

THE UNITED STATES IN KOREA: A RELUCTANT
PARTICIPANT, 1945 - 1948

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MANDUK CHUNG
1975



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

The United States in Korea: A Reluctant
Participant, 1945 - 1948

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. _____ degree in _____ History

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Date 10/8/75

615387

ABSTRACT

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Toward the end of World War II, the United States decided to occupy a part of Korea which was to be liberated from Japanese occupation. Within four weeks following the Japanese capitulation, the United States found its army in occupation of Korea south of the 38th parallel line. During the subsequent three years South Korea was governed by the American Military Government.

This dissertation aims to clarify some aspects of the nature of America's Korean policy during the postwar era of 1945 to 1948. The first is as to whether or not the United States policy toward Korea was based upon her national interests--political, economic, military. Was the American policy aimed at protecting one or all of these national interests in Korea? The second is whether or not the United States had a long-term policy in Korea, with definite goals. Was America's drift and fumbling in south Korea caused by its lack of

long-term policy or was it the result of America's misconception of the revolutionary aspiration of the Korean people in the postwar period? The third is regarding the basic objective of the American policy in Korea. Why did the United States remain in Korea for three years and what did she attempt to achieve there?

Some major points of this study are:

1. The United States had no positive national interests in Korea throughout the postwar period of 1945 to 1948. Its policy, accordingly, was not associated with either promoting or protecting its national interests in Korea.
2. The United States did not feel it necessary to have a long-term policy in Korea until after the first Joint Commission in May, 1946. Lack of a long-term policy was the main cause of drift.
3. The American policy during this period was almost exclusively geared to curbing Russian advance in and around Korea, with a view to achieving a balance of power.
4. The basic objectives of the American policy were to achieve Korea's independence and disentangle the United States from Korea while not leaving it under the Soviet influence or domination. Achieving these objectives suffered limitations due to the cold war showdown between the two occupying powers.

5. Mutual distrust between the United States and the Soviet Union was the decisive cause of perpetuation of the disastrous situation of Korea. Korea was from the beginning a cold war victim.

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1975

To my wife Eunjo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer wishes to express his hearty appreciation to those who have been constant sources of encouragement, insight, and guidance in writing this dissertation: To Dr. Paul A. Varg whose warm personality and profound understanding of the topic have kept me from going astray. Had it not been for his generous and tender care as the dissertation chairman, it would have definitely been impossible for this writer to finish his dissertation. To Dr. Warren I. Cohen whose incisive analysis and interpretation of materials helped the writer to write with greater balance, and to Dr. Madison Kuhn and Dr. Walter E. Gourlay whose timely comments and suggestions broadened the writer's perception of his topic. If there is anything worth reading in this dissertation, it is the result of the guidance accorded to the writer by these members of his guidance committee. For the rest, the writer is entirely responsible.

The writer is highly appreciative of the financial assistance accorded to him by the State Department of the United States under the Fulbright-Hays program, without which he would certainly have missed the most unforgettable and productive period of his life. His

thanks also go to those people at the National Archives and Records Service who rendered the writer a most generous help in locating the needed materials.

Finally, he must mention the names of Eunjo, his wife, and Insook and Nury, his children, who have continuously provided him with a refreshing spirit when he was tired and made him understand why he should be happy when he finished his degree.

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CHAPTER I

A STRANGE LAND IN FAR-OFF ASIA: U.S.- KOREAN RELATIONS BEFORE 1945

Due to its close cultural ties with China and its geographical isolation from the major powers of the world, Korea had neither the opportunity nor the will to maintain relations with nations other than China before 1876.

China's bitter experiences of encroachment by Western powers had long been known to the Koreans, and the frequent appearance of Western armed ships along the Korean coast in the late 1860s made them uneasy at the approach of Westerners. But the first real threat to the secluded life of Korea came not from the Western powers as had been anticipated by many Koreans but from Japan, a nation which was both fascinated and overwhelmed by the glittering Western technology. The treaty of 1876 establishing diplomatic relations with Japan was a shocking experience for Korea after having shut itself off from the world for centuries.

The Korean Kingdom had never been free from the impact of political changes in China. The two nations had been officially linked through the peculiar channel

of the 'tributary system.'¹ The system was essentially an outgrowth of Confucian ethics, in which brotherly understanding and relation between the stronger and the weaker served as a means to keep a society or nations from falling into struggle and disorder. The conceptual peculiarities of this system, however, caused confusion and misunderstanding among the Westerners who were basically oriented to a domination-subservience type of international power relations, and who wanted to have their own way practiced in this part of the world.

Japanese expansionism challenged the Korea-China relations based upon the tributary system. Korea was least experienced in the dynamics of modern international power relations. China, on the other hand, found it to its own interest to employ elements of both the tributary system and the modern Western system of international relations in her dealings with Korea. Korea's adherence to the old system while at the same time soliciting sympathy from big powers to recognize her as an independent nation affected the situation adversely and only enhanced

¹For the tributary system as practiced between Korea and China, see Hae-Jong Chŏn, "China and Korea--An Introduction to the Sino-Korean Relations," Bulletin of the Korean Research Center, No. 29 (December, 1968), p. 1-15.

the Japanese determination to get rid of any voice by the Chinese government in matters concerning Korea.²

When the Korean Kingdom was opened by the treaty of 1876, many Koreans hoped that there would be no more such treaties with other nations. But the implication of the treaty for the future of Korea began to reveal itself within six years; beginning from 1882, several nations imposed treaties of inequality upon Korea following the Japanese pattern. Some of them justified their action as a means to head off conflict between China and Japan. More of them simply looked forward to commercial relations. For Korea, however, the establishment of diplomatic relations brought neither an opportunity for economic improvement nor the maintenance of territorial integrity and political stability in a new setting of international relations. Korea was just flung open to the world before appropriate measures were taken to protect itself from imperialistic encroachment by the big powers.

Many Korean intellectuals who saw no alternatives but to open their country had been deeply impressed by

²An example of Korean interpretation of the system is shown in King Ko-jong's letter to President Arthur on the occasion of negotiating for a treaty. Yur-Bok Lee, Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887 (New York, 1970), p. 41. Also, see the dialogue between Hugh A. Dinsmore, Minister Resident to Seoul, and Yun-Shik Kim, the Foreign Minister of Korean Kingdom, *ibid.*, p. 171.

the wonders of Western technology, especially as applied to military weapons. They, however, were little impressed by the Western thought embodied in Christian teachings. Rather, they found it totally subversive of traditional Confucian values. They faced the dilemma of benefiting from Western technology and yet not falling victim to the Western ideas.³

The excitement, aspirations, and frustration after the 1870s were rather short-lived as the Koreans sensed the dynamics of the newly developing situation around Korea. By the turn of the century China had been suffering from 'loss of face' caused by Western intrusion, coupled with internal turbulence that was peculiar to a dying dynasty. Japan, since the Meiji Restoration, had steadily and elatedly advanced toward westernization. The splendor of the industrial expansion it achieved was sufficient to impress the rest of the Asiatic nations. With this background, Japan moved swiftly toward having its particular interests in the Far East recognized by the Western powers.

Great Britain chose not to dissuade Japan from assuming a predominant position around Korea because she hoped to have Japan check Russia's southward advance.

³For the responses by the Korean intellectual literati, see Kwang-Rin Lee, Hankuk Kaehwa-Sa Yŏnku (Studies of the History of Korean Enlightenment) (Seoul, 1969).

Japan would not stand in the way of British interests in China and in the Southwest Pacific. United States policy toward Korea until the time of the Russo-Japanese War revolved around the principle of upholding the sovereignty of Korea by refraining from taking sides with any power.⁴ Other European powers sided either with Russia or Japan but played very negligible roles in Korean affairs.

Given this situation, the chance for confrontation between the two most ambitious empires for the predominance in Korea, Japan and Russia, grew almost unchecked. And unfortunately for Korea, neither of them was to prove friendly in the years to come. The Koreans were extremely sensitive and bitter toward the infringement by the two equally expansionistic powers.

Despite previous intermittent contacts with Korea, it was not until the 1880s that Russia had made its deep concern for Korea clear and posed itself as a main competitor in this area. Having set up Port Vladivostok in 1860 and having increased her influence in Manchuria, Russia now sought to lease a Korean island off the southern coast in 1882. The request was rejected by the Korean government, but the Russian move stimulated Great

⁴See Yur-Bok Lee, Diplomatic Relations, Chaps. V and VI. Also, see Department of State, A Historical Summary of United States-Korean Relations, 1854-1962 (Washington, 1962), p. 50f.

Britain to brace up against Russia. Great Britain occupied the island in 1885 by surprise without even notifying the Korean government. The incident was not resolved until Russia was compelled to give assurance to the British government that she would not make any further demands for Korean territory.

Russian pursuit of overland commercial rights with Korea had continued with some results but she was always handicapped diplomatically until 1884 when she finally succeeded in concluding a treaty with Korea. As soon as the treaty was effective, Russia attempted to infiltrate the faction-stricken Korean Court. The Russian Minister to Korea, Karl Waeber, proved himself extremely competent in this type of business and increased his personal influence with the Korean Court to such an extent that the King even conducted secret negotiations with him. Though the negotiations were abandoned because of the mounting opposition within the Korean government, the doubt and distrust entertained by the King as late as in 1880 when he read the book, Chao-hsien ts'e-lüeh (Korea Strategy), seemed to have melted away.⁵

⁵Huang Tsun-hsien, Chao-hsien ts'e-lüeh (Korea Strategy). He advised being on guard against Russia by means of adopting a pro-Chinese policy, maintaining close ties with Japan, and allying with the United States.

Waeber maneuvered successfully between factional groups in the Korean government, the Korean Court, and the foreign representatives. For one thing, he impressed the German adviser to the Korean government, Van Moellendorf, so much that the latter advised the Korean government to undergo military reform under Russian assistance. The plan, however, met with opposition from the Korean government and cost Moellendorf his position. Russian attempts to enhance their influence in Korea were never forestalled, and on one occasion when Queen Min was murdered by the Japanese, the King took refuge in the Russian Legation and remained there until the following spring.

This seeming rapprochement, among other things, emboldened Russia to seek a predominant place in Korea to the exclusion of Japan. Japan, in her effort to curb the ever-growing Russian influence in Korea, even proposed in 1896 to divide Korea into two spheres of influence along the 38th parallel, but it was categorically rejected by Russia.⁶ The Russians desired to see Korea independent for the time being and objected to a premature division of Korea, for they thought that they would eventually be able to lay their hands on the whole country. Korea seemed within her grasp. As one

⁶William L. Langer, S. E. Gleason, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York, 1934), I., p. 406.

Russian put it: "The fate of Korea, as a future integral part of the Russian empire by force of geographical and political conditions, had been determined upon by us."⁷

The rapprochement between Russia and Korea, however, was soon to be outdone by Japanese ascendancy in Korea, and the Russian efforts to retain even the northern half of Korea under its direct influence met with a fatal blow by the Japanese when the latter repaid Russia by rejecting her proposal of dividing Korea along the 39th parallel. A renewal of the proposal met with the same response in 1904, by which time Japan had entrenched itself firmly in Korea with British acquiescence and the sympathetic silence of the United States. The Russo-Japanese War was the final blow to the already tottering cause of Russia in Korea. One of the two foreign powers that had persistently pursued territorial gain in Korea thus disappeared from the scene, only to return four decades later.

As many Koreans feared at the time, the treaty of 1876 facilitated Japan's economic exploitation of Korea to satisfy her needs for Korean rice and for a market for the Japanese goods. But Japan's new leadership that was molded through the Meiji Restoration and the prevalent ethos of Fukoku Kyōhei, coupled with the

⁷Count Lamsdorf's memorandum, as quoted in *ibid.*

fanatic sense of mission, all worked together to bring the historically isolated Japan a step closer to the Asian continent. The frenzied aspiration for a new Japan as envisaged in the process of speedy westernization drove the leadership to seek an alteration of relations in the Far East. Japan was ready to dispose of its 'splendid isolation' in Asia for a proud counter-export of westernization to other Asiatic nations.⁸ The corrupt and incompetent Korean government fell an easy prey to Japanese expansion.

The military superiority of Japan over the two rivals, China and Russia, proved overwhelming, and her undisturbed exercise of coercive pressure upon the shaky Korean Kingdom culminated in the treaty of 1905 which proclaimed a de facto protectorate over Korea. Japan took charge of Korea's external as well as internal affairs. Finance and police had already been under Japanese control since 1904. Japan had finally established herself unrivaled in Korea by 1905.

What is more, Japan had enjoyed the encouragement of two great powers of the time, Great Britain and the

⁸One of the undercurrents of Japan's continental policy was its psychological reaction against the outward dazzle of Western civilization. See Zōmura Yasunobu, "Dairiku Seisaku-ni Okeru Imaji-no Tenkan" (Changes of Image in Japan's Continental Policy) in Shinohara Hajime, Mitani Taichiro, ed., Kindai Nihon-no Seiji Shidō (Political Guidance in Modern Japan) (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 253-54.

United States, in substantiating her plan for predominance in Korea in the face of the furious opposition of the Korean people. Great Britain was in the course of negotiations with Japan for the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1905, and in August an agreement on a visibly quid pro quo basis was reached. According to the agreement, the British government accepted Japan's right to establish a protectorate in Korea in return for a Japanese pledge of cooperation in terms of British interests in India. One striking feature of the second Alliance agreement was the omission of any mention of Korea's independence and territorial integrity. This had been explicitly recognized in the first Alliance of 1902.⁹ Japan gained recognition of its right "to take such measures of guidance, control, and protection in Korea as she may deem proper and necessary" to safeguard and advance her "paramount political, military, and economic interests."

American interest in Korea before the turn of the century had been largely to uphold Korea's sovereignty as a matter of principle by avoiding direct

⁹For the First Anglo-Japanese Agreement of January 30, 1902, see Great Britain, Foreign Office, British Documents on the Origins of the War: 1898-1914, ed. by G. P. Gooch, Harold Temperley, II (London, 1927), pp. 115-120; for the Second Agreement of August 12, 1905, see *ibid.*, IV (London, 1929), pp. 165-169.

involvement. American representatives in Korea, John B. Sill (1894-1897) and Horace N. Allen (1897-1905), were repeatedly warned by the Department of State to refrain from participating directly in Korean politics.¹⁰ But the diplomatic situation changed especially after 1898 when the United States obtained territory in the Southwest Pacific. The acquisition of the Philippines made America a new Asiatic power, and her relations with Japan and Russia never allowed her to remain aloof from the impact of the diplomatic wars that were going on in and around Korea at that time.

Furthermore, Theodore Roosevelt's aspiration for a balance of power in the Far East played a weighty role in American foreign policy. Fearful of Russia's threats to a balanced power relationship, he hoped Japan would serve as a bulwark against Russia. Korea was torn by a gigantic struggle between Japan and Russia for supremacy in Korea, and the Korean people were in no position to "strike one blow in their own defense."¹¹ Roosevelt

¹⁰For the attitude of the State Department and its effect upon the Americans in Korea, see Henry S. Marks, The Failure of the United States to Maintain the Independence of Korea and the Effect of This Failure Upon Americans in Korea: From the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 (Florence State College, 1962), Chap. II.

¹¹Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Collier Books ed.: New York, 1962), p. 280.

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thought that it would offset Russian influence in the Far East if Japan would control Korea and have major influence in Manchuria while the Yangtze valley was left under the dominant influence of the Anglo-Americans. As early as in 1900, Roosevelt wrote to Speck von Sternburg, then on the staff of the German Embassy in Washington, that he would "like to see Japan have Korea," in the expectation that Japan "will be a check upon Russia."¹²

By 1905, Roosevelt was firmly convinced that the United States must not undertake responsibility for Korea and that the United States should "let Japan play our game."¹³ He greatly admired Japan's speedy imitation of Western culture and had little doubt that Japan would govern Korea efficiently and maintain an open door there.¹⁴ Naturally, he strongly favored Japan's taking charge of Korea's external affairs as stipulated in the treaty of 1905. The United States thus became the first nation to recognize the destruction of Korean sovereignty which she was obligated to respect by solemn treaty of 1882. As Roosevelt elaborated later, it was

¹²Ibid., p. 273.

¹³Roosevelt's letter to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., dated February 10, 1904, as quoted in H. F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt--A Biography (New York, 1931), p. 375.

¹⁴Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, p. 279.

out of the question to suppose that "any other nation, with no interest of its own at stake, would do for the Koreans what they were utterly unable to do for themselves."¹⁵

The Taft Katsura memorandum of 1905 was not only the product of the prevalent trends of the American diplomatic concern in the Far East but also eloquently reflected the trends of secret diplomacy of the time. In the long and confidential discussion, Taft and Katsura branded Korea as the direct cause of the Russo-Japanese War and agreed that a complete solution of the peninsula question was "the logical consequence of the war." Taft remarked that in his personal opinion, "the establishment by the Japanese troops of a suzerainty over Korea . . . was the logical result of the present war and would directly contribute to permanent peace in the East." Good understanding between the three governments of Japan, the United States, and Great Britain was affirmed as the "only means for accomplishing . . . the general peace in the Far East."¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 280-281.

¹⁶For the full text, see Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State, July (Part III), 1905; for some background of the memorandum, see John G. Reid, ed., "Taft's Telegram to Root, July 29, 1905," Pacific Historical Review, IX, No. 1 (March, 1940), p. 66f.

