15 March 1951.
9 to 16 February, the UK High Commissioner in Wellington, C.R. Price, kept
the Government fully informed of the British intention of pressing for the
acceptance of such a policy amongst those allies contributing to the UN effort
in Korea and the British view of how that policy should be shaped.(21)

In the opinion of the UK Government, the UN front should not, even in
the event of a cease-fire, be further north than "a line which would follow
broadly the 38th Parallel, subject to such minor local variations as the
tactical situation might require." This view was advanced because it was
felt that once the enemy had been driven out of South Korea the primary
objective of repelling the aggression, as agreed by Truman and Attlee during
their talks in December, had been accomplished. A deep advance into North
Korea would "seriously prejudice the possibility of negotiations with the
Chinese", since they would accept nothing less than the status quo ante bellum.
Furthermore, such an advance would not, it was asserted, finally destroy the
enemy or end hostilities; if anything it would likely extend the conflict
and thereby involve Western military resources to an increased extent
fighting an indecisive operation in Asia.(22)

The British even preferred that minor tactical crossings of the
Parallel should be avoided if possible, although it was accepted that the UN
field commander should have discretionary power to "press tactical counter-
attacks beyond the 38th Parallel" to insure the safety of his forces. On the
question of a general advance across the Parallel, however, the British
attitude was emphatic. "There should be no question of a military decision to
advance beyond the 38th Parallel", officials in Wellington were told, "until
the political decision to do so had been taken. The latter decision rests with

21. PM 324/2/23 part(i), Letters, F.88, UK High Commissioner, Wellington
(Price) to Dodge, 9 February 1951; F.88, Price to Acting Minister of
External Affairs (T.C. Webb), 12 February 1951; F.88, Price to Webb,
16 February 1951.

22. PM 324/2/23 part(i), Letter, F.88, Price to Webb, 16 February 1951.
with the United Nations and in particular with those members who are contributing forces in Korea". That decision, it was stated in conclusion, "should be taken only after careful consideration and full consultation."(23)

After giving some consideration to the British views, the authorities in Wellington advised High Commissioner Price that they "entirely agreed with the stand his Government was taking."(24) Informing Berendsen of the reasons for their endorsement of the British proposals, the Government explained that insisting that any crossing of the 38th Parallel should await a positive decision either by the General Assembly or by the chief supporting powers of the UN military effort in Korea was, "from the point of view of prudence, the obvious thing to do". Mindful of past experiences they were anxious that operations above the Parallel might provoke an intensified intervention by the Chinese, a response which the UN forces "might not be able to cope with". With regard to claims that the prestige of the UN would be harmed by a decision to halt an allied advance at the Parallel, the Government felt that these were unjustified; "the continued military resistance of the UN forces makes it possible for the UN to feel reasonably satisfied on this score." Finally, serious consideration had to be given to the "additional physical suffering that an extension of the campaign is bound to inflict on the Korean people."(25)

Berendsen, almost predictably, took issue with this approach. Questioning the wisdom of what he saw as the allies "publicly niggling at the Americans in this way", he could not see any purpose in the British proposal. As he understood it, the Americans "had no present intention whatever" of

23. PM 324/2/23 part(i), Letter, F.88, Price to Webb, 12 February 1951.
24. PM 324/2/23 part(i), Letter, Webb to Price, 13 February 1951.
25. PM 324/2/23 part(i), O.T. No. 48, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 15 February 1951.
embarking upon any serious attempt to drive north of the 38th Parallel "and certainly not without prior consultation". Besides such concern was premature. He agreed with MacArthur's comment that crossing the Parallel at the present stage of the campaign, except by scattered patrol action, was "purely academic". (26)

As it happened, the Americans were willing to agree to the thrust of the British recommendations. On 16 February, the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Dean Rusk, met with the Ambassadors of those countries which had forces in Korea to discuss "the views of the Government of the United States relative to the present situation in Korea". Rusk stated that the US authorities had contented themselves with achieving the original and limited Security Council objective of 27 June of repelling the aggression on South Korea, accepting that it was no longer possible to implement that portion of the 7 October resolution which looked to the unification of all Korea. He therefore felt that the most likely development would be a military stalemate which might encourage the gradual emergence of a modus vivendi followed by a cease-fire. At the same time, he believed that the 38th Parallel should not be regarded as any sort of boundary to limited operations. The UN field commander should have full power to make "raids, feints, thrusts and patrols", north of the Parallel, as well as minor or hit and run amphibious attacks and unlimited air activity up to the Yalu. Such discretionary power was essential because,

this sort of aggressive defence, designed to keep the enemy off-balance, was the best possible if not the only way of saving the lives of United Nations troops and effectively achieving our objectives. These objectives were not to possess any particular portion of 'real estate' but to defeat the enemy's armed forces. (27)