Maintenance of a balance of power by carving out spheres of influence was the essence of this memorandum, and that was in a complete accord with what Roosevelt had been advocating. There was also a common factor in the attitudes of the United States and Great Britain in recognizing Japan's special interests in Korea. Japan, according to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, would abide by the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations.¹⁷

But this expectation was to prove unfounded before long. In fact, one of the reasons Japan wanted Korea was to get a firm base for a bolder advance into continental Asia, especially in Manchuria and the China mainland. Taking Korea was but an incipient step in the implementation of her design of continental policy. For Japan, Korea was virtually nothing if it was to be separated economically from Manchuria and China.

Russia was forced to recognize in the peace treaty of 1905 the "outstanding political, military, and economic interests of Japanese empire in Korea" and had to assure that she would on no occasion whatever interfere with Japanese implementation of guidance, protection, and supervision as Japan deemed necessary in Korea. In addition, the treaty placed a severe limitation on

¹⁷British Documents, IV, p. 165; also, see Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, p. 279.

Russian interests in Manchuria.¹⁸ The humiliating retreat of Russia from Korea and Manchuria, coupled with Anglo-American recognition of Japan's special interests in the areas, gave Japan an entirely free hand in the northern Far East.

Eclipse of United States' interest in Korea was furthered when she concluded a treaty with Japan in 1908 that abandoned extraterritorial jurisdiction over American citizens in Korea and agreed that such citizens were "to be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Japanese court in Korea."¹⁹ Japan annexed Korea in 1910, which had been a fait accompli for the United States. Upon receiving the note of the annexation treaty, Assistant Secretary of State Huntington Wilson was only grateful for the Japanese assurance of retaining the existing tariff schedule in Korea for the next ten years in view of the great importance of the interests of the American citizens (not of the American government) in Korea.²⁰ In August, 1912, the Japanese government took up the question of the abolition of the foreign settlements in the treaty ports of Korea. In conjunction with other treaty

¹⁸Gaimushō, Nihon Gaikō Nenpyō Narabi Jūyō Bunsho (Chronology of Japanese Diplomacy and Important Documents), 1840-1945, I (Tokyo, 1955), p. 245.

¹⁹Dept. of State, Historical Summary, p. 55.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 55-56.

powers, the United States had to consent to their abolition, and foreign settlements came to an end in 1914.²¹

The international rivalry had not protected Korea's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Korea with its own culture and way of life was forced out of its long seclusion and was eventually placed under the Japanese control with the approval of the world's major powers because she was weak internally and unfamiliar with the imperialistic maneuver of international power politics. The feeble aspiration of Korean intellectuals who dreamed of 'harmony between the Western technology and Oriental minds' ended in bitter disappointment. Strong popular resistance throughout Korea against Japanese transgression was crushed mercilessly by the Japanese.²² For the following three decades Korea suffered under Japanese occupation.

Japan's militaristic control of Korea was invigorated following the formal annexation in 1910, and the Koreans were deprived of their most basic rights. Tens of thousands of Koreans with education and social

²¹Ibid.

²²For the resistance between 1905 and 1910 by the Korean Court, Press, foreign friends, and especially by the Righteous Army, see C. I. Eugene Kim, Han-Kyo Kim, Korea and Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910 (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 175-206.

reputation had been apprehended for alleged anti-Japanese conspiracy. Economic and cultural strangulation caused bitter grievances among the Korean people, and many of them found their way to Manchuria and Siberia where they could organize themselves into a resistance force.

The first World War pushed Korea further back into international oblivion. A general peace seemed to prevail in Korea during the War under Japanese guidance and hegemony. But when the War ended, popular feelings that had hitherto been forced underground came to the fore. In Korea the eruption of discontent and cries for justice came two months earlier than the May Fourth Movement in China.

Korean leaders were especially drawn to the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, hoping that Korea's case might receive new international consideration in the process of searching for a new postwar world order by the big powers. For a start, the Koreans resolved to send a delegation to Paris to present their case as soon as the peace conference convened, but to no avail. Only Dr. Kim, Ki-unic barely managed to reach France but his mission got nowhere due mainly to Japanese manipulation and to a lesser degree the negative attitudes taken by other major powers. The diplomatic chagrin along with the already widespread dissatisfaction among the Koreans

who never condoned Japanese annexation of their country led to a mass demonstration on March 1, 1919.

The Koreans proclaimed independence but lacked any effective means to compel Japan to abandon its claim over Korea. The thirty-three signers of the Proclamation of Independence were apprehended by the Japanese police and they surrendered voluntarily. The movement was carried out strictly on the basis of non-violence. But the demonstration ended in a brutal suppression by Japan. The Proclamation of Independence was "written in a lofty tone of the ancient prophet,"²³ and the mass demonstration was aimed solely at making Korea's grievances known more explicitly to the Japanese and, more emphatically, to the world with the conviction that only international support would bring redress to the Korean people.

The world, however, turned a deaf ear to the Korean appeals except on the level of personal observers and sympathetic presses,²⁴ which were far from influential in arousing world opinion. The United States was

²³For the English translation of the Proclamation of Independence of Korea, see F. A. McKenzie, Korea's Fight for Freedom (AMS ed.: New York, 1970), pp. 247-250.

²⁴For instances: ibid., Chaps. XV, XVIII; Los Angeles Times which editorialized the Korean case on April 6, 1919, under the title "The Dignity of Life"; a response from a Japanese Christian leader Dr. Ishizaka, a summary of which appeared in R. S. Spencer's article in the Christian Advocate of New York, quoted by McKenzie, op. cit., pp. 311-313.

speechless in the face of Japanese charges that many Americans, especially the Christian missionaries in Korea, were affiliated with the mass demonstration.²⁵ The United States failed to take notice of Korean appeals for sympathetic understanding. The Acting Secretary of State Polk instructed the American Ambassador to Japan on April 14 that the Consulate at Seoul "should be extremely careful not to encourage any belief that the United States will assist the Korean nationalists in carrying out their plans," and should not do anything which "may cause Japanese authorities to suspect American government sympathize with Korean nationalist movement."²⁶

The leaders of the movement published a daily newspaper, the Independence News, regularly through March, April, and May, and at intervals thereafter, keeping the location of the press in secrecy. During the week of April 16-23, representatives of Korean people met secretly in Seoul and organized a Provisional Government. They drew up a provisional constitution,²⁷

²⁵Dept. of State, Historical Summary, p. 8; also, Dept. of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (to be abridged to F.R. hereafter), 1919, II, pp. 458-459.

²⁶F.R., 1919, II, p. 462.

²⁷The constitution provides for representative government. For the text translated into English, see McKenzie, op. cit., pp. 304-305.

and elected Syngman Rhee, who was in the United States at that time, as the first President of the Republic. The government was reorganized and expanded in Shanghai to involve those who had been already engaged in resistance movements outside Korea.

In the meantime, Kim, Kiusic was joined later by other Koreans and began to act as the official representative of the Korean Provisional Government. They stayed in Paris until 1920 and published Public Information (22 volumes in total) and Free Korea (10 volumes in total), both in French, with a view to supplying the foreign delegates to the Paris Conference with useful information on the Korean situation.²⁸ The representative, aided by Mr. Homer B. Hulbert, a one-time English teacher dispatched by the United States government in the 1880s and since then a most persistent friend of Korea's cause, made every effort to have their cause favored by the United States delegation. For the Koreans of the time, the United States was the only nation in the world which could do something for the Korean people if only she had a will to do so.

But the United States was simply not inclined to give any serious consideration to such a trifling matter

²⁸A part of their activities with respect to public relations was disclosed recently. See Tong-A Ilbo (Tong-A Daily News), March 1, 1975, p. 5.

as Korea. The problems she encountered--postwar European questions, recognition of the new Soviet government of Russia, tension between the President and the Senate in regard to the Versailles treaty, etc.--were legion. Korea had no place in the grand Wilsonian design of postwar peace for the Far East, a design that eventually accepted the fact of Japanese power. Thus, Korea's case went totally unnoticed either at the Paris Conference or by any individual government, especially by the United States.

The Korean Government-in-exile was engulfed with a welter of problems to resolve by itself. Cold response from the major powers, the endless postponement of independence, and particularly the factional division among the Koreans themselves--they exhibited an enormously complicated spectrum of ideological inclinations--eroded grounds for hope, and tempers flared easily in frustration. The relations of the exiled government with the various armed resistance groups that had been in existence in Manchuria, China, and Siberia were for the most part quite precarious. The factional struggle and acute difference of opinion ensuing therefrom were aggravated further by the impact of the Communist revolution in Russia and the various factions within the Chinese national government. Some favored close ties

with the Communists.²⁹ Others wanted to work closely with particular factions in the Chinese government. Geographical separation of the leaders of the exiled government in China and the United States also contributed to inflaming emotional conflict out of misunderstanding and jealousy.

The different circumstances in which these leaders worked were a constant source of friction and disagreement in policy decision. Those in China were naturally under the Chinese influence which stressed use of arms as of utmost importance for quick and palpable results. Being closer geographically to their home country, they were under constant pressure to engage themselves in armed resistance against the Japanese. They did so with considerable success from time to time.³⁰

Those in the United States, notably Syngman Rhee of the Korean Commission which was representing the exiled government in America, were doubtful of the effect of armed resistance which often succeeded but more often ended in mere terrorism. He argued that such violent measures would only strengthen the Japanese case

²⁹For the Communist activities within the Korean Provisional Government, see Dae-Sook Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948 (Princeton, 1967), pp. 13-15.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 8-9, 11-12.

for ever-tighter controls and continuance of their police control over Korea.³¹ A graduate of Princeton University and a student of Woodrow Wilson, Rhee had a great respect and admiration for Wilsonian idealism. Rhee sought recognition of his Government-in-exile by resorting to diplomatic measures. But it is undeniable that Rhee was also mindful that he must not lose his leadership to the heroic armed resistance in China and Siberia by fellow Koreans.

Rhee concentrated on creating the strongest possible impression through securing friendly and pervasive newspaper coverage. To attain this end, he also kept writing letters and petitions to the leaders of the United States government. Whenever an important international conference was held, he never failed to attempt to present Korea's case and to draw the world's attention to the justification of the independence of Korea as a vital factor for peace in the Far East. His effort received warm but informal encouragement from many individuals but was totally neglected by the leaders of major powers.³² His activities often caused those

³¹Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth (New York, 1960), p. 151; also, Suh, Korean Communist, p. 12.

³²Rhee failed to get a passport to attend the Paris Peace Conference in 1919; he attempted to be received as an observer at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921, only to fail; in 1932 he managed to

'balanced gentlemen' in the official positions in and out of the United States to shun him. Rhee thought that he was doing his best to bring an end to the total neglect of Korea.

The efforts to win recognition of Korean independence continued but without success. It was not until after the war broke out in the Pacific that the question again gained international attention. In a letter dated December 18, 1941, to Chang, Key-Young, Rhee's secretary, Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa reported that his discussion regarding the recognition of Korea as an independent political entity received a sympathetic response from the State Department, but since many Americans were still in Japan, the United States government could not take any step that would arouse resentment among the Japanese.³³ Even this was a great encouragement to the Koreans. On January 2, 1942, Rhee had chance to talk with Alger Hiss and Stanley Hornbeck at the State Department on the potential role of the Koreans in the Allied war effort, suggesting that recognition of the Korean Government-in-exile would greatly bolster Korean determination. Hiss reportedly responded

be in Geneva where the League of Nations was discussing recent Japanese conduct in Manchuria, but returned without any official results.

³³Oliver, S. Rhee, p. 176.

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that there was little or nothing the United States could do because recognition of the Korean government would "offend the Soviet Union which had a great interest in north Asia" and would mean a solution in which "Soviet Russia is not represented."³⁴ Later, Rhee was notified flatly by Hornbeck that in the opinion of the State Department, he was wholly unknown inside Korea and that the Korean Provisional Government was no more than a self-constituted club with limited membership among a group of expatriates.³⁵

This kind of distrust of Rhee and the Korean Provisional Government was not entirely unfounded. Rhee's moralistic background and his stubbornness in relation to the dissenters, whether Koreans or foreigners, provided the main source of misunderstanding and conflict. His relentlessness in opposing and condemning Communism went to such extremes that even many moderate-minded people were branded by him as Communists or Communist-sympathizers. To work with them even for a common cause was absolutely out of the question for him.

President Roosevelt referred the Korean question to a meeting of the Pacific War Council in early 1942, where the question of granting recognition of the Korean Provisional Government was informally discussed. The

³⁴Ibid., p. 178.

³⁵Ibid., p. 182.

meeting decided that any such action would be postponed until it might be more useful for arousing Korean opposition to Japan.³⁶ T. V. Soong, China's Foreign Minister, reported at the subsequent meeting that the Koreans were too disunited to comprise any effective force, citing Rhee's stubbornness as the main cause of disunity.³⁷

This low and unfavorable estimate of Rhee by Soong was to prove even more costly in 1945. Chiang Kai-shek instructed Soong at the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations to see to it that Korea be given a seat at the Conference. Soong, however, disregarded the instructions and took a passive, noncommittal attitude on the Korean issue despite the fact that the entire Chinese delegation, including the influential Bishop Paul Yu-Pin, favored Korea's admission to the Conference.³⁸

A Chinese spokesman in San Francisco was quoted as saying that "since the Yalta Conference was one which did not include China, China is not in a position to talk about the Korean questions."³⁹ Soong also made the

³⁶George M. McCune, Korea Today (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 41.

³⁷Oliver, S. Rhee, pp. 195-196.

³⁸OSS R&A, No. 129798 (May 21, 1945).

³⁹Ibid.

point that the Korean Provisional Government had not been recognized by the Chinese Central Government, for which Rhee was quite bitter. Rhee complained that China "should not wait for the answer of the United States on all questions."⁴⁰ Soong, on May 22, invited the Koreans with the avowed purpose of drawing them together to support a program of coalition for Korea but Rhee not only refused to attend the meeting but declared later that George McCune, the State Department specialist for Korea, and other State Department officials joined Soong in support of the coalitionists who were to Rhee tantamount to Communist-sympathizers.⁴¹

Nor was the Korean Provisional Government in 1942 an efficient and fully representative organization. Since its establishment, it was dependent upon the financial support of Korean residents in China and sympathetic Chinese. It moved from place to place as the Chinese Central Government was forced to retreat. It finally settled in Chungking but the situation was far from ideal. Further removed and hopelessly separated from their mother country financially, politically, and geographically, its members seemed, as Hornbeck previously put it, nothing but a 'self-constituted club' with a small number of followers.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Oliver, S. Rhee, p. 199.

In correspondence in May 1942 exchanged with Mr. James H. R. Cromwell, the then President of the Korean-American Council, Secretary Hull made it clear that the United States would avoid taking action which might, when the victory of the United Nations was achieved, "tend to deprive peoples now under Axis yoke of full freedom to choose and establish their own government."⁴² In other words, Hull did not wish to commit the United States to recognizing the Korean Provisional Government because he did not consider it representative of the Korean people.

This view persisted into 1945. Joseph W. Ballantine, Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, unhesitatingly branded the Korean leaders in the United States as "more interested in furthering their personal interest," with a great "predilection for personal publicity," even attempting "to maneuver the Department of State."⁴³ The chance for recognition of the Provisional Government was getting bleaker day by day even in 1945. It appeared more so because the Korean Government-in-exile was almost entirely

⁴²Written in May, 1942. J. Kyuang Dunn, "Korea Seeks Recognition," Far Eastern Survey, XIII, No. 21 (October, 1944), p. 198.

⁴³Ballantine's conversation with Mr. Shao Yu-lin, Senior Secretary to Generalissimo Chiang, at Washington, on February 5, 1945, in F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1020.

contingent financially and politically on the Chinese government which had been treated by other Allied powers as a 'third-class' ally.

It had been repeatedly pointed out by responsible persons that the Korean Government-in-exile did not fully represent the Korean people. But if Rhee's claim that his group enjoyed full support of the majority of the Koreans was groundless, American assertion that Rhee was wholly unknown inside Korea or that the government was no more than a self-constituted club among a group of expatriates was equally inaccurate. The American government knew better than any other nations that it was impossible for any free flow of person, finance, or any support between the Provisional Government and the Japanese-controlled Korea. Under the circumstances, it was almost impossible for the Korean government to be fully representative.

The Americans had no understanding of the psychology of Korean politics in which person superseded institution. Whether or not the Korean Provisional Government was institutionally representative, or even whether or not there was an institution called the Korean Provisional Government was not vitally important for the Koreans. All they needed was the names of Syngman Rhee, Kim, Ku, or Ahn, Ch'ang-Ho. The Americans paid little attention to Korea's aspiration for

independence. It was something too much to ask of them when United States interest in Korea was minimal. Surface silence of the Koreans under the Japanese occupation was not the sign of their total submission, as a State Department official recollected later.⁴⁴

Furthermore, the State Department seems to have failed to take into consideration the vital factor that the Korean Provisional Government, unlike those of Poland or France, had been in existence more than two decades, and that the energy it once possessed in its incipient stage may have faded away because of total neglect by the major powers of the world. Korean leaders had no knowledge that the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination was primarily for European countries and as such, there was almost no possibility that Korea's case would be received favorably by the major powers, including the United States. The two decades' experience of the Korean Provisional Government taught that theirs was a vain dream, a completely lost cause which no nation would care about but the Koreans themselves.

Amidst frustration and criticism, the Government-in-exile, however, continued to work as the symbol of

⁴⁴Comments in a radio broadcast by J. C. Vincent, Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, and Colonel B. E. Prescott, a former Civil Administrator of the U.S. Zone. Department of State Bulletin, XIV, No. 343 (Jan. 27, 1946), p. 105.

the restoration movement. The Cairo Declaration on Korea was a timely encouragement to reawaken the Koreans from resignation to reactivation. Early in 1944, the Korean National Provisional Assembly in Chungking attempted to revise the status of the so-called Korean Restoration Army, which, under the existing agreement with the Chinese Military Council, was wholly dependent on the Chinese Army with respect to military operation.⁴⁵

As has been referred to, Korean armed resistance against Japan began in Manchuria and Siberia even before the independence movement of 1919. But the first major attempt to unite those scattered resistances into a more effective force was made in 1920, and resulted in the establishment of Taehan Tongrip Kundan (The Korean Independence Corps).⁴⁶ Though many of the members were not Communists, they had to work with the Chita Soviet Government in Siberia. They purchased arms from the Czechoslovakian troops who were on their way home from Siberia, and were aided by the Korean Russians in negotiations with the Chita Government for its assistance to

⁴⁵Military Intelligence Division, W.D.G.S. No. 65567 (March 8, 1944).

⁴⁶Kūn-Shik Ch'ae, Mujang Tongnip Undong Pisa (Secret History of the Armed Independence Movement) (Seoul, 1948), pp. 100-105. Also, see Robert A. Scalapino, Chong-Sik Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I (Berkeley, 1972), p. 32f; Suh, Korean Communist, p. 29f.

Korean resistance movement. But the factional strife among the Communists and the betrayal by the Chita Government finally cost the united resistance movement in 1921.⁴⁷

Since then, there had never materialized any appreciable consolidation of armed resistance groups mainly because of personal rivalries and ideological differences between the nationalists and Communists. The Korean Restoration Army came into being in 1941 without much autonomy granted by the Chinese government. A petition for more autonomy resulted only in lowering the status of the Army.⁴⁸

The Korean National Assembly in Chungking resolved in 1944 to dispatch diplomatic delegations to America, England, and Soviet Russia to promote the interests of the Provisional Government. This action was interpreted by some members of the U.S. Embassy in Chungking as being motivated by a desire to transplant the Korean independence movement to more hospitable capitals and away from Chungking where issues had often been colored by China's intra-party conflict.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷Kūn-Shik Ch'ae, Pisa, p. 105; also, see Hong-Il Kim, "Chayushi Sapyōn Chōn-Hu" (Before and After the Free City Incident), Sasang-Kye (The World of Thought), February, 1965, p. 221f.

⁴⁸OSS R&A, No. 105263 (October 24, 1944).

⁴⁹Military Intelligence Division, W.D.G.S. No. 65567 (March 8, 1944).

Assembly adopted a manifesto in which they reaffirmed the authority and prestige of the Korean Government-in-exile as the highest and central organization in Korea's bid for the restoration of independence, and made a renewed pledge not to let factional strife take any more toll in pursuing the common target of independence.⁵⁰

Encouraged by the Cairo Declaration and bolstered by the renewed determination for united efforts at the Provisional Assembly, the Provisional Government now proceeded to contact the Central Committee of the Kuomintang for recognition. The Twelfth Plenary Session of the Fifth Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang was in session in Chungking and the Korean Provisional Government presented to it a memorandum enunciating the reasons why the Korean government should be recognized officially. The main points set forth in the memorandum were: First, Korea held an important geographical and historical position in the war against Japan; second, all the United Nations should support Korea and consider her as an ally; and third, China should be the first to support the Korean independence movement and recognize the Provisional Government so

⁵⁰OSS R&A, No. 76561 (May 15, 1944), Enclosures no. 2 and no. 3.

as to strengthen her right to speak for all the oppressed peoples in Asia.⁵¹

Even though there is no evidence that this appeal had any effect on the Chinese government, the relations between it and the Korean Provisional Government seemed improved. The Chinese Government donated five million Chinese dollars to the Koreans to enable the Provisional Government to establish more effective contact with the Korean homeland.⁵² The Chinese People's Political Council which had been divided among themselves in regard to the recognition of the Korean Government-in-exile now took up the matter again and proposed that the Koreans should be given recognition on certain conditions.⁵³ China was probably thinking of helping the Koreans to form a united front patterned after the French Liberation Committee.⁵⁴

⁵¹For the full text of the memorandum, see OSS R&A, No. 85672, enclosure to despatch No. 2639 (June 1, 1944).

⁵²OSS R&A, No. 105263 (October 24, 1944), p. 2.

⁵³The conditions were: (1) China recognizes the Korean Provisional Government after all the Allies have reached agreements on Korea; (2) the Korean Provisional Government must accept the former agreements between Korea and China (not disclosed); (3) establishment of a firm leadership in the Provisional Government. See *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*; also, see the memorandum of conversation between Ballantine and Shao Yu-lin, in F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1019.

The Yalta Conference of February, 1945, obviously had a far-reaching impact upon the Koreans in Chungking. They seemed especially alarmed by the unfortunate position of the London Poles. On the occasion of forming a united front, they argued that if the Koreans had made no reasonable contribution to the war effort, and had made no substantial preparation for the national restoration, it would be truly childish to voice any discontent over the decision of the Cairo Conference in which Korea's independence was promised "in due course." "What the great . . . Crimea Conference had decided regarding Poland and Yugoslavia," they expressed fearfully, "serves well as an iron-clad example of what will happen to the soon-to-be liberated Asiatic countries."⁵⁵

At this time, the Korean Commission in Washington was making its last effort to obtain recognition of the Provisional Government. In a letter to Undersecretary of State Joseph Grew, Rhee gave friendly warnings that there had been repeated and unmistakable signs of danger that the Korean Communist army in Siberia might rush into Korea at an opportune moment and overrun the entire peninsula before the Korean Provisional Government could find a chance to return to Korea. He argued that this could naturally create a situation detrimental

⁵⁵The Manifesto of the New Korean Democratic Party, in OSS R&A, No. 122652 (March 21, 1945), p. 2.

not only to Korea but also to the United States and China in the postwar era.⁵⁶

Whether or not his assertion in the same letter that China was considering giving a de jure recognition to the Korean Provisional Government only if the United States followed suit was founded on truth, he seemed not very far from reflecting the general atmosphere of the Chinese Government on the question.⁵⁷ The Counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington Liu Chieh explained in a private talk with Joseph W. Ballantine that his government considered the Chungking Government of Korea as the "principal element" among the different Korean groups overseas and that it should be given official support not as a de jure government but as "representing the heart of the Korean resistance movement in China."⁵⁸ It seems likely that the Chinese Government was moving toward making a commitment along that line had it not been for some unidentified reasons.⁵⁹

But Grew instructed Ambassador Hurley in Chungking to leave the question of recognition in abeyance

⁵⁶F. R., 1945, VI, pp. 1022-1023. The letter was dated February 5, 1945.

⁵⁷Letter to Ambassador Hurley from the Acting Secretary of State, on February 20, 1945, in *ibid.*, p. 1022.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 1021.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 1019.

for the present,⁶⁰ and let it be known to Rhee that the Korean Provisional Government did not possess the qualification requisite for obtaining recognition by the United States as a governing authority because it never had "administrative authority over any part of Korea" and was not "representing the Korean people today."⁶¹ He defended the American position of avoiding any action that might after the war tend to compromise the right of the Korean people to choose the ultimate form and personnel of the government which they may wish to establish. Rhee's response to this was that the only possibility of "avoiding the ultimate conflict between the United States and the Soviet Republics after the war was to build up all the democratic, non-Communistic elements wherever possible now."⁶²

It is doubtful if there was at this late date any chance left for America to help build up democratic elements among the Koreans.⁶³ But it is disappointingly

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 1023.

⁶¹His letter to Syngman Rhee, dated June 5, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 1030. The same principle is enunciated in his Press Release of June 8, 1945. For the text, see Dept. of State Bulletin (June 10, 1945), pp. 1058-1059.

⁶²F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1023.

⁶³Rhee and his group were not cooperative in forming a united front of democratic elements in Chungking. OSS R&A, 122652 (March 21, 1945), p. 6.

true that the United States policy makers in early 1945 discounted the role that could be played by the Russian-trained Communist Koreans in deciding the postwar political status of Korea. The American leaders saw no reason to have 'Korean colleagues' because postwar Korea seemed unassociated with American national interest. They did not realize that the question of the Korean Provisional Government was assuming new significance, and the issue was no longer a mere matter of legality or technicality. When this fundamental change of character of the Korean question was brought to America's attention in August 1945,⁶⁴ the United States found itself in a mess as far as postwar Korean policy was concerned and had no alternatives but to stick to the hopeful prospect that the Korean question would be resolved in some way by being internationalized.

As Soviet Russia entered the Pacific War, the Red Army swiftly overran Manchuria and north Korea. Two divisions of Korean Communists were brought in as a part of the Red Army and a new chapter of modern Korean history began in north Korea, while leaders of the Korean Provisional Government were 'allowed' to

⁶⁴Sowang Cho's proposal to Hurley, dated August 14, 1945, in F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1036; also, a letter of the Provisional Government through Rhee to President Truman after the Potsdam Conference, in ibid., pp. 1036-1037.

return to Korea only in October strictly in a personal capacity.⁶⁵ The longest-lived government-in-exile in modern world history thus died out without being recognized by any government in the world.⁶⁶

The United States' lack of concern and national interests in Korea before 1945 perhaps finds its best expression in Truman's remarks that before American occupation forces landed in Korea in the late summer of 1945 there had been probably few Americans who had known or thought much about Korea other than that it was "a strange land in far-off Asia."⁶⁷ Missionary activities

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 1058. In response to the Chinese Ambassador to the United States Dr. Wei Tao-ming's suggestion that the Korean Provisional Government might form the basis of an eventual Korean government, Vincent, Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, said that the leaders of the Provisional Government would be helped to return to Korea as individuals but the future Korean government would have nothing to do with the Korean Provisional Government officially.

⁶⁶China assisted the Korean Provisional Government but never recognized it officially. Besides the United States, Great Britain reaffirmed its non-recognition on April 9, 1945 (F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1026). It is not clear whether or not Lenin's financial assistance to the Korean Provisional Government in 1920 was accompanied by an official recognition. For the financial assistance, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I, p. 18f; Suh, Korean Communist, p. 14. France was the only nation that allowed its Embassy in China to maintain de facto relations with the Provisional Government (F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1025).

⁶⁷Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope (New York, 1956), p. 316.

or change in the power situation in the Far East since 1910 had little impact upon America's idea of balance of power in terms of Korea. Korea had become to the United States an integral part of Japan's new order in Asia. Since then, no relations existed between Korea and the United States except a meaningless exchange of letters between Rhee and some officials in the Department of State. It was meaningless because Rhee was a victim of the factional strife among the Koreans overseas and the State Department officials were simply expressing America's indifference toward Korea.

The situation changed little even after the Pacific War broke out, for there seemed no justifiable ground for America to reconsider its traditional policy of placing Korea under the influence of either Japan or China as a means to avoid international struggle in this area. The power vacuum that would come into being after the war was scarcely imagined by any Americans at this time. William Bullitt, among others, advised President Roosevelt in September 1941 that the United States should be more careful in dealing with Soviet Russia because "a Russian victory in the war might well mean one vast dictatorship extending from the Pacific to Western Europe," imperiling American interest "now covered by our Atlantic Doctrine and our Open Door

Doctrine."⁶⁸ But Roosevelt's response was that he simply did not think that Stalin was that kind of man. "If I give him everything I possibly can and ask nothing from him in return, noblesse oblige," he continued, "Stalin won't try to annex anything and will work with me for a world of democracy and peace."⁶⁹

Given the situation, the Cairo Declaration regarding the independence of Korea was a surprise to the Koreans. The Korean Provisional Government responded to this rather unexpected promise of independence with an unqualified approval despite a cautious expression of fear regarding the "in due course" phrase.⁷⁰ They well remembered the bitter experience of 1919 when the doctrine of self-determination was denied to the Koreans. They earnestly hoped that the Cairo Declaration would not fail to serve as the assurance that the principle of the Atlantic Charter would be applicable to Asia as well as to Europe.

It was not known to the Koreans, however, that neither the United States nor Great Britain were taking

⁶⁸William C. Bullitt, "How We Won the War and Lost the Peace," Life, XXV (August 30, 1948), p. 91.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 94.

⁷⁰Leaders of the Korean Provisional Government had a strong fear of Chinese intensions regarding the postwar position of Korea, as rumors were advanced that Korea would be placed under a Chinese mandate. F.R., 1943, III, p. 1096.

the Korean question as seriously as the Koreans hoped. The Cairo Conference was the only major Allied conference where China was represented, and the Korean question was given but a peripheral consideration in the process of general discussion of the Far Eastern situation which was mainly concerned with bolstering China's prestige as an Allied member. The revised American draft of the communiqué stated that the three powers were mindful of "the treacherous enslavement" of the people of Korea by Japan.⁷¹ But the phrase, perhaps the first outspoken appraisal of the Korean situation by some Americans, was dropped from the final communiqué on British insistence.

It was only after the Cairo Conference that the United States began more serious study of the future of Korea. According to a memorandum of March 29, 1944, by the Inter-Divisional Area Committee on the Far East, the two main concerns regarding postwar Korea were the nature of the occupation and the limitation of American responsibility.⁷² In case occupation resulted in the course of combat, the memorandum continued, a more serious consideration would have to be given to various political factors, such as the Allied members and Soviet

⁷¹Ibid., p. 403.

⁷²PWC papers No. 125, dated March 29, 1944. F.R., 1944, V, pp. 1224-1228.

Russia if she entered the war, the Korean Provisional Government with its 1,000 trained troops, the Korean Communist Army in Yenan, the Korean resistance groups in Manchuria, and most significantly, the Korean troops trained in the Soviet Far Eastern Army with an estimated total of 35,000. To be sure, all of them would want to participate in combat in Korea with a view to having a voice in the future status of Korea. The paper stressed that even if the occupation was a result of Japanese capitulation, it would be most desirable to set up an inter-allied military government.

As a means to implement this principle, the paper made a strong point that zonal military government must be avoided as far as possible and a combined civil affairs administration be established with all the participating countries bearing a joint responsibility. This last point related directly to the limitation of American involvement in Korea, and was more fully reiterated in another memorandum prepared one month later.⁷³ It pointed out that not only the military occupation but the interim organization between the occupation and the full attainment of independence must also be international in character, and ruled out any possibility of trusteeship by any one nation because internationalization

⁷³PWC papers No. 124a, *ibid.*, pp. 1239-1242.

only would minimize the possible effort by individual countries to control Korean affairs and help adjust any possible rival claims. In no case, the paper concluded, should there be a mandate for the United States alone.

The principle as enunciated in these study papers seemed sound and reasonable in view of the fact that it was extremely questionable for the United States to make any commitment beyond that line. But, as will become apparent later, Great Britain and China, each for different reasons, had shown little interest in Korea, and the internationalization as hoped by the United States had ended up in a bilateralization between Russia and America. In fact, these study papers failed to envisage that the solution of Korean problems was less in the keeping of an international organization than in a "working agreement" between the powers having special interests in this area.⁷⁴ Nor did they consider the possibility that the United States might turn out to be a partner of Soviet Russia in filling the postwar power vacuum in the Far East. The studies, however, had not progressed far enough to enable the State Department to make any recommendation for decision at the time of the Yalta Conference.⁷⁵ The only informal mention regarding

⁷⁴Tyler Dennet, "In Due Course," Far Eastern Survey, XIV, No. 1 (January 17, 1945), p. 2.

⁷⁵F.R., The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, pp. 358-361.

Korea at Yalta was on the possible periods of trusteeship for Korea.⁷⁶

The conferences, and German capitulation heightened American concern for the political implications of the Russian advance in the Far East in case she joined the Pacific War, and attempts were made by the government to define the American political objectives in the postwar Far East. The need for obtaining assurance from Soviet Russia regarding the exact implementation of what had been agreed upon at Yalta, and the Soviet demands for occupation of part of the Japanese homeland were given serious consideration.⁷⁷ With reference to Korea, the United States seemed especially concerned with placing Korea, with full consent of Russia, under the four-power trusteeship, as manifested in Joseph Grew's memorandum of May, 1945.⁷⁸

A careful comparison of the two study papers of early 1944 and Grew's memorandum a year later shows that the American concern in internationalizing Korean

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 770. Roosevelt said it had taken about fifty years for the people of the Philippines to be prepared for self-government, and in the case of Korea it might be from twenty to thirty years.

⁷⁷Hopkin's report on his meeting with Stalin on May 28, 1945, as quoted in R. E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York, 1948), p. 904.

⁷⁸Grew's memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, Forrestal, dated May 12, 1945. F.R., 1945, VII, pp. 869-870.

problems had shifted from 'America's limited involvement in Korea in order to keep herself from taking full responsibility' to the 'involvement in order to curb Russian advance around Korea.' This was an important turning point and was related to the general trend within the American government regarding Russia at that time. A Briefing Book Paper prepared for the American delegation to the Potsdam Conference requested that the United States should obtain an agreement among the three powers--with China's anticipated cooperation--that they would jointly support whatever measures appeared best adapted to develop in Korea a strong, democratic, and independent nation, and obtain "at least Russian adherence to the Cairo declaration regarding Korea."⁷⁹ The United States Government evidently began to see it very necessary to escalate and intensify the effort to bind Soviet Russia to agreements on Korea with a view to warding off any extravagant demands Russia might make in the time to come.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ F.R., The Conference of Berlin, 1945, I, pp. 310-311. Also, see a Paper for the guidance of Harriman in talks with Stalin. A special emphasis is given on the structure and function of the international (four powers) organization to be set up in Korea. Ibid., pp. 882-883.