26. PM 324/2/23 part(i), I.T. No.54, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 15 February 1951.

27. PM 324/2/3 part(v), I.T. No.55, Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, 16 February 1951.
Having defined the purpose of these tactical incursions, Rusk was at pains to impress on the Ambassadors that they should not be confused with the political question of whether the UN should seek to unify Korea by force and therefore be seen as a prelude to a general advance into the north. Such a decision, he stated, could only be made after full consultation amongst the allies. This statement found general acceptance amongst the allied Ambassadors and it was welcomed by the UK and New Zealand offered to Governments.(28)

While the question of a firm policy regarding the 38th Parallel was deliberated on the political level in Washington and other allied capitals, developments in the military situation were making these deliberations seem all the more relevant. As a result of General Ridgway's successful counter-offensive, the 8th Army had advanced northwards to within a few miles of the 38th Parallel by late March. On 27 March, South Korean troops crossed the Parallel on the east coast. The Chinese continued to fall back on the entire front and intelligence reports indicated that they were attempting to concentrate men and supplies in the central sector bounded by Pyonggang, Chorwon and Kumwha, the so-called 'Iron Triangle', some 20 miles above the Parallel. This concentration clearly pressaged a Chinese counter-offensive and Ridgway was authorised to advance to a line of high ground a few miles north of the Parallel. The advance was made between 5-9 April and Ridgway then began preparations for a pre-emptive blow at the Iron Triangle. The 8th Army seized another more northerly line some 25 miles in length on the central front and close to the Iron Triangle.(29)

Despite these northward advances by the UN forces during March, the question of whether or not the 38th Parallel should be crossed seemed to lose

28. Ibid; PM 324/2/23 part(i), Memorandum, New Zealand Embassy, Washington to McIntosh, Enclosure, 'Korea - 38th Parallel', 26 February 1951.
its urgency, at least in Wellington. In the US, however, these battlefield successes persuaded officials to attempt a political solution to the conflict. With the military initiative in Korea having shifted to the UN Command, policy planners in Washington decided that efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement should be renewed. They hoped that the Chinese would be a little more conciliatory after their severe losses during the preceding two months. The American authorities decided the best way of initiating this process would be an appeal by President Truman directly to the Chinese calling for a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement of outstanding issues. The draft text of the intended presidential declaration was given to Berendsen, as it was to all allied envoys whose countries had forces in Korea, for transmission to Wellington for the Government's consideration and comments.

The New Zealand response was immediate and, understandably, supportive of this approach. "Please inform the State Department", Berendsen was instructed, "that we welcome the proposed statement as offering an opportunity to bring the Korean fighting to a conclusion on a basis that, if not as satisfactory as we had once hoped, would at least cover the more immediate United Nations objectives". (30)

In the event, the proposed presidential announcement was not made. While it was still being prepared, General MacArthur issued a public statement on 24 March that "in the eyes of Washington officials completely vitiated the contemplated political move". (31) The statement, in effect, pre-empted Truman's approach by calling on the Chinese Commander-in-Chief to confer with the General in an attempt to find military means whereby the

30. PM 324/2/3 part(v), O.T. No. 97, Minister of External Affairs to Berendsen, 23 March 1951.

political objectives of the UN could be realized. MacArthur was well aware of Truman's intention to issue his appeal during the next few days and his action was consequently regarded as "insubordination of the grossest sort to his Commander-in-Chief" by officials in Washington. (32)

This was not the first time MacArthur had acted in defiance of his superiors, but it would be his last. Truman could no longer tolerate MacArthur's open criticism of his policy of limiting the war to Korea and on 11 April he relieved the General of his command. He was succeeded by General Ridgway and command of the 8th Army passed to Lieutenant General James Van Fleet.

If the Government had any views on this dramatic event, they were not put on record. Truman's decision was apparently seen as one which was the sole concern of the US authorities and therefore no useful comment could be made by New Zealand which would have any effect in Washington. With the conflict in Korea reaching a crucial phase, however, it would not be difficult to imagine more than a few officials glad to see the General's bellicosity finally curtailed.

Meanwhile, plans were implemented in Korea for the next UN offensive in the area of the Iron Triangle. But this intended drive was forestalled by the massive Chinese Spring offensive which began on 22 April. This was followed on 16 May with a second thrust by the Chinese forces. Both failed to break the UN defence and by the beginning of June, the battle front was stabilised along a line almost identical to that held by the UN Command at the time of the April attack. This line was maintained except for minor adjustments until the fighting ended in July 1953. The question of whether or not there should be a general advance across the 38th Parallel was thus forgotten. If for no other reason, the realities of the military situation rendered further consideration of the matter pointless.