⁸⁰ Some bases for American suspicion of Russian intentions may have included the following facts: (1) Russian interest in occupying Pusan of south Korea (F.R., The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943, p. 257); (2) possible strong demands by the Soviet Union

Along with the rising concern about possible political moves on the part of Soviet Russia, more specific studies on the future of Korea were being made in the State Department. The main point was how to ensure a truly international control of postwar Korea where various political factors might be intermingled.⁸¹ And it was finally narrowed down to some form of interim, international supervisory organization which would take care of Korea's administration either under the authority of the United Nations or independently of it.⁸²

Since the ability of the Koreans to govern themselves immediately after the liberation still appeared doubtful to the United States, it was recommended to adopt an interim administrative organization in which all four powers would take part jointly. By July 4, 1945, the prospect of a strong Russian position in the postwar Far East had been envisaged so clearly that the

in postwar Korea (F.R., The Conference of Berlin, 1945, I, p. 313); (3) the Soviets may attempt to set up a "friendly government" in Korea as they had done in Eastern European countries (ibid., p. 927); (4) Russian concern in ascertaining whether or not the United States is interested in a joint Russo-American operation in Korea (ibid., II, p. 351).

⁸¹F.R., 1945, VI, p. 556f. A report by the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, dated June 28, 1945. Part III, Chap. III, A.

⁸²Briefing Book Paper by the State Department, July 4, 1945. F.R., 1945, VII, pp. 311-312.

Department of State recommended to the President that there must be Soviet representation in the interim organization regardless of whether or not Russia entered the war against Japan. The Department expected that Russia would be making strong demands for a leading role in Korean affairs and advised that if the Russians made demands that would limit the other powers to only a nominal voice, the United States should designate Korea as a trust area and place it under the authority of the United Nations.⁸³

Despite intensified concern and wariness about the expected Russian move in Korea, the United State government in July was still far from adopting a working policy regarding either the exact function of the interim international organization or its relationship with trusteeship. The possibility of bilateral military occupation of Korea was not seriously considered, as is manifested in a recommendation by the State Department. The recommendation suggested three stages for Korean administration: First, Allied military government to be

⁸³F.R., The Conference of Berlin, 1945, I, p. 313. China had already made it clear to the United States that no matter which army entered Korea, the possible military-civilian administration should be undertaken jointly by the three powers, China, the U.S., and Great Britain, and Soviet Russia if it had entered the war against Japan. See the conversation between Liu Chieh and Ballantine, February 17, 1945, F. R., 1945, VI, p. 1021.

established with the completion of military operations in Korea; second, interim international supervisory administration to succeed the Allied military government and to function until such time as the Koreans were able to govern themselves; and third, a free and independent Korea implying that Korea should be completely free and independent following the termination of any interim international supervisory authority for Korea.⁸⁴ But no clarification was made in the recommendation as to how the interim administration and the four-power trusteeship were related.

To add to the confusion, the President's Chief of Staff William Leahy recommended to President Truman that a four-power trusteeship be established right upon the defeat of Japan for so long a time as necessary for Korea to demonstrate its capacity to govern itself as a free and independent sovereign state.⁸⁵ A trusteeship for Korea by the four Allied powers independent of the United Nations was, as Stalin and Molotov put it, "an unusual arrangement with no parallel" and the Russians

⁸⁴F.R., The Conference of Berlin, 1945, I, p. 314.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 314-315. Also, see Secretary of War Stimson's memorandum for the President (July 16, 1945) which shows that he understood that an international trusteeship was agreed upon for Korea right after the Japanese capitulation. Ibid., II, p. 631.

were worried about its implementation without first arriving at "a detailed understanding" among the four powers.⁸⁶ Despite the agreement on trusteeship, the American government had no clear idea of concrete implementation of trusteeship in the face of urgent military needs and the lack of detailed discussions with other Allied powers. This proved frightfully costly for the Koreans when the American troops came to Korea unprepared for a new situation caused by Japanese surrender that came unexpectedly earlier.

The Koreans had not maintained a good relationship with the Japanese ever since the 17th century, and naturally, they were greatly delighted when the Pacific War broke out. Their confidence in American power was almost fanatic, and they were convinced that the war would end in the destruction of Japan, which meant an opportunity for Korea to regain independence. The Government-in-exile immediately presented a cabled declaration of intent to do everything it could to assist the United States in defeating the Japanese.⁸⁷ No one, not even the Koreans themselves, however, would

⁸⁶T. V. Soong's conversation with Stalin and Molotov on June 30, 1945, as reported to President Truman by Harriman. Truman, Years of Decisions (New York, 1955), p. 316.

⁸⁷Oliver, S. Rhee, p. 175.

have thought that they could make any quantitatively significant contribution, given the situation.

The American government on its part never quite neglected the war potentiality of the Koreans. The former American Consul General in Seoul reported in August 1942 that the national spirit was always there among the Koreans and that it needed to be rekindled along practical lines.⁸⁸ He, however, added cautiously that in view of Japanese suppression, any hasty uprising would only hurt the Koreans who had had no chance of being organized into revolutionary activities in Korea. In no case, he insisted, should the Koreans be made the "scapegoat of premature endeavors" as they were in 1919. A similar view was presented at the request of the State Department by Dr. Horace H. Underwood, a renowned life-long Christian missionary in Korea. He was pessimistic concerning any effective hostile action by the Koreans in Korea but suggested that any well-sponsored and well-supported activity started from outside might have some chance of success in the light of anti-Japanese spirit among the Koreans.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ OSS R&A, No. 20862 (August 15, 1942). A report by Harold B. Quarton, the former American Consul General in Seoul, Korea, to the State Department.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Horace H. Underwood to Mr. Quarton, August 15, 1942.

As the war progressed, the Korean people were more opposed to their Japanese taskmasters and there always existed the possibility that if well handled there could be reborn a line of definite action looking to the establishment of national independence. But the question was whether an uprising was worth risking within Korea. Had not the armed resistance movements been driven out of Korea long ago?

Given the situation, any chance of making a contribution to the Allied war effort had to be formed and nurtured outside Korea. In October, 1942, a Korean resident in the United States, Ilhan New, published a small book entitled The Other Ally of the Orient, in which he made a strong and persuasive point that Koreans overseas, under the guidance of the Korean Provisional Government, must be given material means by the Allies to fight the Japanese in order that Korea could fulfill its share in the war.⁹⁰ Following enunciation of the detailed plans of contribution the Koreans could make, the author emphasized as the justifiable reasons for such material aids that "a people who have fought, suffered, and have won their own right to liberty would be better prepared" to set up a government of their own. They would "know the

⁹⁰The text, together with critical notes by the Office of Strategic Services, is found in OSS R&A No. 35772 (May 8, 1943).

price of freedom" and would more diligently apply themselves to maintain it. If Korea's freedom came as the result of United Nations' victory in which the Korean Army had no great part, Korea would be grateful but the country would probably be occupied for a time at least by the conquering armies, which might even unintentionally deter the speedy rehabilitation of Korea. New was also worried that such military occupation would intensify rather than reduce a chance of power struggle around Korea.

This book attracted the attention of the Office of Strategic Services. The Office analyzed the contents of the book very carefully and intensively, and issued a critical note in which it concluded that developing the largest possible force of thoroughly trained Korean soldiers, commanded as far as possible by Korean officers, would seem desirable in the interests of the United Nations as a whole as well as of Korea itself. "Such a unit," the comment went on, "could do a specialized job which soldiers of no other nationality could perform so well." It could also be recognized as a Korean "token force" within the Allied command, thus letting the people of Korea and the world know that Koreans were in the middle of the fight.⁹¹

⁹¹Ibid., p. 8. Mr. New wrote the book at the suggestion of Lt. Col. Carrol T. Harris, Executive Officer of the San Francisco branch of the Military Intelligence Service.

It is, however, not clear whether or not this comment was reflected in any way in the policy making of the United States. In fact, in the summer of 1942, the Koreans had already submitted to the War Department a detailed plan for Korean units from Hawaii and the American mainland to serve in the Chinese area, but the proposal had not been accepted.⁹²

Even before the critical notes appeared in May, 1943, Syngman Rhee had occasion to meet with Col. M. Preston Goodfellow, who was on the staff of "Wild Bill" Donovan, Chief of the Office of the Strategic Services. They worked out a plan to select one hundred Koreans who knew both the Korean and Japanese languages, and to parachute them either in Japan or Korea where they would develop a program of active sabotage and establish contact with members of nationalist underground clubs within Korea. Eventually, the training commenced, and another similar group was being trained in China. The plan, however, collapsed midway partly due to the American strategy of defeating Japan through the Pacific islands rather than landing on the northern Chinese coast.⁹³

⁹²OSS R&A, No. 53715. Enclosure No. 2, to dispatch No. 1815, dated November 15, 1943, from the Embassy memorandum of conversation between Dr. Kim, Kiusic, Minister of Publicity, the Korean Provisional Government, Gen. Kim, Yak-San, and Lt. Hitch, Assistant Naval Attache, on November 12, 1943.

⁹³Oliver, S. Rhee, pp. 184-185.

Desires and plans of the Koreans to make meaningful contributions to the war were not met with desired response from the United States government for various reasons. Lack of unity among the Koreans overseas was stressed very frequently, and any feasible plan to utilize Korean manpower in fields like combat, propaganda, and intelligence as advised by the American experts in each field were completely ignored by the policy makers. Undeniably, the number of Koreans that could be mobilized and the extent of contribution likely to be made by them was negligible in the huge war efforts of the Allies. There was even no assurance that any such plan would bring forth the expected results without endangering America's prestige.⁹⁴

But the United States failed to grasp the political implication of the proposed military plans even after the Cairo Declaration in which she made a commitment to the political independence of Korea. Beginning from the spring of 1944, the State Department engaged itself in the study of the political status of postwar Korea but failed to find any correlation between the military plans presented by the Koreans and the political future of Korea. The U.S. Government rather attempted to simplify the political entanglement in postwar Korea by

⁹⁴OSS R&A, No. 70566 (April 5, 1944). A study of Korean potentialities in the Pacific war.

intentionally excluding Korean armed forces, rightist or leftist, from assuming an important role in the war.

It seemed almost certain to some Koreans in Chungking that Russia would enter the Pacific war for the purpose of settling old scores with Japan and to reestablish her previous influence in Manchuria. They were convinced that the United States could be a controlling force in determining the political results of the defeat of Japan. They hoped that the United States would exert her political influence in the Far East. They trusted the United States, and did not trust any of the other powers which might take over Far Eastern leadership.⁹⁵ But this hope proved futile and America's lack of interest in Korea continued to preclude action or even meaningful planning.

In 1945 discussions among the Americans developed further. Political revitalization of the Koreans seemed more desirable than ever before. It was suggested by China that the Korean Provisional Government should be reorganized into an underground movement along the lines of that of Free France, that it might stir up the people of Korea, inform them of developments overseas,

⁹⁵OSS R&A, 105310 (October 30, 1944).

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and instruct them in the methods of resistance.⁹⁶ And for this purpose, the Korean Provisional Government had already undertaken a program of working with the surrendered Korean soldiers in China who numbered about 2,000 to train them as underground agents.⁹⁷

The Koreans who were forced to serve in the Japanese Army in China seemed an invaluable asset for the Provisional Government in promoting the program of strengthening the underground movements. Assistance from the Chinese Government would enable them to make a contribution. As was reported in the National Herald of Chungking, the Chinese Government decided to set free scores of Korean captives detained in the Japanese prisoners camp at Liberty Village in South Hot Springs with a view to aiding the Korean restoration movement which was gaining momentum day by day. The Koreans who had been forced to work for Japan now were given a chance to work for the independence of their own country. The report stated that the liberated Koreans would be handed over to the Korean Revolutionary Army of the Provisional Government and that from that day on, the Koreans either

⁹⁶F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1019. Conversation between Shao and Ballantine. The question of political training for the Koreans was raised even earlier. See Arthur C. Bunce, "The Future of Korea: Part I," Far Eastern Survey, XIII, No. 8 (April, 1944), pp. 67-70. Also, J. Kyuang Dunn, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

⁹⁷Conversation between Shao and Ballantine, op. cit.

taken prisoner or who surrendered to the Chinese troops would be given freedom as soon as they reached Free China.⁹⁸

This policy had already been in practice in part at the Chinese prison camps,⁹⁹ but now was expanded to a fuller scale. China's concern in the future of Korea seemed further enhanced because any adverse situation in Korea might well endanger her security.

The State Department was well informed about this new development in China through the reports of the Office of Strategic Services. The OSS stated that the Chinese Government would unquestionably assist "substantially in reducing Japanese strength" and "in providing a larger body of qualified Korean personnel to be trained for our own activities."¹⁰⁰ There seemed to be a renewed American concern for utilizing the Koreans in the war.¹⁰¹ Acting Secretary of State Grew even wrote to Syngman Rhee in June that he might be assured

⁹⁸National Herald, May 16, 1945, as reported in OSS R&A, No. 133039 (May 26, 1945).

⁹⁹Central China News Service, Chungking, May 15, 1945, as quoted in OSS R&A, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹Joseph C. Grew's letter (March 20, 1945) to Hurley in reply to Sowang Cho's letter to the Secretary of State (March 1, 1945). F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1024-1025.

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that the military services of the United States had not neglected to examine carefully the potentialities of the Korean people in the war against Japan and that as the war progressed, the Korean people might be placed in a position to play an increasingly important role in the defeat of Japan."¹⁰²

The assurance of Grew sounded sweet and encouraging to the Koreans but in retrospect, it came too late. Or, was it mere lip service to appease the Koreans? Until the day in September when American troops landed in Korea that country had remained a strange land in a corner of Asia. Before the hurried landings there had been no positive and just evaluation of the Koreans, and no realistic preparation for the future of Korea, to which the United States had already made a commitment. All the expectation, confidence, and good will toward the American people seemed to disappear when the Koreans found, to their bitter disappointment, that the United States came to Korea quite empty-handed. Everything had to be begun hurriedly and with it began the long, costly drift.

¹⁰²Grew's letter to Syngman Rhee, June 5, 1945. Ibid., p. 1030.

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CHAPTER II

INITIAL INVOLVEMENT: A TEMPORARY BURDEN, AUGUST 1945-DECEMBER 1945

Despite the studies and recommendations at the expert's level regarding the political status of postwar Korea, the American government failed to establish any workable policy for Korea before the Japanese capitulation. The Potsdam Conference, which was concerned primarily with the military measures to shorten the war, and where the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz that preparation for a possible Japanese capitulation had become a "pressing necessity,"¹ added little to America's preparation for Korea. The dropping of two atomic bombs and the Russian entry into the war quickly brought the Japanese to their knees. Few Americans in responsible positions expected that the capitulation would come so soon. The United States simply did not have enough time to prepare for the Korean situation even if it had a will to do so.

¹Barbara W. Tuchman, Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945 (New York, 1971), p. 664.

Korea received no attention in the military planning because America's basic military strategy centered on the invasion of Kyūshū island of Japan. Any idea of landings in Korea was dismissed categorically.² American military leaders believed that Korea could be brought under Air Force control from Kyūshū. The whole of Korea was in the American zone of air and sea operations. But the United States did not include Korea in its plans for early land operations.³

The military was concerned with the Japanese Kwantung Army in China and as late as the Potsdam Conference and after the first successful explosion of the atomic bomb insisted that the Red Army had to be brought into the war.⁴ They thought that the war would not end shortly. The plan of action in case of Japanese surrender, BLACKLIST, called for the occupation of Korea by the Tenth Army under General Stilwell, but it was

²Gen. Marshall's comment. F.R., The Conference of Berlin, 1945, II, p. 351.

³Statement of John M. Allison, Deputy Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Dept. of State, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 81st Congress, 1st Session, Hearings on HR 5330, "Korean Aids" (Washington, June 2-23, 1949), pp. 118-119.

⁴Henry L. Stimson, McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1948), pp. 618-619; Edward R. Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference, ed. Walter Johnson (New York, 1949), p. 98; also, Stimson and Bundy, On Active Service, pp. 618-619.

anticipated that this would not take place until some time in late 1946. It is clear that the American military had not turned intelligence data on Japan's intention to surrender to good account before V-J Day.⁵

By early August, however, the collapse of Japan appeared imminent and this presented the possibility of an early American occupation of Korea. It was only then that the U.S. government began to give some hasty considerations to the unanticipated burden of occupation. The assignment fell to the XXIVth Corps in Okinawa which had been devoting itself entirely to the plan of invasion of the Japanese mainland. In August, about one hundred men who had been trained for the occupation of Japan worked for "three days" preparing plans for the military occupation of Korea. Two weeks before, many of these same men scarcely knew where Korea was located. Naturally, ignorance handicapped most of them from the outset. These military government officers had none of

⁵Robert J. C. Butow, Japan's Decision to Surrender (Stanford, California, 1954), p. 130; Gen. Eisenhower advised Truman not to give anything away to get Russia into the Pacific War because there was no question that Japan was already thoroughly beaten. See The Forrestal Diaries, ed. Walter Millis (New York, 1955), pp. 78-79; for negative opinions, see Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., pp. 618-619, and James Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York, 1947), p. 262.

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the benefits of previous planning, ideas, or instruction concerning Korea.⁶

Though not solidified into working policies yet, various studies and recommendations in line with multinational military occupation had been made within the government as a means to head off possible international rivalries in Korea. But in early August the situation was developing in such a way that the American government felt compelled to give hasty consideration to the possibility of bilateral, instead of multilateral, occupation of Korea. A recommendation along this line had already been made before the Russian entry into the war.⁷

The entrance of the Soviet Union into the war, and the suddenness of Japanese surrender compelled the State Department and the Armed Services to move quickly.⁸

⁶William J. Gane, Foreign Affairs in South Korea, August 1945 to August 1950 (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1951), p. 10. The author was one of those officers. Many of these basic characteristics have also been confirmed by another such officer, Mr. Arthur Frank Brandstatter, professor of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University; interviewed at Michigan State University on March 4, 1975.