32. Acheson, op cit, p. 519.
While allied governments had been discussing their military and political objectives in Korea, consideration was also given to the need for increasing the strength of the UN Command. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff had told MacArthur in January that he could expect no immediate reinforcements, at the same time they looked at ways in which additional forces could be provided at a later date. As they saw it, part of the solution was to seek additional forces from UN members whom they believed were not contributing all they could. This criticism was not only directed at those UN member countries yet to make a contribution but also at those with forces already in Korea, in particular "the Commonwealth nations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, all of which could", it was felt, "well offered to increase the size of their contingents in Korea". (33)

Berendsen was first approached by the State Department on this matter on 20 February. He was told that the US Government had decided to send reinforcements to Korea and were making formal requests to other countries for increased ground force contributions "both for reasons of military necessity and to maintain the United Nations character of the force". The Americans were quite particular in emphasising that the purpose of reinforcements was not to launch a general offensive but to enable "a stabilisation of the situation in order to provide, in due course, a suitable atmosphere for negotiation." Although the US authorities "fully and gratefully" recognised that New Zealand had already made an excellent contribution, they now sought from this country "a doubling of the present force, namely an additional 1,000 artillerymen." (34)

Berendsen undertook to pass this request on to Wellington but warned that even if the Government was willing to increase the New Zealand force,

33. Schnabel, op cit, pp.356-7

34. PM 324/2/7 part(), I.T. No. 59, Berendsen to Doidge, 20 February 1951.
any reinforcements would have to be "trained from the beginning", a procedure that would take several months.(35)

When government and military officials considered this request, it soon became evident that any increase in New Zealand's contribution could not be made easily or without disruption to regular force and national service training programmes. But despite these practical problems, the Government, for political reasons, was inclined to give favourable consideration to the request. At a meeting of the Defence Council on 23 February, Holland instructed the Chief of the General Staff, General Stewart, to consider the question and report to the Defence Council in a few days time.(36)

Stewart's response was not encouraging. Although the Army could, if pressed, double the existing strength of Kayforce, this would cause considerable difficulties. The Compulsory Military Training programme would have to be curtailed, the consequence of which, he maintained, would seriously prejudice New Zealand's ability to employ forces in the event of a major war. He therefore recommended against expanding Kayforce in the manner suggested by the Americans. An increase in force strength could, however, be made by expanding the existing transport component of Kayforce from a platoon to a divisional company, a move which would increase the size of the New Zealand force by 300 men. Such an increase would be in line with the previous decision by the Council that the ceiling of New Zealand's effort in Korea would be 1500 men.(37) If the Government agreed to this proposal, Stewart said he would consult with the Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth forces in Korea, General Robertson, who was at that time on a brief visit to Australia, to establish whether such a contribution would be acceptable. The Council accepted Stewart's assessment and agreed that he

35. Ibid.
36. NA 08/11/26 part(ii), DC(51)M.1, Record of Meeting of Defence Council, Item 4, 23 February 1951.
37. See above, p.81.
should consult with General Robertson. (38)

Soon after, the Government learned that Australia had similarly been asked by the US to make an increased ground force commitment. Although they had not yet made a decision, the Government was told that "consideration of the proposal was proceeding somewhat unenthusiastically at the departmental level." (39) Australia's reluctance did not, however, alter New Zealand's attitude. On 5 March, General Stewart reported the outcome of his consultations with General Robertson to the Defence Council. He stated that he had asked three specific questions of the Commonwealth Commander; whether an increase of the transport component of Kayforce would be militarily acceptable; whether it met a real requirement; and, whether it was thought that the vehicles required could be obtained from American sources within the theatre. While replying affirmatively to these enquiries, Robertson had pointed out that from a military viewpoint he did not see the necessity for either Australia or New Zealand to increase their contributions to the UN force in Korea. Stewart, however, explained to Robertson that in the New Zealand Government's view, "considerations of policy affecting the issue overrode the military implications and these considerations were so strong as to make it most desirable that New Zealand should comply to the maximum possible extent with the request which had been received from the US authorities". It was therefore recommended by Stewart that the Government advise Washington that New Zealand would "increase its forces in Korea immediately by approximately 50 percent and that this increase would take the form of expanding the Artillery Platoon, RNZASC, to a Divisional Transport Company, RNZASC." (40)

38. NA 08/11/26 part(ii), DC(51)M.2, Record of Meeting of Defence Council, 26 February 1951.
39. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), New Zealand High Commissioner, Canberra to Minister of External Affairs, 2 March 1951.
40. NA 08/11/26 part(ii), DC(51)M.3, Record of Meeting of Defence Council, 5 March 1951.
In the discussion which followed, the Council agreed with Stewart's recommendation and that the US Government be approached accordingly. The Secretary of External Affairs, in consultation with General Stewart, was instructed to "prepare a draft of a broadcast address to be delivered by the Prime Minister calling for the expanded force."(41) But before this decision was conveyed to Washington, the Government thought it appropriate to advise Australia and the UK of their intentions.(42)

The British replied immediately. They asked the Government to postpone advising the US of their final decision on the nature of any additional New Zealand contingent and send instead an interim answer merely stating that New Zealand had decided to increase the size of its ground force in Korea. The reason for this suggestion, the British explained, was that in the light of US calls for further forces and, in particular the decision by Canada, on 20 February, to bring its force in Korea up to brigade strength, the UK authorities had been considering urgently the possibility of some expansion and reorganisation of Commonwealth contingents in Korea, perhaps on the lines of a Commonwealth division.