⁷State Department Press Release, No. 931 (December 27, 1946).

⁸Harry S. Truman, Years of Decisions (New York, 1955), p. 382. At the July 24th meeting at Potsdam, Gen. Antonov, the Red Army Chief of Staff, told the other Allies that Russia would not enter the war in the Pacific before the latter half of August and that

In fact, Russian entry into the war raised the question of who was to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops in Korea. The military suggested zonal acceptance as the best practicable measure to cope with the almost undisturbed Russian advance in Korea.⁹ The Russian desire to occupy Pusan was known even in 1943, and at the Potsdam Conference, the Soviet leaders confirmed that the American troops would not participate in any land operation in Korea. Russian entry into the war, therefore, meant an undisturbed advance as far south as she wanted to go in Korea.

At this juncture, the U.S. government, with fresh memories of what the presence of the Red Army had meant in the Eastern European countries, improvised measures to offset the possible development of a situation that might be detrimental to American interests in the postwar Far East. According to Dean Rusk's recollection, it was between August 10 and 15 that the United States finally hammered out the plan of divided

it would be only after satisfactory negotiations with the Chinese government were achieved. The negotiations ended only August 14, while the Red Army had been in the war since August 8.

⁹Arthur L. Grey, Jr., "The Thirty-Eighth Parallel," Foreign Affairs (April, 1951), pp. 482-487.

zonal occupation along the 38th parallel.¹⁰ The State Department desired that the U.S. forces receive the Japanese surrender as far north as possible, but only limited American forces were immediately available. As a compromise between desire and reality, Col. Rusk and Col. C. H. Bonesteel, III, recommended the 38th parallel. It was neither a secret agreement nor bargained for by either side. It was adopted solely to prevent Russia from occupying the whole of Korea.¹¹

Russia had agreed to a trusteeship for Korea, as proposed by the United States. There was little sign that the divided military occupation would prolong or thwart the implementation of the trusteeship plan. Americans, who participated in drawing a line of division across Korea, were both surprised and pleased that the Russians accepted the American plan of division "in view of our respective military positions" in Korea.¹² The limited troops available, the presence of the Red Army already in Korea, and fear of American authorities

¹⁰F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1039. The War Department proposed division along the 38th parallel on August 11th. See S 3809 House of Representatives, debate on Mutual Assistance to Korea, July 18, 1950, by Rep. Walter H. Judd.

¹¹U.S. Congress, Senate, The United States and the Korean Problems, Documents, 1943-1953, pp. 2-3; also, see Truman, Years of Decision, pp. 440, 444-45.

¹²F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1039.

of a continental war against the Japanese on Korean soil, made it inevitable that the United States should insist on divided occupation. It seemed justifiable only because the occupation was viewed as short term and long enough to accept Japanese surrender, repatriate Japanese military and civilians to Japan, and maintain order for a brief period.

Thus, the division was justified for compound reasons of military and political considerations. It was accepted by Stalin and was promulgated in General Order No. 1 on September 2, 1945. Neither the British nor Chinese governments expressed objection to this arrangement.

One very important factor was overlooked in this arrangement; namely, the impact upon Korea's national life and the psychological response of the Koreans who had lived as a nation for centuries. American policy makers assumed that a historically weak Korea had no choice but to follow the decisions made by the major powers. The American attitude toward Korea, reflected in Roosevelt's position, was one of paternalism. Korea was to be enlightened through education and training. There was little evidence that there had been any basic change in this attitude at the end of the War. The division of Korea at the 38th parallel was an inevitable byproduct of these assumptions.

Before the entry into the Pacific war, Stalin had suggested to the United States that the Red Army accept the surrender of the Japanese forces in Hokkaido. The first response of Soviet Russia to the General Order No. 1 was also that she wanted at least the northern part of Hokkaido along the Kushiro-Rumoi line. She reminded the United States of the Japanese occupation of the whole Soviet Far East in 1919-21.¹³ But the suggestion was refused categorically by the United States on the ground that the American forces "had earned the right" to accept the surrender on the main Japanese islands.¹⁴ Later, on August 10-11, Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov proposed that it was conceivable to have two supreme commanders for the Allied forces in the Pacific. The American response to this, as pointed out by W. Averell Harriman, was that the United States had carried the main burden of the Pacific war for four years and had kept the Japanese off Russia's back while the Soviets "had been in the war but for two days."¹⁵

The United States, for political reasons, opposed Russian occupation of any part of Japan after the war but easily accepted dividing Korea for the alleged military

¹³Truman, Decisions, p. 439.

¹⁴John R. Deane, Strange Alliance (New York, 1947), p. 281.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

reason. Soviet Russia obtained special rights in Manchuria and especially in the Liaotung peninsula through the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance.¹⁶ And Harriman advised the American government that the United States was under no obligation to the Soviets to respect any zone of Soviet military operation, implying that Russia should not be allowed to have any positive voice in political and military problems of postwar Japan.¹⁷

The preparation for the zonal occupation was so hasty and confused that even General Douglas MacArthur was still thinking as late as August 22, 1945, that the occupation of Korea would be on a "quadripartite basis."¹⁸ General John R. Hodge who was to command the occupation troops in Korea was without directives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff or any other authorities as late as August 26; this fact justifiably evoked complaint by U. Alexis Johnson, the then American Consul at Manila.¹⁹

¹⁶For more details, see H. M. Vinacke, "United States Far Eastern Policy," Pacific Affairs, XIX, No. 4 (December, 1946), p. 358.

¹⁷Truman, Decisions, pp. 433-434.

¹⁸General MacArthur's inquiry to the JCS, August 22, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1037-1038.

¹⁹Paul Steintorf, Consul General at Manila, to the Secretary of State, August 26, 1945. Ibid., p. 1041.

General Hodge was accompanied by only one State Department officer as political adviser, who was a specialist on Japanese affairs and without experience in Korea.²⁰ Hodge landed in Korea with only a draft directive, which did not include specific recommendations as to immediate steps to be taken in political and economic matters. In fact, the "Basic Initial Directive" was approved by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and the Joint Chiefs of Staff only on September 14.²¹ Besides, there was no civil affairs team attached to the XXIVth Corps, and the military government had been under control of the "tactical forces" during the crucial several weeks after the landing.²²

By contrast, Soviet Russia was far better prepared for the occupation and control of Korea. It was reported in February 1945 that in addition to the well-known Korean Communist Army, the Russians had perfected a civil organization composed entirely of Koreans which would move in with the army and take over the civil

²⁰George M. McCune, "Occupation Politics in Korea," Far Eastern Survey, XV, No. 3 (February 13, 1946), p. 34; a State Department liaison personnel to the occupation forces was dispatched only upon the request of the Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1040-1041.

²¹F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1045, n. 58.

²²Mead, Military Government, p. 47.

administration of the country.²³ These military and civil organizations were brought into Korea in Russian military uniform.

The Red Army entered Korea only four days after the Russians joined the Pacific war. The Soviet press immediately began propaganda on the decisive contribution made by the Red Army in crushing Japan, with an eye to offsetting the impression created by Russia's late entry into the Japanese war. They were particularly bringing into focus their alleged security needs and were quoted as saying that Manchuria and to a lesser degree Korea were bases for Japanese aggression against the U.S.S.R. and a long-standing menace to Soviet society,²⁴ obviously drawing a parallel of Poland.

Soviet Russia took full advantage of its own dominant military power and America's limitations both as regards military power and political interest in Korea. They began to fortify north Korea to such an

²³OSS R&A, No. 120760 (February 27, 1945), "Future of Korea."

²⁴Harriman's telegram to the Secretary of State, August 21, 1945, State Department File, 740.00119 P.W./8-2145; North Koreans continued the same propaganda even in 1949. See Minchok Powi-Sŏng Munhwa hulryŏn-Kuk (Cultural Training Bureau, Defense Ministry), Soryŏn-ŭn Chosŏn Inmin-ŭi Minchok-chŏk mit Kuk-ka chŏk Ri-ik-ŭi Chinchŏng Hako Sichong Ilkwan-Han Ong-Ho-Cha Ita (Soviet Russia is the Truthful and Consistent Protector of the National Interests of the Korean People) (Pyŏngyang, 1949), pp. 1-6.

extent that General Hodge who came to Korea one month later than the Red Army complained that the Soviet occupation authorities considered the 38th parallel not as a line of military administrative convenience, as it was supposed to be, but "a wall around their preserve."²⁵ Supplies of essential commodities dwindled and the essential socio-economic unity of Korea was on the edge of destruction. Initial efforts by General Hodge to rectify the situation through negotiations on the local level proved hopeless. Within two weeks after landing, the political adviser in Korea was recommending to the State Department an early contact between the two governments. "Unless something . . . is done in the very near future," he warned, "the welcome, trust, and respect accorded to the United States by the Koreans may well be transformed into distrust."²⁶ The first directives in occupying Korea came to General MacArthur only on October 17 after two turbulent and even tumultuous months had elapsed since Japanese capitulation.²⁷

²⁵Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (Signet Book ed.: New York, 1970), p. 582.

²⁶H. M. Benninghoff's letter to the Secretary of State, September 26, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1059-1060.

²⁷Basic Initial Directive in Occupying Korea, undated. Transmitted to General MacArthur on October 17, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1073f.

Zonal division had already begun taking heavy tolls. Economic and social unrest could have been mitigated had it not been for irresponsible actions taken by the Japanese during the last days. For one thing, they printed an almost unlimited amount of Bank of Chosen notes, thereby promoting uncontrollable inflation.²⁸ The discriminatory economic policy Japan had imposed upon the Koreans made the black market flourish beyond control and contributed a great deal to fostering the practice of hoarding among the Koreans. The Korean economy had been distorted to fit Japanese aims. The Korean industry had been made wholly dependent on Japan, from technicians to the replacement of parts.²⁹ An abrupt severance of economic relations between the two countries was tantamount to smothering the Korean economy.

The economic hardships caused by the reduced and grudging supply of raw materials such as coal from north Korea added to the economic breakdown but this situation could have been rectified had it not been for political

²⁸The total amount of Bank of Chosen notes in circulation as of July, 1945, was 4.7 million wŏn. It jumped in August to 8.0 million wŏn. Chosen Bank, Monthly Statistical Review (January, 1947), pp. 11-43, as quoted in George M. McCune, Korea Today, Appendix C, table 1.

²⁹For Japan's imperialistic economic policy toward Korea, see Andrew Grajdanzev, Modern Korea (New York, 1944), Chaps. V-XII.

confrontation along ideological lines. The ideological discrepancies of the right and left which had been associated from the beginning with the two occupation forces were brought into a sharper focus as a result of territorial division. Besides, the Koreans at the time were extremely sensitive and impatient in demolishing completely any remnant of Japanese colonial rule in their country. This impatience often expressed itself in extreme denunciation of Japanese rule.

This trend, however, should be very carefully distinguished from an indoctrinated mass movement by the leftists or Communists. It has often been argued that Korea in the wake of liberation was filled with 'revolutionary' spirit, ready for leftist mass movement or revolution,³⁰ and that Korea's case for 'revolution' was so compelling that in 1945 she found herself in the middle of "revolutionary turmoil."³¹ The 'revolutionary' situation, some scholars have argued, was "indigenous to Korea," having nothing to do with the Red Army in the north or the Communist agents dispatched to south Korea.

³⁰Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954 (New York, 1972), p. 277.

³¹Bruce Cummings, "American Policy and Korean Liberation," in Without Parallel: The American-Korean Relationship Since 1945, ed. Frank Baldwin (New York, 1974), p. 39.

Undeniably, demands for socio-economic reforms were high among the Koreans. And land reform and nationalization of the main industries were among the most urgent and important reforms demanded. But these were not the monopoly of the Communists or leftists. Even those who were branded by the Communists as extreme conservatives or reactionaries also advocated similar reforms as an indispensable step toward building a new nation.³² In general, the Korean people aspired for social reforms within the context of nation building following the collapse of Japanese colonialism. As far as Korea of 1945 was concerned, the naive and simple impulse of opposing oppression and inequality did not necessarily imply an all-out denunciation of the capitalistic social system or a full-fledged support of revolutionary socialism or Communism, as asserted by some.³³ Socio-economic reform was strongly favored by the majority but it would be rather misleading to assert that the aspiration for such reform was bound to a mass revolutionary movement with a Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation. While differing in details of method, all

³² Syngman Rhee's economic program as adopted by the Representative Democratic Council, in March, 1946. See Henry Chung, The Russians Came to Korea (Washington, 1947), p. 208.

³³ For instances, see Kolko and Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 279; Cummings, in Without Parallel, p. 48.

the political parties in Korea, even the Communist Party, strove to appear to the masses as nationalistic as possible because they were aware that preaching of social theory isolated from nationalist appeal was least likely to be understood or accepted by the common people.³⁴

This was the political and social setting of Korea in which General Hodge and his troops found themselves in late 1945. Korean problems had already assumed a political and economic nature to such an extent that an army trained primarily for accepting the surrender of enemy troops could not manage even for a short while. Furthermore, there was no combat phase in Korea and the military government began with a garrison stage, which terminated only in December when the occupational program planned at the Moscow meeting was adopted.³⁵

To compensate for a total lack of preparation, General Hodge decided to temporarily retain ranking Japanese officials and technicians in the liberated Korea, only to evoke fierce criticism not only from the Koreans but the American government as well. The State-War-Navy

³⁴For the political platforms and policies of these political parties, see Chung-Ang Sŏn-Kŏ Wiwŏn-Hoe, Republic of Korea, Taehan Minkuk Chŏng-Tang Sa (History of Political Parties of the Republic of Korea) (Seoul, 1964), pp. 86-100.

³⁵E. Grant Mead, American Military Government in Korea (New York, 1951), p. 46.

Coordinating Committee admitted that Hodge's decision had already had an unfortunate effect on the American position in Korea.³⁶ Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson asked the President to issue a public statement clarifying the intention of the American government.³⁷ Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., charged that the decision to use the Japanese was in "direct opposition to everything . . . America fought for"³⁸ At last, a Presidential statement was issued in which the President said that such Japanese as may be retained temporarily were "being utilized as servants for the Korean people" and pleaded that the goal of independence for Korea was in view but its speedy attainment would require "time and patience."³⁹

This confusion, however, was not created solely by lack of political and economic training on the part of General Hodge and his military government officers. As far as use of Japanese technicians after liberation was concerned, the possibility and advisability had

³⁶F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1044. Memorandum of SWNCC dated September 10, 1945.

³⁷Ibid., p. 1047.

³⁸State Department File, 740.00119 P.W./9-1045. A letter from Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., to Secretary of State James Byrnes.

³⁹Presidential statement released by the White House, September 18, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1048.

already been studied in 1944, and the recommendation was made on the ground that politically undesirable results of the use in the Korean economy of Japanese technical personnel could to a great extent be controlled and would be more than offset by the practical needs for the use of such personnel.⁴⁰ But this hopeful expectation failed to take into account the state of mind of a people who had been suppressed by another nation for more than three decades. It belied the reality of postwar Korea.

The most embarrassing problem for General Hodge and the Military Government was that they had no definite instructions as to the policy regarding Korea's future.⁴¹ The problem lay in the fact that the Korean situation had developed in such a way that the commander of the U.S. troops had to have something to say about the immediate future of Korea. It seemed not entirely unlikely that the south Koreans might repudiate the United States if the confusion was prolonged. Hodge wrote frankly to General MacArthur that, based on policies to date, there was little to encourage the Koreans to believe that the Allied promise of Korean independence

⁴⁰Memorandum by the Inter-Divisional Area Committee on the Far East, Washington, March 29, 1944. F.R., 1944, V, pp. 1228-1230.

⁴¹F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1049-1053.

was sincere, and he expressed doubt that any of the powers with the exception of Russia had given serious thought to the problems involved.⁴²

There had been reports that Soviet Russia had been training an army estimated to contain approximately 100,000 Koreans together with some Chinese and Mohammedans in Central Asia. Many of these Koreans were those who came to Manchuria and Siberia to flee Japanese rule. In the spring of 1943, this army was moved to Russia and formed a part of the Russian defense against the original German invasion of Russia.⁴³ The 30,000 Korean Communists who returned to Korea with the Red Army in August, 1945, were a part of the original 100,000 men.

These Korean Communists did not appear in the front of north Korean politics as long as the People's Republic and the Preparatory Committee for Nation Building were active.⁴⁴ Their primary assignment within the military occupation was to help organize a Communist Party of north Korea behind the scenes. This was in violation of the "one party in one nation" principle of the international Communist movement because there had

⁴²Ibid., pp. 1054-1057.

⁴³OSS R&A, No. 120760 (Feb. 27, 1945).

⁴⁴Kolko and Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 280.

been existing a Seoul-centered Korean Communist Party composed mainly of the native Communists. The Soviet Union lacked faith in the native Korean Communists and therefore proceeded to supplant them. In this process a struggle for hegemony was inevitable between the brought-ins and the native Communists, and the murder of Hyŏn, Chun-Hyŏk, the secretary in charge and head of the political department of the South Pyŏng-an branch of the Korean Communist Party was an example of such struggle.