"The preliminary view in London", the Government was told,

is that a contribution by New Zealand on the lines proposed ... would be most welcome, but the UK authorities are studying the question and would wish to consider it further in the light of the overall requirement for divisional troops which will arise if we all decide to form a division.(43)

The Government found no difficulty in agreeing to this approach.(44)

The Australians, on the other hand, sought a complete deferral of New Zealand's intention to communicate its decision to the US authorities. Responding to the Government's notice of intention on 22 March, the

41. Ibid.
42. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), O.T. No.69, Doidge to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, London; Repeated as O.T. No.25, Doidge to New Zealand High Commissioner, Canberra, 6 March 1951.
43. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), Letter, F.88, UK High Commissioner to Shanahan, 9 March 1951.
44. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), Memorandum, Shanahan to Holland, 9 March 1951.
authorities in Canberra told Wellington that they had not yet reached a
definite decision regarding the American request and were unlikely to do so
until their Cabinet met on 30 March. If it was decided to expand the
Australian force, these officials stated that they would prefer to make an
announcement to this effect simultaneously with New Zealand's and thus make
the response appear as a concerted Australasian effort. The New Zealand
Government agreed to this request and told the Australians that they would
postpone any announcement on the future of Kayforce until it had heard from
Canberra.(45) In the event, Australia decided against sending additional
ground forces to Korea at this time and offered instead, the aircraft
carrier HMAS SYDNEY for use in Korean waters.(46)

On 30 March, Ambassador Scotten was asked to convey to his
Government the New Zealand decision to increase the size of its ground forces
in Korea. The precise nature of this increase was not disclosed as this,
the Ambassador was told, had still to be discussed with other Commonwealth
countries whose forces were serving in Korea.(47)

By now, that discussion centred on the possible formation of a
Commonwealth division. On 6 April the Government received a British
proposal which suggested the linking of all Commonwealth ground forces
in Korea to form a Commonwealth division. The division would comprise
two UK brigades (less one battalion), together with the Canadian brigade,
the Australian and New Zealand contingents and the Indian unit. It was
proposed that the division be commanded by a British officer, who would be
served by an integrated staff. Operational control would be in the hands

45. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), Record of telephone conversation between
    Shanahan and Australian Secretary of External Affairs (Watt).
46. O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, pp.211-3
47. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), Aide Memoire, Doidge to Scotten, 30 March 1951.
of the 8th Army Commander and non-operational control would be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Occupation Force, in the same manner as the 27th Commonwealth Brigade.(48)

With regard to the specific elements in the division that were to be contributed by each member, the UK asked New Zealand to expand its force to include: (i) an HQ Infantry Division Transport Platoon, RNZASC; (ii) one Infantry Division Transport Company, RNZASC; (iii) one Light Aid Detachment, RNZEME. The British stressed the desirability of forming the division as soon as possible after the arrival of the Canadian brigade in May and suggested that its full title should be '1st (Commonwealth) Division, UN forces'.(49)

The Government accepted these proposals, including the type of expanded contribution expected of New Zealand. It was pointed out, however, that the additional personnel would all be volunteers and would thus be required to undergo some training and be formed into units before they were sent to Korea. This additional force would, therefore, not be available for operational employment before September at the earliest.(50)

On 2 May, the Minister of Defence, T.L. Macdonald, announced that the New Zealand forces would be linked with other Commonwealth formations in Korea to form the 1st (Commonwealth) Division, UNF. The division was formally inaugurated at a ceremony on 28 July 1951, near Tokchon, north of Seoul. It comprised the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade, the 29th British Infantry Brigade, and the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade and came under the command of the former head of the UK Service Liaison Staff in Melbourne, Major General A.J.H. Cassels.

48. See above, pp.81-2

49. PM 324/2/7 part(iv), Letter, F.88, UK High Commissioner, Wellington to Holland, 6 April 1951.

50. PM 324/2/7 part(iii), Letter Holland to UK High Commissioner, Wellington, 24 April 1951.
The American call for an increase in New Zealand's ground force commitment in Korea brought into sharp focus once again the difficulties confronting the military authorities in New Zealand in providing forces for an emergency that was short of a major war. The decision to augment Kayforce with a Transport Company rather than increasing the artillery component of the force reflected this problem. It was, after all, far less complicated to prepare an additional support unit rather than a specialist combat force, even though it was additional artillerymen that the Americans had specifically requested. It was thus fortunate for the Government that moves were underway to re-organise the Commonwealth forces in Korea into a divisional formation, for it was as part of that formation that the authorities in New Zealand could claim that the intended contribution was both necessary and welcome.

For New Zealand, however, the formation of the Commonwealth Division was more than just a timely development which the Government could fall back on to justify the composition of the country's ground force contribution to Korea. Apart from the obvious advantages to be derived from having Kayforce operate within a familiar military framework, one which would allow the force to retain its national identity, there was the further benefit of being an integral part of a larger military unit. As a self-supporting formation of divisional size, the combined Commonwealth force assumed more importance in the eyes of the Unified Command than had been the case when the various Commonwealth contingents operated as mere attachments to larger American formations. An opportunity was thus presented to the Commonwealth force commanders to have a greater say in, and influence over, the broad conduct of the war. In particular they were able to play a larger part in the higher operational planning and decision making which hitherto had been carried out by the Unified Command with little or no reference to other national field commanders in Korea. And, as a component
of that Commonwealth force, New Zealand had better prospects of having its views heard on matters which directly affected the well-being of its forces in Korea. Thus as the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War passed, the Government was at least satisfied with the operational arrangements affecting Kayforce, even though there seemed little prospect of the conflict coming to an end and of these forces being able to return to New Zealand in the immediate future.

Despite this gloomy prognosis, attempts were being made at the political level at that very moment to open a dialogue between the principal antagonists in the war. On 23 July, Jacob Malik, the Principal of the Soviet Delegation to the UN, speaking on a weekly UN radio programme in New York, proposed a cease-fire and the opening of negotiations to bring about a peaceful settlement in Korea. After ascertaining in Moscow and at the UN whether the Soviets were acting in good faith and with the acquiescence of the Chinese, the US Government ordered General Ridgway, on 29 June, to communicate with the Communist High Command and to arrange armistice talks.(51)

On 10 July 1951, more than a year after the commencement of hostilities in Korea, truce talks were started at Kaesong, a town one mile south of the 38th Parallel and five miles north of the UN line on the westernmost part of the front. For the next two years, the fate of Korea was debated exhaustively in the truce tent while on the battlefield the conflict developed into a protracted war of attrition until, on 27 July 1953, at Panmunjom, a town a few miles to the east of Kaesong, an armistice was finally signed.

51. For a detailed account of the preliminary steps leading to the opening of the armistice conference and of the negotiations themselves, see Walter G. Hermes, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, a volume in the series United States Army in the Korean War, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1966.
Although the war in Korea had a further two years to run its course, by July 1951 the critical political decisions and military actions had been taken which were to affect the nature of the Korean conflict up until its conclusion. From the military aspect, the first year of hostilities was notable for the manner in which the war was conducted; it was, unlike the latter part of the conflict, a war of rapid movement in which the fortunes of both sides underwent dramatic change. In this very short space of time, a number of distinct combat phases occurred beginning with the near victory of the North Korean armed forces over their southern counterparts, a victory denied the invader by the stubborn rearguard defensive action by the US and ROK forces in the area of the "Pusan Perimeter". Then followed a period which saw the UN forces move onto the offensive, opening with MacArthur's brilliant amphibious assault on Inchon and ending with the near victory of the UN Command over the North Korean forces close to the Yalu. That victory was denied by the large scale intervention of Chinese Communist forces in the conflict, a move which resulted in the UN forces making a hasty retreat back to and, for a short while, beyond the 38th Parallel. By the middle of 1951, however, new battle lines were drawn which were to run roughly along the Parallel and were to remain essentially unaltered for the rest of the war. A full year of bitter fighting had thus served only to bring the opposing forces into balance. Neither side had been able to achieve a final victory.

From the political aspect, the first year of the conflict was significant in that it "shifted world attention from Europe and the Middle East to the Far East and reminded all great powers that the Cold War was global in scope."(1) It also provided, at least for a brief moment, some

1. O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, p.402.
hope that a system of international collective security under the auspices of the United Nations could work, albeit in a limited way and under extraordinary circumstances. But that hope was short-lived as the practical problems of first achieving international participation in, and then conducting military operations with, a multi-national UN force revealed themselves. These difficulties were not made any easier by the intervention of Communist China in the conflict. It was this development which had perhaps the most significant political and, of course, military, impact during the first twelve months of the war. China's battle successes during the winter of 1950-51 raised the prestige of the Communist regime in Peking and won it a front-rank position as a military power. While offset to some extent by a lack of an atomic capability and a dependency on the USSR for industrial and technical support, China's new prominence ensured that the political and strategic balance in Asia would be irrevocably altered.