Hyŏn, an indigenous radical leftist who reportedly advocated a gradual "Bourgeois democratic revolution" in postwar Korea,⁴⁵ and who was thought to be a stiff competitor for leadership among the Communists and who could certainly have been expected to "outshine a young unknown guerrilla leader like Kim, Il-sŏng" had the Russians elected to remain neutral,⁴⁶ was assassinated in broad daylight as early as September 28. This was the first case of political terrorism against leaders in the liberated Korea.

⁴⁵Dae-Sook Suh, Documents of Korean Communism, 1918-1948 (Princeton, 1970), p. 490.

⁴⁶Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I, p. 322. Kim, Ch'ang-Sun, author of Puk-Han Siponyŏn-Sa (Fifteen Year History of North Korea) (Seoul, 1961) says Kim, Il-Sŏng came to Pyŏngyang in early September, pp. 66-68.

As soon as the Russians came to Korea, they disbanded by force the indigenous self-rule committees and replaced them with people's political committees dominated by Communists.⁴⁷ Many of those who came to control the committees were core members of the two Korean Communist divisions who had hitherto worked behind the scene.⁴⁸ The Soviets, thus, had a Korean core group of support trained and backed by them.

The Americans in the south had neither such a supporting group nor well-defined programs in their zone. The south Koreans grew more impatient with America's lack of social and economic plans. Non-Communists were uneasy because they believed that the north Korean Communists and the Soviet occupation authorities were attempting to draw popular support by promising them far-reaching social and economic reforms. They felt that placing full trust in the American occupation authorities was unjustifiable unless the commander showed them clearly where Korea was going, which, unfortunately, was a matter quite impossible for General Hodge to do at that time due to lack of information. The gap between

⁴⁷A confidential letter dated September 26, 1945, from two Presbyterian pastors in Sinŭichu, Revs. Youn, Ha-Young, and Han, Kyung-Chik, to the Headquarters of the Allied Forces through an American chaplain, Lowe. OSS XL 26109.

⁴⁸Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Yŏksa-ui Chŭng-in (A Witness of History) (Seoul, 1956), p. 36.

the primary American mission which was basically 'technical' and the political aspiration of the Korean people was getting wider.

It was not only those non-Communist Koreans who were uneasy and frustrated; the Americans who were really concerned about Korea felt no less so. The political adviser in Japan, George Atcheson, for instance, saw it as strongly advisable for the State Department to consider the use of some progressive, popular and respected leaders, or small groups, to act as a nucleus of Korean politics. Even though giving open and official support to any one leader or group or combination was contrary to past American thinking, "the present situation in Korea," he insisted, "fully warrants such a step."⁴⁹ Unless positive actions in this line were taken, America's difficulties, he feared, would increase rather than decrease and would let the Russians have a fertile field to work on in the American zone.

Attempts to negotiate with the Soviet Headquarters in an effort to mitigate the immediate hardships resulting from the zonal division were futile. The Russians not only declined the proposal for negotiations but also instructed the Soviet liaison detachment in

⁴⁹ Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State, October 15, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1091-1092.

Seoul to withdraw and informed the American authorities that they would not accept an American detachment in Pyŏngyang.⁵⁰ Thereupon, General Hodge recommended to the Joint Chiefs of Staff a contact on a higher level. Such contact, however, was never realized before the Conference of the Foreign Ministers in Moscow in December.

Confusion, dissatisfaction, and frustration were everywhere. The non-Communist Koreans thought that chances for independence were growing more remote and that no clear prospect of Korea's future was within sight. The inadequately prepared American authorities in Korea had often been sandwiched hopelessly between the Koreans of various political colors and frequently had been made scapegoats by their own government. The American Military Government, as Hodge confessed, was rapidly losing popularity and support among the Koreans. The United States government was increasingly worried about the fast deteriorating situation in Korea.

By this time, the United States government realized that the General order No. 1 for occupying Japan which initially was to be applied to Korea mutatis mutandis had adversely affected the American position

⁵⁰General Hodge's report to the JCS, October 11, 1945. Ibid., pp. 1071-1072.

there.⁵¹ Despite the directives, many Americans in the Military Government were uneasy because they felt that America's Korean policy had been "predicated solely on Russian cooperation with no planning beyond this premise."⁵² It was even suggested that it might be more realistic to "by-pass trusteeship" and seek Russian guarantees in establishing a Governing Commission.⁵³ This uneasiness was confirmed by the Assistant Secretary of State John J. McCloy who visited Korea in November.

McCloy was especially critical of John C. Vincent whose memorandum as the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs to Colonel Russel R. Vittrup disclosed the grave misconception and confusion that existed in the State Department regarding Korea. Ignoring what had hitherto been experienced, analyzed, and recommended by the personnel on the spot, Vincent wrote to Hodge to refrain from giving support to particular Koreans or groups of Koreans because such action "might complicate the political problems facing the Military Government" and "would encourage the Soviet commander to sponsor a similar group in his zone," which would postpone a unified Korea. He seemed quite unaware that the Soviets

⁵¹Ibid., p. 1041.

⁵²Political Adviser Langdon to the Secretary of State, Dec. 11, 1945. Ibid., p. 1141.

⁵³Ibid.

had already begun supporting Communists and suppressed through them non-Communists dissenters long before. Furthermore, Vincent stated in the same memorandum that the trusteeship system would be under the United Nations Organization, which was not correct. The trusteeship was to be lodged in the four powers, according to the American plan.⁵⁴

Against this unrealistic appraisal of the Korean situation, McCloy made a strong point that future American policy for south Korea would have to take into consideration the irreversible fact that the Soviets had continuously refused to cooperate in solving the problem of a divided Korea in which there was absolutely no intercourse or cooperation between the two zones. A more realistic consideration had to be given to such factors as the seriousness of non-cooperation of the most pro-American rightists with the Military Government, the effect of north Korean Communist solidification upon south Korea, and the Soviet refusal of cooperation on the local level.⁵⁵

This analysis at a high level in the American government had a point but came too late. By the eve of the Moscow Conference, the commander of the American

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 1113-1114. Memorandum of Nov. 7, 1945.

⁵⁵John J. McCloy's letter to Acheson, Nov. 13, 1945. Ibid., pp. 1123-1124.

occupation forces had grown so frustrated because of the long and costly drift in Korea that he even recommended "simultaneous withdrawal" of both Soviet and American troops from Korea, "leaving her to its own devices." This was seemingly an irresponsible alternative after four months' artificial division of a country, having driven it into unsurmountable difficulties in its national life. But in Hodge's judgment it appeared in the American interest to put an end to the Korean policy that had "drifted to the edge of a political-economic abyss" than to continue the inaction that was making the American position in Korea more untenable and reducing further the already waning popularity of the Military Government.⁵⁶ The confusion and drift since the end of the war was unfortunate for the United States because Korea was, in George McCune's words, "proving to be [a] testing ground of American postwar policy."⁵⁷

The American Military Government was doomed to failure. Poor preparation, manifold and unfamiliar duties to which it was not oriented, lack of competent personnel, non-cooperation of influential Koreans, the

⁵⁶Hodge's letter to JCS, Dec. 16, 1945. Ibid., pp. 1144-148.

⁵⁷McCune, "Occupation Politics in Korea." The author was in charge of Korean affairs in the Office of the Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department.

situation created by the 38th parallel, poor understanding of Korean background and their psychology, all contributed adversely to maintaining its prestige and efficacy, as one Military Government member reflected later.⁵⁸ More fundamentally, lack of a well-defined and clear policy took a fatal toll. Not only the Korean people but many Americans in Korea were affected by this confusion and drift. For many of them, Korea became known as "the end of the line--a kind of Siberia for American troops."⁵⁹ And who was entitled to blame these soldiers who were isolated from the prevalent trends of demobilization at home and engulfed with bitter experiences in Korea, even not knowing why they were there?

Political confusion in south Korea was also a product of what the Japanese authorities in Korea had done just before capitulation. On August 14, the Japanese Civil Governor Ryūsaku Endō decided to invite three most prominent Koreans to consult concerning the transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of order after Japanese surrender. The first of them, Song, Chin-Woo, rejected the offer on the ground that he saw no reason

⁵⁸For more details, see Bertram D. Sarafan, "Military Government: Korea," Far Eastern Survey, XV, No. 23 (Nov. 20, 1946), pp. 349-351.

⁵⁹Richard E. Lauterbach, Danger From the East (New York, 1947), pp. 223-225.

to act for the Japanese when the legality of such a request by the defeated Japanese was questionable. To him, the Korean Government-in-exile was the only legitimate organization, if any, to assume the responsibility of helping the U.S. occupational forces in maintaining order in Korea.

So, the assignment fell upon Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng, who accepted it and with it began his colorful yet wavering political career. His supporters labeled him as a democratic socialist, and excused him for his having closely associated with the Communists as an inevitable step to achieve a unified Korea. To his opponents, however, he appeared a mere opportunist who shifted between various spectra of political thought and groups but always hoping to achieve his personal ambition. Both views may have a certain measure of truth.⁶⁰

Yŏ moved swiftly and with the help of Ahn, Chae-Hong, established Kŏnkuk Chunpi Wiwŏn-Hoe (Preparatory Committee for Nation Building) on August 15. By the end of August, 1945, local branch committees had been reportedly organized in south and north Korea, and these posed as the main body for the future Korean government. Two days before the arrival of the American occupational

⁶⁰About Yŏ's political affiliation, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism of Korea, Part I, pp. 233-235.

troops, the Committee proclaimed the inauguration of the Korean People's Republic. Names of the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government, who at that time were still thousands of miles from Korea, were included in the People's Congress. But the Republic was launched explicitly so as to assure the hegemony of the Committee in the future Korean government and to exclude other rightist groups.

The Central Committee of the People's Republic was dominated numerically by the Communists although it was not so on the local level.⁶¹ In many cases, these local committees were controlled by the moderates who were well known and influential in their respective localities. But Communist tactics of infiltration and propaganda were soon effective and by late September, the local committees also came under the control of the Communists and, to a lesser degree, leftists.⁶² The majority of rightists boycotted the People's Republic from the beginning, and those rightists who took part in the initial stage of the Republic departed from it by the end of September.

⁶¹ Il-Wŏn Pak, Namno-dang Ch'ong Pip'an (General Criticism of the South Korea Labor Party) (Seoul, 1948), p. 34, as quoted in Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 239.

⁶² Mead, Military Government, pp. 55-57. His description is on the situation in Chŏlla-Namdo Province.

Words such as rightist, leftist, moderate, Communist, revolutionary, and conservative, came into use as soon as Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism. They, however, carried a very loose definition and were used loosely. The only major dividing line was the extent of inclination toward the two social systems represented by the United States and Soviet Russia. The Communists endeavored to establish in Korea a social system patterned after that of the Soviet Union, while the rightists favored a Western democratic, capitalistic social system. These two groups represented the two extreme wings.

Many leftists were not Communists. They did not necessarily desire to sovietize Korea and differed from the rightists in that they preferred revolutionary measures to overthrow the capitalistic social system. The moderates represented almost every spectrum of political thought in a mild way. The rightists strove in essence to conserve the capitalistic system, while the Communists and leftists were committed to destroying it through revolutionary means. The Communists and leftists, while disagreeing as to the correct relationship to Soviet Russia, were nevertheless united in most political controversies and in their political, social

and economic programs. Nationalism was not the monopoly of any one of these groups.⁶³

Before the war, the Japanese used to brand all anti-Japanese as Communists or pro-Communists. This was done to give the Koreans an impression that these Communists were breakers of law and order. Undeniably, Communists and leftists actively participated in what the Japanese called "Red bandits" guerrilla movements in Manchuria, but Japan in effect planted an incorrect impression among the Korean people that the resistance was all Communist. When Korea was liberated, the Korean masses looked upon the resistance leaders as heroes.⁶⁴

A handful of genuine Communists and leftists were quick to exploit the general emotional trends of the common people.⁶⁵ They magnified what they had contributed to the liberation of their fatherland and strove to impress the masses that they were the only ones who deserved the leading role in a new Korea. Any argument that postwar Korea was "unmistakably . . . pointing . . .

⁶³Chōng-Tang Sa, pp. 75-146, 511-598.

⁶⁴About the Communist partisans' activities, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I, Chap. III.

⁶⁵Kolko and Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 277. The Kolkos say that the leftists controlled the resistance (as Japan alleged) and had a "mass base." This is incorrect, for the support by the Korean masses was given regardless of right or left as long as they were resistant.

toward a leftist government" was a purely superficial observation even though it can hardly be denied that there was a fertile soil for the Communists and leftists.⁶⁶

General Hodge was told not to give recognition to any Korean group as having governmental authority and to treat all parties impartially. The People's Republic refused to abandon its claim as a government. Therefore, Hodge declared on October 25 that the Military Government was the only government in Korea, and again in December warned sternly that activities of any political organization in any attempted operations as a government were to be treated as "unlawful" activities.⁶⁷

But America's traditional attitude of withholding recognition of any particular Korean leader or group was not the sole reason for denouncing the so-called People's Republic. The People's Republic, with the support of leftists and Communists, caused considerable trouble from the point of view of the Americans. The trouble caused by them, under the guise of being the government, eclipsed other more pressing problems

⁶⁶McCune, "Occupation Politics"; also, Richard J. H. Johnston, in the New York Times, Jan. 5, 1946, and Gordon Walker in Christian Science Monitor, Jan. 3, 1946.

⁶⁷U.S. Military Government, Chukan Digest, No. 2 (Oct. 25, 1945), as quoted in McCune, Korea Today, p. 48.

like economic hardships.⁶⁸ General Hodge had been receiving reports from non-Communist sources of north Korea, including the great right-wing nationalist leader, Cho, Man-Shik, about the danger of Communist activities in Korea and complained that "lack of clear-cut policy" and America's occupation policy of "ensuring freedom" were contributing to turn Korea into a "fertile land for Communism."⁶⁹

In addition to the flow of personnel and funds from north Korea into the south, there was also evidence, according to the Military Government, that the Russian Consul General was assisting the Korean Communists in the People's Republic, working behind the scenes in apparent attempts to discredit the United States and its occupation policies in the eyes of the Koreans. The Military government's distrust of the People's Republic as a Communist-controlled organization was, thus, another important reason for not recognizing it, and such distrust was deepened undeniably by the rightists' attack on the Republic.⁷⁰ The State Department, however,

⁶⁸A letter from MacArthur to the Department of War, Oct. 24, 1945, No. CA53789, CCS 381.21 Korea, Section 12.

⁶⁹F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1145-1146.

⁷⁰Hodge's letter to MacArthur, Oct. 12, 1945. Ibid., p. 1073.

was less pessimistic about Communist threats in south Korea.⁷¹

The vacuum that existed between Japanese surrender and landing of the American occupation troops caused confusion among the Koreans. The People's Republic owed its existence almost entirely to this vacuum. It enjoyed every benefit of this vacuum: The endless aspiration of the Korean people for independence after Japan's collapse; heightened emotional response to such a moving scene as freeing of political prisoners; virtually unrestricted participation in political and social movements with a feeling that at last they became the master of their own life; and above all, non-existence of central administrative authorities.

As referred to in the foregoing chapter, the Korean Provisional Government that was established in 1919 in Shanghai, China, had never been warmly received by the United States. Upon Japanese capitulation, an advance group of the Government flew to Korea on August 18 but was refused the right to land by the Japanese. Since then, there had been no official contact between the Provisional Government and the American Military Government. The Provisional Government was especially concerned over political activities in the Soviet zone.

⁷¹F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 613-614.

Fear of Communist activities was further intensified by a broadcast of Pak, Yun-Kom, president of the Korean College in Yen-an, in which he said that they aimed at setting up a government in Korea according to Communist ideals.⁷² The Chinese Government also expressed concern over the reports that Soviet Russia was organizing or sponsoring Communistic governmental groups in the Soviet occupied zone. Chiang Kai-shek suggested that it would be advisable to fly members of the Korean Provisional Government to Korea, and that if the United States recognized the Korean Provisional Government, China would be glad to follow it.⁷³

The leaders of the Provisional Government had to return to Korea on an individual basis long after the Communists were brought into north Korea by the Soviets. Syngman Rhee returned on October 16. Kim, Ku and other leaders returned on November 23, and others only on December 2. They made official statements that they returned home not as members of the Exiled-Government but as Korean citizens. Especially Kim, Ku made it clear in a press interview on November 24 that since there had been an American Military Government in south

⁷²Pauley's letter to the Secretary of State, August 31, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1042. The broadcast was sometime between August 15 and 31, 1945.

⁷³Robertson, the Chargé in China, to the Secretary of State, Sept. 25, 1945. Ibid., p. 1057.

Korea, the Korean Provisional Government would not assume the function of a government.⁷⁴ They soon began participating in south Korean politics in an individual capacity.

Thus, south Korea began its political life with two claimants for governmental authority: the American Military Government and the People's Republic. But as it became clear that the Military Government had no intention to accord recognition to the People's Republic, the leftists under Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng's leadership departed from the Republic on November 20 to form the Korean People's Party. In north Korea, there was no military government, and no surfacial political disorder according to reports of observers. Communist-controlled People's Committees established themselves firmly in that society as the ruling political power.