For New Zealand, the impact of the Korean War was apparent in a number of ways. The most obvious were the difficulties caused by the decision to commit ground forces in the conflict. The necessity to call for volunteers for the formation of a suitable ground force for Korea highlighted the limitations of existing military planning where the structure of New Zealand's armed forces was shaped to meet the requirements of a major war rather than the limited conflict then in progress in Korea. This shortcoming was not unique to New Zealand. The Americans, British, Australians and Canadians all experienced similar difficulties in making an effective response to a limited, lower level emergency such as Korea, when all existing strategic planning was directed at an effective response to a wider, global conflict - the so-called "hot war". Although an examination was undertaken in New Zealand during the early part of the conflict in an attempt to resolve this problem, no effective solution was forthcoming. This was due largely
New Zealand's continued adherence to a defence policy based on the "Middle East" strategy.

The war in Korea did encourage, however, a reappraisal of New Zealand's defence and foreign policy commitments and although it would take until 1955 before there was a distinct shift in her strategic priorities, that shift had its origins in the Korean conflict. The Korean War thus marked something of a turning point in New Zealand's strategic outlook. The events in Korea showed that disruption in the Asian-Pacific region had a far greater affect on New Zealand's security than had earlier been acknowledged. Apparent, therefore, was the slow realisation that New Zealand's destiny and her most important national interests lay in that region and not perhaps on the other side of the world in the Middle East. Doidge made just this point in September 1950 when he stated,

It would be dangerous complacency to imagine that what is happening in Korea cannot be repeated. It can be repeated in Asia, or in any other part of the world. At present Asia is in the position of the greatest danger, and the fate of our neighbours - and they are our neighbours - is a matter of the greatest and gravest concern to this country. (2)

Some things remained unaltered, however. Despite professions of support for, and even brief moments of renewed faith in, the "collective policing action" carried out by the UN in Korea, Government's earlier doubts as to the effectiveness of this organisation in guaranteeing international peace and security soon resurfaced. "The significant fact is not the military defeat of the last few days", wrote J.V. Wilson, a senior External Affairs official, after the intervention of Chinese forces in the conflict,

but the lack, throughout the campaign, of any broad basis of co-operation. The withholding of positive support by the whole of Latin America, the Arab States, India and Pakistan, not to speak of the more tepid European countries, shows that even in a very clear case the United Nations as a whole is not prepared to take risks to defeat aggression.

While this situation was in itself regrettable, there was the possibility, in the Government's view, that the non-co-operation of the majority of the United Nations states could place correspondingly greater burdens on the few co-operating states, including New Zealand. If that were the case, Wilson continued,

we might as well ask ourselves whether United Nations burdens should not be assumed by the majority of members before demands are made on a few. If, again, we are to offer assistance it might be better to do it frankly as a gesture of support to the United States or the United Kingdom, rather than as a United Nations obligation.(3)

By early 1951, the casual observer might easily have concluded that Wilson's comment had been acted upon and New Zealand was preparing itself to meet any similar emergencies in the future as part of a specific regional alliance rather than as part of a broad obligation to give material support to the UN. The conclusion of the ANZUS Alliance, however, owed nothing to such considerations - it was the result of another issue, the peace settlement with Japan. If anything, the experiences for New Zealand operating alongside the Americans in Korea would have raised doubts as to the wisdom of becoming formally aligned to the US. As in the earlier Pacific war, New Zealand encountered once again problems arising from a lack of adequate consultation, particularly over the critical issue of crossing the 38th Parallel and establishing as the new war aim the unification of all Korea, by the Americans. To a large extent this was alleviated by relying on traditional avenues of information, the Commonwealth nations in general and Britain in particular. In this respect, the Korean conflict illustrated that in issues of allied diplomacy, as well as military commitments, New Zealand still looked to and was dependent on a familiar British led Commonwealth for the lead in deciding important defence and foreign policy issues.

3. PM 234/2/3 part(iii), Untitled Memorandum by J.V. Wilson, 8 December 1950.
All these developments were to take place in the first year of the Korean War and they were to determine the nature and course of New Zealand's participation in the remaining two years of the conflict as well as to influence her involvement in the Asian-Pacific region for many years into the future.
APPENDIX I

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER IN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JUNE 29, 1950

The Government are following events in Korea with the utmost attention and they are in constant touch with the British and American Governments.

The New Zealand Government hold the view that the action taken by the Security Council is fully in accord with the United Nations Charter.

The Charter provides that the Security Council shall determine the existence of any breach of the peace or act of aggression, and shall make recommendations or decide what measures shall be taken to deal with it. If measures not involving the use of armed force would be ineffective, then the Security Council may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Despite the fact that the arrangements contemplated in Article 43 of the Charter have not been concluded, because of disagreements between the leading members, and there are no formal agreements with the Security Council under which members would make available to the Council armed forces and other assistance which the Council could call upon and use where necessary, the New Zealand Government hold the view that the Security Council has a clear duty to maintain international peace and security, and they feel that it is incumbent upon members of the United Nations to give their full co-operation in all endeavours to achieve that end.

The New Zealand Government welcome the measures thus promptly taken by the Security Council and fully approve the terms of the Council's resolution of 27 June. They have advised the United Kingdom and the United States Governments of their support for the action taken by those Governments to assist the Republic of Korea to withstand aggression.

The New Zealand Government will do whatever lies within their power to fulfil the obligations they have incurred under the United Nations Charter. They are prepared to make available units of the Royal New Zealand Navy should this form of assistance be required and they are at present in consultation with the United Kingdom Government on this matter.
I wish to inform the House of the Government's decision in regard to the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the provision of increased combat forces for Korea.

The Government has given very full and careful consideration to this matter ever since the receipt of the first resolution of the Security Council and has been in constant consultation with the United Kingdom and other British Commonwealth countries and the United States. As the House is aware, in response to the first appeal, the two frigates H.M.N.Z.S. "Tutira" and "Pukaki" were despatched for service in Korean waters.

In view of the gravity of the situation created by North Korean aggression, and of the further appeal by the United Nations for additional effective forces, particularly ground forces, we have given further consideration to the practicability of making an additional contribution in order to fulfil our obligations to the United Nations.

After discussions in the Defence Committee - with the Service Chiefs present - and in Cabinet, the Government has been in further consultation with the United Kingdom as to the role of the proposed New Zealand unit in relation to other ground forces.

Though the question of the role and type of a New Zealand ground force is still under consideration, I feel that I should, without further delay, announce that the New Zealand Government is immediately offering to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a special combat unit for service with other ground forces. Subject to the outcome of the consultations now proceeding, this will probably take the form of an artillery formation.

Army offices will be open to receive volunteers for this combat unit from 8 a.m. tomorrow.

I am sure that the course I have outlined will commend itself to both sides of the House, and to the country as a whole.
APPENDIX III

DIRECTIVE TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR MORACE ROBERTSON,
COMMANDER IN CHIEF, BRITISH COMMONWEALTH
OCCUPATION FORCE

INTRODUCTION

His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have agreed that in accordance with the principles and procedures established in connection with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, responsibility for non-operational control and the general administration of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand Army and Air Forces, and Canadian Army Force, which have been or may be made available to the United Nations for operations in Korea, should rest with the Australian Defence Machinery, together with the accredited representatives of the Chiefs of Staff of all the participating countries. The accredited representatives of the United Kingdom and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff are located in Australia. The Canadian Military Liaison Officer in Tokyo has been designated as the accredited representative of the Canadian Chiefs of Staff in so far as non-operational control and general administration of the Canadian Army Force are concerned.

2. This directive which defines your responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief British Commonwealth Occupation Force in relation to such forces is issued to you by the Australian Government in accordance with the assignment of responsibility referred to in paragraph 1 above.

3. This directive is additional to and where it conflicts with it supersedes your existing directive as Commander-in-Chief British Commonwealth Occupation Force dated 21 April 1949.

APPOINMENT

4. You are appointed the representative of the Australian Chiefs of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of United Nations Forces operating in Korea in respect of non-operational control and general administration of the forces set out in paragraph 1 above.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

5. (a) The operational control of the Forces referred to in paragraph 1 above will be exercised by United Nations Unified Command.

(b) Non-operational control and administration of the forces referred to in paragraph 1 above will be your responsibility as Commander-in-Chief British Occupation Force.

6. In relation to non-operation control and administration of the Commonwealth Forces concerned policy direction to you will be issued from the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

7. You will be the representative of and responsible to each Commonwealth Service Headquarters concerned for administrative matters which concern them alone and you will communicate direct with them in relation thereto.
This does not prejudice the right of Commanders of national components to communicate direct with their own Governments in accordance with directives they have received from them.

BASIC ORGANISATION

8. To maintain the British Commonwealth Forces in Korea a British Commonwealth advanced base is to be established in Korea with an element in Japan. This base is to be stocked from the main base at Singapore, the existing British Occupation Force base in Japan and other British Commonwealth Forces as may be decided from time to time.

9. The existing British Commonwealth Occupation Forces Base in Japan will be responsible for maintaining such elements of the advanced base as may be located in Japan in all respects except for ordnance equipment and stores.

SAFEGUARDING INTERESTS OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH FORCES

10. As the representative in Japan of the Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and the United Kingdom and Canadian Service Departments concerned you are to interest yourself in the operational tasks allotted to the United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand Forces and Canadian Army Forces and for this purpose you are to maintain close contact with the Commander of the British Commonwealth Force in the field.

If the Commander of the British Commonwealth Force in the field in Korea makes representation to you in regard to the operational deployment of his force you are to represent the case to the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Forces in Korea and report to the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

11. Your financial responsibilities in relation to the employment of the British Commonwealth Force in Korea will be communicated to you at a later date.