In the incipient stage, the Military Government favored the rightists simply because they did not challenge the authority of the Military Government. But as the situation deteriorated the rightists became more outspoken in their critical attitude toward the four powers and especially the United States. They were especially bitter about the partition of Korea by the

⁷⁴Kim's press conference, Nov. 24, 1945, at Chuk-Ch'ŏm Chang residence. Haebang Ishim-nyŏn, Document Section (Seoul, 1965), p. 275.

big powers and the decision by them to place Korea under a joint trusteeship. They resented the way Korea was treated as a conquered enemy and asserted that with qualified foreign advisers, technicians, and appropriate material aid Koreans could bring their house into order. The idea of trusteeship was blasted as the result of vicious Japanese propaganda in which Korea had been depicted as unable to govern itself.⁷⁵

Korean rightists envisaged rightly that the trusteeship would invariably divide up the Koreans and make unification impossible. They asserted that Article 73 of the United Nations Charter was intended for uncivilized colonial people while Korea was one of the most civilized nations in Asia. Political weakness could not be the reason to deny an immediate self-government. "Koreans are as capable of governing themselves on their level as the Americans are Naturally, they will have difficulties. But there is no reason to suppose that they will not run an honest or efficient government," observed a Christian missionary who had spent his whole life among the Korean people.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Address to the four Allied Powers by the United Central Council (Syngman Rhee, chairman), Nov. 4, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1110-1111.

⁷⁶Edgar Snow, "We meet Russia in Korea," Saturday Evening Post (March 30, 1946), p. 19.

Return of the leaders of the Exiled-Government seemed to have restored balance between the rightists and the leftists in south Korea. They persistently demanded withdrawal of the Red Army on the ground that it had been viciously hindering political and economic unification and freedom of communication within the Korean peninsula,⁷⁷ thus making their anti-Communist attitude crystal clear. Their weakness, however, lay in that they were divided hopelessly among themselves. Hundreds of political parties and social organizations sprouted, each with high-sounding principles and exaggerated claims as to membership. But whether Right or Left, they were miraculously united in denouncing trusteeship because trusteeship was for the Koreans tantamount to denying independence.

The American government was slow to perceive the nature of Korean politics. It persisted in adhering to the idea of trusteeship despite the clear fact that most Koreans were vehemently opposed to it. It was still taking issue with the factional strife in Korean politics, but Hodge had made an important and essential point that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, ever to achieve unity until Koreans could see the present 38th parallel barrier removed.

⁷⁷Resolution of the Korean Congress held on Nov. 4, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1115-1117.

"Every day of delay," he stressed, "fosters further and permanent division of the people."⁷⁸ Koreans were fully aware that under dual occupation, any talk of real freedom and independence was purely academic. As a Korean put it: "Best of all for us would be no occupation at all The next best thing would be the occupation by one power only--preferably American. But better Russia alone than our country torn in two."⁷⁹

The American government failed to give due attention to the sentiments of the Korean people. The Koreans were "impatient of spoon feeding, conscious of independence and eager to exercise it."⁸⁰ Only by taking these conditions into serious consideration could the situation be kept in hand, conflict avoided, and cooperation obtained. As the political adviser Langdon properly put it, "fulfillment of Korean aspirations as they feel them and not as we think they should be" was essential to the success of America's mission in Korea.⁸¹

⁷⁸Hodge's report to the JCS, Dec. 16, 1945.
Ibid., p. 1145.

⁷⁹Snow, op. cit., p. 18. Conversation with a sixty-year-old Mayor of Songdo City.

⁸⁰Langdon to the Secretary of State, Dec. 11, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1140.

⁸¹Langdon to the Secretary of State, Dec. 14, 1945. Ibid., p. 1143.

No less a vital factor was America's indifference to the political psychology of the Korean people. Koreans had little tradition of struggle for civil rights, experiences in representative government or institutionalized politics which are some of the basic assumptions of a democratic society. Since they had lived as the same race, used the same language, had the same culture, and followed the same pattern of life, they were not oriented to the values of a pluralistic society, such as tolerance toward dissenters and solution of problems through negotiations, as practiced in Western society between different political, ethnic or cultural groups. In short, they had experienced no social pluralism in their long history.⁸² This tradition greatly discounted the significance of well-defined, well-functioning institutions in their political life. 'Person,' and not 'institution,' was always at the center of politics. America's hasty attempts to impose a Western political system upon the Koreans created more confusion than stability.

The American Military Government failed to maintain good relationships with either of the three main political groups: the Communists who challenged the

⁸²For analysis of traditional Korean society, see David I. Steinberg, Korea: Nexus of East Asia (New York, 1968), p. 9f.

very existence of the Military Government under Russian influence, the leftists who were generally critical of the Military Government but had not ruled out the chance for compromise with it, and the rightists who generally supported the Military Government not because of its programs in Korea but because of their expectation that it would support them in their pro-American, pro-Western, and pro-capitalistic programs.

The first impression the Red Army strove to create among the Koreans was that they were "the liberator." The Red Army received a hearty welcome because they were a member of the Allies. With the American troops still hundreds of miles away the Red Army was in a most favorable situation to usurp the glory that belonged to the other. So they became "the liberator."⁸³

Russian presses were filled with triumphant stories of the Red Army in the Far East. Pravda editorialized that "Dark days [are gone] . . . fresh breeze blows . . . [and] a new epoch is beginning in the Pacific."⁸⁴ Even Secretary of State James Byrnes was

⁸³Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Memorandum of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (Tokyo, 1962), p. 7.

⁸⁴Pravda's editorial as quoted in Kennan's memorandum to the Secretary of State, No. 3420, Oct. 1, 1945. State Department File, 740.00119 P.W./10-145.

compelled to witness the Soviet effort to offset any weakness in the Russian image as a victor. He was shown a Russian movie at the dinner party after the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers, which pictured "Japan's preparation for war as being directed only against Russia" and the scene of surrender ceremonies on the Missouri gave an impression that the war was "a private war between Russia and Japan."⁸⁵

But the prestige and welcome was short-lived. General Ivan Chistyakov and his quarter million men provoked fear and resentment among the Koreans before long. They demanded a large supply of food. The discipline and moral standard of the army was low, as they were in Germany after the end of the war. Looting and raping were common. A Presbyterian Theological Seminary professor in Wŏnsan city wrote to Hodge that there was "no freedom," "no emancipation" in north Korea. The Russians stripped machines and shipped them to their country. Use of radio, correspondence, mail and press had been forbidden since the Russian army landed in Wŏnsan on August 20. Travel without Russian approval was prohibited and the practice of Korean Communists in arresting and imprisoning people without making specific charges horrified

⁸⁵Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, p. 213.

innocent Koreans.⁸⁶ A very similar situation was reported from Songdo by the Rev. Kwan-Shik Kim, the then Moderator of the United Church of Korea.⁸⁷

Political development in north Korea was strongly influenced by Cho, Man-Shik, the most respected non-Communist leader who was well known for his commitment to nationalism in north Korea. He set out, upon Japanese capitulation, to organize a security maintenance committee for South Pyŏngan Province in which Pyŏngyang was located. It was reorganized into a Preparatory Committee for Nation Building to keep pace with south Korea. All the north Korean provinces followed the example in organizing security maintenance committees. These security maintenance committees were forced to be reorganized into Communist-controlled "people's political committees" by the Russians.

Joyce and Gabriel Kolko have asserted that the Russian troops in north Korea "accepted the revolutionary people's committee" and placed "most administrative functions in their hands" by August 25, and "encouraged them to proceed with their program of expropriating the

⁸⁶ A letter by Professor Lee, Kyu-Young, September 27, 1945. OSS R&A XL 26109.

⁸⁷ A letter to General MacArthur, September 24, 1945, *ibid*.

property of the Japanese and collaborators."⁸⁸ But this does not fit the facts. The Russian troops did not reach Pyŏngyang until August 24. As soon as they came, they took a hand behind the scenes in reorganizing the indigenous security maintenance committee in which non-Communists far outnumbered the Communists. General Chistyakov, head of the Soviet 25th Army and the Supreme Commander in Korea, ordered Cho and other nationalists "to take directive from the Communist Party on matters relating to the provincial government."⁸⁹ The popularity of Communists was not comparable to that of Cho and other nationalist leaders, and the Soviet authorities, fully aware of this, were determined to strengthen the Communist Party. The Soviet occupation authorities reorganized the various northern branches of the Seoul-based Preparatory Committee for Nation Building into so-called people's committees and thereby enhanced greatly the Communist representation in those organizations.⁹⁰ The Soviet authorities did not accept the indigenous committees as they existed, as asserted by the Kolkos, but

⁸⁸ Kolko and Kolko, *Limits of Power*, pp. 279-280.

⁸⁹ For details, see Yŏng-Chin O, Hana-ŭi Chŭng-ŏn (A Witness) (Pusan, 1952), pp. 111-114. This witness coincides with the reports contained in OSS R&A XL 26109, September, 1945.

⁹⁰ For example in Hwang-Hae Province; see Scalapino and Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

set out to reorganize the indigenous committees and then gave to these communized people's committees the administrative function to the exclusion of non-Communists.

Similar developments occurred in the city of Sinŭichu, where the leading people organized a self-rule council on the day after the Japanese surrender to maintain order. Then, a sudden change came about as the Russian troops entered the city on August 30. The commanding officer ordered the council to disband and then reorganized it as a so-called People's Political Committee, in which a small number of Communists were given the dominant role although there were proportionately very few native Communists in the city at that time. As soon as the Japanese were disarmed, the arms were given to the Communists. A few days later the Communist Party was publicly organized and set out to monopolize the radio station and newspapers, while the dissenting Social Democratic Party's existence was threatened.⁹¹

The Communist Party in north Korea was organized from the beginning as a body to assume power. In other words, they assumed power through the aid of the Soviet occupation authorities and not through revolution aided by mass mobilization. Many of these Communists had no

⁹¹OSS R&A XL 26109. Both reporters were the vice-chairmen of the Social Democratic Party at the time of report.

experience with the painstaking job of revolution. This explains why later the north Korean regime had to undergo "purification" and "purges." The first step of reorganizing the predominantly non-Communist security committee into a Communist-dominated people's committee was completed speedily. But their popularity among the general population was low. The Soviets and the Korean Communists now proceeded to another stage of consolidating their control over north Korea.

On October 12, three official statements were proclaimed by the Soviet military authorities.⁹² The first one was entitled "the proclamation of General Chistyakov," in which he reminded the Koreans of the suppression by the Japanese and emphasized the new hope brought to Koreans by the liberator. "The Red Army," he said, "provided Koreans with every condition to set out for free and creative efforts. Merchants, entrepreneurs and factory owners! Set out at once to reconstruct the factory that the Japanese destroyed!" The proclamation sounded as if free enterprise would be allowed in north Korea. The Russians understood that nothing was more alien to the Koreans than denying the

⁹²Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Witness of History, pp. 21-33, translation is mine; also, see Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 331.

right of personal property and attempted to give the impression that free enterprise would be allowed.⁹³

A second statement was entitled "For what purpose did the Red Army come to your country?" This sought to offset the bad impression that the Red Army had created among the Koreans. It said that the great Red Army had never used its power in conquering other nations. "Soviet Russia," it stated, "had no ambition whatever of occupying other's territory." It specifically ruled out the possibility or intention that Soviet Russia would attempt to establish a Soviet system in Korea or acquire its territory.

The third one was entitled an "Order of the Commander of the 25th Soviet Army in North Korea." This order required registration of all anti-Japanese parties and democratic organizations with the Russian authorities. All the officers and members of parties and organizations were required to report their family background up to the two preceding generations, together with each member's biography since the age of eight.⁹⁴ Through these measures the Soviet authorities could effectuate a highly regimented, Communist-controlled society under Kim, Il-Sōng's leadership. An iron curtain had already fallen

⁹³Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Witness, p. 23f.

⁹⁴Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 332.

along the 38th parallel and all the coastal line of north Korea,⁹⁵ and by the end of October they were well on their way to establishing a separate state of north Korea by organizing the Five-Province Administrative Bureau.

Soviet tutelage was the decisive factor for a rapid consolidation of the Communists in north Korea. But another factor was those Koreans who had been indoctrinated in Russia and who entered Korea as a part of the regular Soviet Army. Many of them had been trained as "able leaders both for military and political affairs" in postwar Korea.⁹⁶ And the nucleus of that force was the so-called Kim, Il-Sŏng Unit which had come into being just before the entry into Korea.⁹⁷ By October those native Communists who had engaged in underground

⁹⁵ See the conversation between Kim, Ch'ang-Sun, and Kim, Yong-Su, a high-ranking administrator in the Romanenko Headquarters. Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Witness, p. 27.

⁹⁶ Chosŏn Minchu-chui Inmin Konghwa-Kuk, Kwahak-Wŏn, Yŏksa Yŏnku-So (Institute of Historical Research, Academy of Science, Korean Democratic People's Republic), ed., Chosŏn Kŭndae Hyŏngmyŏng Undong-Sa (History of Modern Korean Revolutionary Movement). Japanese translation, by Shin Nippon Shuppan Sha (Tokyo, 1964), p. 424.

⁹⁷ For the falsified Kim, Il-Sŏng Unit, see Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Witness, pp. 36-47. An interesting yet undocumented story of how Kim, Il-Sŏng was related to the Russian Army during the Pacific war is given in Motoi Tamaki, Kin-nichisei-no Sisŏ-to-Kŏdŏ (Thought and Behavior of Kim, Il-Sŏng) (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 45-46.

resistance within Korea enjoyed nominal leadership only. The last big and powerful group of Communists, the Yen-an group, was also brought under Kim's control without much difficulty.⁹⁸

In late 1944, the Koreans operating in the Eighth Route Army bases had been organized into the Korean Independence League, the Korean Volunteer Army, and the Korean Revolutionary Military and Political School. They had been engaged in the psychological warfare work of the Chinese Eighth Route Army.⁹⁹ After the liberation and the 30,000 Russian-trained Korean Communists had entered north Korea, this Yen-an group belatedly made their way to Korea in early November. Their political leaders had already been in north Korea. The 2,000 Korean Volunteer Army, however, was completely manipulated by the Russian-trained Communists with direct intervention of General Bankowsky of the Soviet occupation army and on the first night in Korea they were disarmed and made defunct as a military group.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Kim, Il-Sŏng's rise to power owes, among others, essentially to Soviet tutelage. See Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 323f. The misjudgment, miscomprehension, and misinterpretation of the political development of liberated Korea on the part of old Communists also played an important role in Kim's rise. See Suh, Korean Communist, p. 325.

⁹⁹OSS R&A 117112. Yen-an Report #33 (Dec. 28, 1944).

¹⁰⁰For details, see Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Witness, pp. 48-61.

According to occupation regulations, no armed forces were to enter Korea except Russian and American occupation troops. This was one of the reasons that the American occupation authorities did not permit the entry of the Korean Restoration Army of Chungking. The Yen-an Volunteer Army was reportedly disarmed for the same reason. But more than 30,000 Korean Communist armed forces entered Korea under the disguise of Soviet regular army and set out quickly to take control of north Korean society with the open support of the Russian authorities. As the Communists themselves admitted later, they were "favored from the beginning by the conditions created by the Russian occupation army" and set out to "establish a revolutionary democratic base in north Korea."¹⁰¹

In the meantime, frequent reports about the Soviet conduct in north Korea reached the American occupation authorities. An Australian representative to the survey team of American prisoners camps in north Korea observed that the Korean Communists were taking advantage of the advent of the Russians to further their own end.

¹⁰¹Chokuk T'ong-il Minchu-chui Chōsōn Chung-ang Samgmu Wiwōn-hoe, Sōnchōn-kuk (Propaganda Bureau, Central Standing Committee of Democratic Front for National Unification), Minchu Kōnkuk-e isōsō Puk-Chosōn Minchōn-ūi Yōk-hal (The Role of North Korean People's Front in Democratic Building of Fatherland) (Pyōngyang, 1949), p. 1; also, Soryōn-ūn (Soviet Russia is.), pp. 7, 10.

"The excesses of the Russians," he remarked, "were bringing the Japanese and Koreans together for the first time in 40 years."¹⁰²

Industrial stripping by the Soviets was done on a purely unilateral basis. There had been no agreement between the two occupation powers regarding reparations from Korea. Korea was not a defeated country, yet the Russians helped themselves to reparations.¹⁰³ General MacArthur was increasingly concerned over the developments in north Korea and called for a "strong representation" to the Soviet government to "desist" from such practices.¹⁰⁴ This brought an instant reaction from the American government. President Truman decided to send Edward Pauley for a first-hand inspection,¹⁰⁵ and W. A. Harriman, at the request of Secretary Byrnes, made the representation of the case to Andrew Vyshinsky, asking the Soviet government whether it would authorize the Soviet commander in Korea to negotiate with General

¹⁰²As quoted in the memorandum of Vincent, Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, to Acheson, Under-Secretary of State, Oct. 1, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1066-1067.

¹⁰³Byrnes' memorandum to Harriman, Nov. 7, 1945, *ibid.*, pp. 1112-1113; also, see Hodge's report to the State Department, *ibid.*, pp. 1149-1150; also, OSS R&A, XL 26109 (215484-2; 215484-10).

¹⁰⁴Forrestal, diary entry for some day in early November, 1945, Diary, p. 107.

¹⁰⁵Truman, Years of Decisions, p. 522.

Hodge or whether it desired that the problems be discussed by the two governments.¹⁰⁶ Hodge had long been urging that since any collaboration with the Soviet occupation authorities seemed quite doubtful, negotiations at the highest level should be convened at once.¹⁰⁷

The Soviets kept silence. Russia was probably content to "concentrate on action, not on debate" until the question of Korea's future was raised by other powers. Their calculation seemed to solidify political consolidation in north Korea and politically penetrate as much as possible into south Korea so that by the time the issue of civilian administration was raised, the Soviet groundwork would have been solidly laid.¹⁰⁸

The first official response came through the supreme commander in Korea on November 18 and it was the exact repetition of what had already been said a month ago. Chistyakov was still asserting that the Red Army liberated Korea and that Russia had no intentions of territorial gain or establishment of Soviet system in Korea. There was no response to the questions raised by the American authorities. North Korean Communists

¹⁰⁶Harriman's letter to the Secretary of State, Nov. 9, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1119.