REPORTS

12. You will be responsible to the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committees for:

(a) The despatch of authoritative periodical reports on the battle situation with such comments as you deem necessary.

(b) The despatch of periodical appreciations of the general situation as seen by the Commander-In-Chief, United Nations Forces, Korea.

(c) Keeping them informed of future plans including expected reinforcements and forecast dates of their deployment in the theatre.

(d) The despatch of information concerning the tactics and technical equipment employed by the enemy. You should also report on Allied tactics and weapon effectiveness.

13. You will be responsible for providing the Commander-in-Chief United Nations Forces in Korea with any detailed information he may require concerning British Commonwealth Forces placed at his disposal.
APPENDIX IV

DIRECTIVE

TO THE COMMANDER NEW ZEALAND ARMY CONTINGENT (KAYFORCE)
OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCES IN THE KOREA/JAPAN THEATRE

1. This directive is issued to you as Commander of the New Zealand Army contingent (Kayforce) in the Korea/Japan theatre on behalf and with the approval of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

2. The Statutory authority under which the New Zealand Army contingent is constituted and is to be governed is contained in the New Zealand Army Act 1950.

3. The New Zealand Army contingent is part of the United Nations forces which, with the approval of Governments, have been placed under the supreme command of the Head of the United Nations Unified Command in Korea. The role of the New Zealand Army contingent is to take part in operations designed to repel the armed attack on the Republic of Korea and so restore international peace and security in the area. To this end the 16th New Zealand Field Regiment and its affiliated sub-units, i.e., Signals Troop, Light Aid Detachment and Transport Platoon, will be grouped with forces provided by other British Commonwealth countries under the operational control of a nominated British Commonwealth Commander.

4. In lieu of an appointment of a New Zealand officer to the United Nations Command Liaison Staff, you are authorised to confer directly with the Headquarters of the United Nations Unified Command in accordance with instructions you may from time to time receive from Army Headquarters in Wellington or on matters which in your view are of concern to the Unified Command and New Zealand alone.

5. The Commander-in-Chief BCOF will be the Theatre Commander for the purpose of the non-operational control, general administration and maintenance of all United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand land and air forces in the Korea/Japan theatre. He will exercise this control through Headquarters British Element Korea Base whose Commander will be for this purpose C-in-C BCOF's principal administrative officer.

6. You will be responsible to C-in-C BCOF for the non-operational control and general administration of the NZ Army contingent. You will also be responsible to the New Zealand Army Board for matters of New Zealand domestic concern, i.e., personnel administration, discipline and welfare, as set out in the following paragraphs.

7. You will arrange for the documentation and notification of casualties in accordance with orders which will be issued to you from time to time by Army Headquarters Wellington.

8. Your authority for promotions will be as provided in New Zealand Emergency Force Regulations 1950.

9. Your disciplinary powers will be in accordance with the warrant issued to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government in New Zealand.

10. You are empowered to fix and alter the establishment and composition of units organised on New Zealand higher establishments as found expedient provided ranks laid down therein are not exceeded.
11. Your responsibilities regarding the initial equipment of the New Zealand Army contingent, its maintenance and stores accounting are contained in the directions which have been given to you separately by Army Headquarters Wellington, and you will receive from the C-in-C BCOF further instructions as may be necessary.

12. In addition to your financial responsibilities in respect of charges borne by the Korea Operations Pool Account, which will be notified to you separately, you are empowered to authorise as a direct charge against His Majesty's Government in New Zealand:

(a) In exceptional circumstances which cannot be foreseen at present and when immediate action is imperative, extra expenditure which you consider necessary for the protection, health and safety of your command. Whenever possible you will obtain the prior concurrence of Army Headquarters Wellington to any such expenditure.

(b) Disbursements at your discretion from such entertainment fund as may be approved.

13. You will communicate direct with Army Headquarters Wellington on matters of New Zealand domestic concern. In addition you will make periodical reports on the activities and general welfare of your command direct to Army Headquarters Wellington, and you will provide C-in-C BCOF with copies of such reports.

14. You are responsible for bringing to the notice of Army Headquarters Wellington any matter which you consider necessary in the discharge of your responsibilities on matters which affect either the well-being of New Zealand personnel serving in the United Nations forces or the interests of New Zealand, which you have not been able to resolve in consultation with the C-in-C BCOF and which you consider sufficiently important to be brought to the notice of the New Zealand Army Board. In such cases you are to communicate with Army Headquarters Wellington only after full consultation with the C-in-C BCOF to whom you are to furnish immediately a copy of your communication.

15. You will ensure that the components of your command retain their national identity, although in the case of administrative elements you may decide upon such integration with other British Commonwealth units as may be necessary in the common interest.

16. Finally, you will do your utmost to ensure that all ranks of the New Zealand Army Contingent conduct themselves in accordance with the best traditions of the New Zealand Army and of their country.

K. L. STEWART
Major-General,
CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.
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