¹⁰⁷Benninghoff's letter to the Secretary of State, Oct. 1, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 1066.

¹⁰⁸Harriman's letter to the Secretary of State, Nov. 12, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 1121.

alleged later that power plants and other important industries were destroyed by the Japanese and that it was Soviet Russia who helped rebuild them.¹⁰⁹

Kim, Il-Sōng had replaced Cho, Man-Shik as the north Korean leader by January 1946, and Cho was placed under house arrest because he did not support the Moscow decision on trusteeship. The people of north Korea were forced by the Soviet authorities to declare their unconditional support for the Moscow declaration on trusteeship.¹¹⁰ The central power of north Korean administration became vested in February in the so-called North Korea Temporary People's Committee, with Kim, Il-Sōng, as the chairman. It promulgated a land reform law on March 5.

As referred to previously, some form of land redistribution was favored by the majority of Korean people. The difference between the rightists on the one hand and the Communists and leftists on the other was that the former preferred confiscation and redistribution of lands with compensation while the latter

¹⁰⁹Soryōn-ūn (Soviet Russia is.), p. 13.

¹¹⁰Lauterbach, Danger, p. 124. For Soviets' attempt to cajole Cho into accepting trusteeship to no avail, see Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., pp. 338-340; also, Ch'ang-Sun Kim, Puk-han, pp. 70-73.

advocated unconditional land reform.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, the reform was delayed in south Korea mainly because the Military Government held that land reform was to be done under the responsibility of a Korean government. The land reform in north Korea had a great psychological impact upon the south Koreans.

But disillusionment made itself gradually manifest in north Korea as the peasants came to understand that they had received the right of possession for cultivation only and not any property title. Lack of property title was quite disillusioning to the prevalent aspiration of the Korean peasantry. Furthermore, despite the nominal cut in the tax rate, it was not infrequent that the cultivators had to pay more tax than ever because taxes were allocated on the basis of theoretical production quotas.¹¹² Taxes were paid in kind, often reaching as high as fifty percent of the total output.¹¹³ Thus, the land reform of north Korea, while badly needed, gave an impression of well-directed propaganda.

¹¹¹See the political platforms of south Korean political parties, Ch'ong-Tang Sa, pp. 86-100; also, see the resolution of the Coalition Committee adopted on Oct. 7, 1946, Summation, USAMGIK, No. 13 (Oct., 1946), p. 16.

¹¹²David J. Dallin, Soviet Russia and Far East (New Haven, 1948), pp. 289-291.

¹¹³Ch'öl Pak, Puk-Chosŏn Nosŏn Pip'an (Criticism of North Korean Lines) (Seoul, 1966), p. 56.

CHAPTER III

INITIAL CONFRONTATION WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

America's concern in Korea was almost wholly in terms of Korea's place in keeping the peace and stability of the Far East. Despite the worries and warnings expressed by the Americans on the spot, the United States government hoped to resolve the Korean questions through international cooperation. Having succeeded in stopping the Russian military advance at the 38th parallel, the American government looked to the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers as presenting an opportunity to find the clues for the long-awaited political solution in Korea. Ill-preparation for the occupation and the subsequent drift had led to difficulties but America hoped that these could be overcome in the forthcoming Conference in Moscow.

By the time of the Conference, partition of Korea had been so complete that there was virtually no communication between the two economically-dependent yet politically-separated zones. Emotional conflict coupled with political antagonism were already apparent between the two zones and any compromise on the level of the two occupational authorities seemed hopeless.

For the United States, internationalization of the Korean questions seemed the most inexpensive and face-saving way to relieve itself of the burden, and simultaneously, to prevent Russia's dominant influence in Korea. On the other hand, Soviet Russia, more confident than ever in its Korean policy, saw any agreement including trusteeship as creating no great obstacle to the final victory in Korea. The two nations thus wanted some agreements on Korea but from different stances. Korea had already become a bilateral issue although the four powers could still claim the right to participate in making the final decisions.¹

Foreign Ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met at Moscow in December, 1945, to discuss the pending problems after the war, and reached an agreement on Korea in an effort to put an end to the divided military occupation and to restore independence to Korea as soon as practicable. The three Foreign Ministers agreed that since Korea had been under Japanese occupation for more than three decades, she needed some kind of aid and assistance to create the necessary conditions to develop the country on democratic principles and to liquidate the disastrous remnants of Japanese colonialism.

¹F.R., 1945, VI, pp. 1150-1151. But the right had never been exercised on the four-power level.

Three steps were stipulated to implement the decision. The first step was to convene a conference "within a period of two weeks" between the two occupational authorities to solve the urgent economic and administrative problems between the south and north. The second was that the two occupational authorities establish a Joint Commission and, upon consultation with the Korean democratic parties and social organizations, help the Koreans to establish a Korean Provisional Government. The last was to work out the measures to aid and assist the Korean Provisional Government including a four-power trusteeship.²

The first and second provisions coincided with the hopes of Koreans, but the third one, the trusteeship clause, was so subversive of their aspiration of attaining full independence that it evoked a storm of protest among them. From the moment agreement to establish the trusteeship was disclosed, not a day passed without mass protest, demonstrations, and sabotage.³ Trusteeship, which was translated into Korean Shint'ak T'ong-Ch'i which literally means "to entrust sovereignty to others," was for the Koreans tantamount to denial of independence.

²Ibid.

³For details, see Summation of Non-Military Activities in Japan and Korea (shortened to Summation, Japan and Korea, hereafter), published by General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Nos. 1 through 5, October, 1945, to February, 1946.

The American authorities in south Korea attempted to silence the Korean protest by employing a liberal interpretation of the word as 'guidance' or 'assistance' but it proved futile because the Koreans thought that they were ready to run an independent nation in their own way. Compulsory assistance in the form of trusteeship was thought unacceptable. The real problem facing Korea, south Koreans argued, was not a lack of guidance by big powers but the 38th parallel itself that paralyzed their national life in a most unnatural and disastrous way. Soviet Russia made no instant response to the trusteeship question.

Initially, the idea of trusteeship for Korea was credited to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Anthony Eden, the then British Foreign Secretary, remarked in his Memoirs⁴ that President Roosevelt mentioned Korea and Indochina as areas for postwar trusteeship, at a meeting in March, 1943, between the President and himself. Eden did not like the idea of trusteeship⁵ perhaps because he "had to think of the British Empire system" in the postwar era.⁶ Two months later,

⁴Anthony Eden, Memoirs: The Reckoning (Boston, 1965), p. 438.

⁵Ibid., p. 595.

⁶Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II (New York, 1948), p. 1237.

Roosevelt reportedly told Eden that Korea would be placed under the trusteeship of China and other nations.⁷

At the Cairo and Teheran conferences, the trusteeship had been mentioned among the Allied leaders.⁸ Roosevelt seemed quite satisfied that Joseph Stalin had specifically agreed that the Koreans were not yet capable of exercising and maintaining independent government and that they should be placed under a "40-year tutelage."⁹ However, exchange of opinion regarding the trusteeship on Korea seemed to have been quite informal at least for the United States, and no official reference or documents on the question of trusteeship existed until the time of the Yalta Conference, where Roosevelt told Stalin that he had in mind for Korea a trusteeship composed of a Soviet, an American, and a Chinese representative, and that he felt the trusteeship might last from 20-30 years. Stalin was quoted as saying that "the shorter the trusteeship period the better," and that President Roosevelt's idea to forbid stationing of

⁷Ibid., p. 1596.

⁸F.R., 1943 (Cairo and Teheran), p. 257 (with China); p. 864 (with Russia); also, Hull, Memoirs, II, pp. 1309-1310.

⁹F.R., 1943 (Cairo and Teheran), p. 869.

foreign troops in Korea other than the two occupation troops was acceptable.¹⁰

W. A. Harriman, the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, had remarked later to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal that Stalin's first response at Yalta to Roosevelt's proposal of trusteeship for Korea was "why was there need of trusteeship if the Koreans could produce a satisfactory government?" Harriman thought that Stalin had in mind a Bolshevik or Soviet government.¹¹ During the 1937-38 purge, hundreds of thousands of Koreans had been transferred from Siberia to Central Asia and many of them were made Russian citizens and later served in the Red Army. It was not a secret in early 1945 that more than 30,000 Korean Communists were serving in the Red Army during the war, ready to enter Korea at any propitious moment.

Possibly, Stalin concurred in the trusteeship proposal at Yalta to avoid arousing the suspicions of the United States. In general, Soviet Russia did not go along with either the American or British conception of trusteeship. The Russians favored prompt independence for Korea as late as the San Francisco Conference

¹⁰Ibid., 1945, VII, pp. 309-310.

¹¹Forrestal, Diaries, p. 56. Entry for May 12, 1945.

in May, 1945.¹² They did not deny trusteeship publicly, however. At a meeting with Soviet leaders in late May of 1945, Harry Hopkins brought up the question of trusteeship, saying that the period of trusteeship "might be 25 years, might be less, but it would certainly be five or ten." Stalin agreed to the principle of a four-power trusteeship at this meeting.¹³

This exchange of opinion and discussions, however, did not proceed any further. Details of implementation remained to be worked out. Harriman suggested to the State Department that before going to Potsdam, preparation should be made, in addition to other main topics, for a detailed discussion of the character of the proposed four-power trusteeship for Korea.¹⁴ But there was no formal discussion of this matter at Potsdam.

Furthermore, the British government had not been even informed officially of the trusteeship plan even after Japanese capitulation.¹⁵ Conversations on trusteeship had been largely on a private and informal basis, which implied that the Korean question had never been

¹²George Kennan, the then Charge in the Soviet Union, to the Secretary of State. F.R., 1946, VII, p. 619.

¹³Ibid., 1945 (Conference of Berlin), I, p. 47.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁵Ibid., 1945, VI, pp. 1046-1047. Acheson's letter to Secretary Byrnes who was in London for the Foreign Ministers' Conference.

considered a serious matter deserving of official and close attention by the Allies. The question remained always peripheral.

The United States government considered early establishment of an international trusteeship as the only way to terminate the social havoc caused by the artificial division of Korea, and was determined to push the plan against possible opposition by the Koreans.¹⁶ A recommendation by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee stated that opposition by the Koreans should be offset by including in the trusteeship agreement such provisions as: the independence of Korea would be recognized only after a certain period of trusteeship; the states directly concerned pledge themselves to actively support in the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations the admission of Korea to the United Nations Organization as soon as trusteeship terminated; and those states would help Korea to prepare for the final goal of a full independence.¹⁷

By the middle of November, the British government agreed to the trusteeship for Korea although the British were quite pessimistic about the practicability of a

¹⁶Appendix "B" to SWNCC 79/1 by State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, Subcommittee for the Far East, Oct. 22, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 1093.

¹⁷Appendix "B" to SWNCC 101/1 adopted on Oct. 24, 1945, *ibid.*, pp. 1100-1101.

four-power trusteeship. They suggested that the more fundamental issue of the Russian participation in the Far Eastern Advisory Commission had to be fully clarified before the Korean question could be brought into proper perspective.¹⁸

Meanwhile, William Langdon, the political adviser to the American Military Government in Korea, was equally pessimistic about the feasibility of trusteeship. He argued that trusteeship was not suitable for Korea: morally unsuitable because Korea had been a distinct nation except for the preceding 35 years and had a high literacy, cultural and living standard judged by Asiatic and Middle Eastern standards; and impractical because Koreans would not accept it. The Military Government had been a disappointment to them and a four-power trusteeship after the unpopular Military Government was terminated would be intolerable for the literate elements of Korea. For these reasons he advised the State Department to drop the trusteeship plan and adopt a more feasible one.¹⁹ The State Department, however, rejected the suggestion on the grounds that it was too late to

¹⁸Ambassador John Winant's conversation with J.C. Sterndale Bennett, Head, Far Eastern Department, British Foreign Office, *ibid.*, pp. 1124-1125.

¹⁹Langdon's letter to the Secretary of State. Langdon proposed a Governing Commission in place of trusteeship. Nov. 20, 1945. *Ibid.*, pp. 1130-1133.

change the trusteeship plan which had been the American policy since the war and that it was most unlikely that Russia would agree to what Langdon proposed in place of trusteeship, especially at a time when discussion on Korea was expected to begin soon.²⁰

A political adviser who worked among the Koreans had better opportunities of sensing and seeing the unmasked sentiment and the pressing problems of the Korean people, but the on-the-spot observer also tended to get lost in trivialities and to fail to see the larger picture. The Secretary of State had the advantage of being more objective in analyzing and evaluating a particular situation in the general frame of American foreign policy but was often blind to the real and immediate problems. In any event, trusteeship had become fixed American policy for Korea even though fierce opposition by the Koreans seemed almost certain. "If [trusteeship] is imposed now or at any future time," Hodge warned, "it is believed possible that the Korean people will actually and physically revolt."²¹

²⁰Reply of the Secretary of State to Langdon, *ibid.*, pp. 1137-1138. There was at least one more despatch from the Military Government authorities to the State Department to abandon trusteeship for another form of cooperation after Langdon's proposal was rejected by the State Department. See Forrestal, Diaries, entry for Dec. 19, 1945, p. 125.

²¹Hodge's letter to JCS, Dec. 16, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1146.

Ever since the principle of trusteeship was first advocated by Franklin Roosevelt, it had always been the United States that showed more positive interest in it until after the Moscow Conference of December, 1945. For several reasons, trusteeship was considered by Roosevelt and the policy makers of the United States vitally important for Korea. First, trusteeship seemed the proper step to lead the Korean people to attain a full independence because the Koreans, they thought, were not yet able to govern themselves. Second, trusteeship was thought to be the most effective way to avoid international rivalries in Korea. Third, the growing Russian prestige and influence in Europe since 1943 and in the Far East, particularly after German capitulation in May, 1945, could not escape American attention.

After the Potsdam conference, international rivalries in Korea began to narrow down to Russo-American confrontation. An anticipated yet sudden entry of Soviet Russia into the Pacific War, the Japanese surrender that came unexpectedly early, and the hasty occupation of Korea on a zonal basis, all made such confrontation inevitable. American emphasis on the internationalization, and more specifically, placing Korea under trusteeship was often understood in terms of Article 79 of the Charter of the United Nations.²² But

²²SWNCC 101/4. Ibid., pp. 1096-1097.

there was also a growing awareness in the American government that stabilization of Korea through trusteeship would achieve a balance of power between the two super nations in Korea.²³

Increased Russian power and prestige in the postwar period was clearly envisioned by Franklin Roosevelt in 1944. According to Edgar Snow, Roosevelt, as a practical politician, saw the necessity of defining spheres of influence in making a workable peace. Roosevelt was ready to "accept the Russian giant as a great and dreadful neighbor with whom we have to learn to live and share world power and authority."²⁴ The essence of Cardinal Spellman's conversation with Roosevelt in late 1943 was not very far from conveying the latter's appraisal of the Russian power after the war.²⁵ But the two conversations were primarily in regard to Russia's increased role in postwar Europe; the Russo-American confrontation in Korea was entirely a product of new developments closely associated with the Cold War sentiment.

²³Summation of United States Army Military Government Activities in Korea, No. 17, February 1947. (Shortened to Summation, USAMGIK, hereafter.)

²⁴Edgar Snow, Journey to the Beginning (New York, 1958), pp. 343-344. His talks with Roosevelt in May, 1944.

²⁵Robert E. Gannon, The Cardinal Spellman Story (New York, 1962), pp. 222-229. The conversation with the President on Sept. 3, 1943.

American demand for a balance of power in Korea vis-à-vis Soviet Russia grew stronger after the hasty occupation began. On the eve of the Moscow Conference, American's advocacy of trusteeship was so firm that some Americans both in Korea and Washington exhibited a favorable response to a Korean leftist leader's proposal on the divided trusteeship for each zone, that is, United States trusteeship for south Korea and Russian trusteeship for north Korea under the United Nations. The divided trusteeship was to end mutually with the withdrawal of troops and invitation to the United Nations membership after five years, with free movement of persons and goods between the two zones in the meantime.²⁶

In spite of the American determination to carry out the trusteeship plan and the enduring effects of the Moscow decisions on Korean politics, the Korean question at Moscow was nevertheless only a trivial one eclipsed greatly by bigger issues in other areas. As one of the chief negotiators of the American delegation to the Conference reportedly confessed later, "Korea was a very

²⁶The proposal by Hŏ, Hon, leader of the radical Korean People's Republic, and Langdon's concurrence to the idea. F.R., 1946, VII, pp. 606-607; also, see Forrestal, Diaries, entry for Dec. 19, 1945, p. 125.

minor problem at that time,"²⁷ apart from the fact that the Moscow Conference was called at the request of Secretary Byrnes just "impulsively and without much preparation."²⁸

The disclosure of the trusteeship clause was a bombshell to all Koreans, right or left. Excitement and furor were so high-pitched and universal that intervention of the American military police was necessary to protect vital installations in Seoul. The Chungking group, headed by Kim, Ku, took initiative to organize a nationwide Anti-Trusteeship Committee, and maintained that trusteeship conflicted with the desires of all Koreans who upheld national self-determination, that it was contrary to the assurance that Korea was to be free and independent given repeatedly by the American government during the war, that none of the three [sic] articles relating to the trusteeship contained in the United Nations Charter was applicable to Korea, and that any trusteeship for Korea would destroy peace in the Far

²⁷Discussion on the U.S. Policy toward Korean Unification, comments by Dr. Soon Sung Cho, in Report on International Conference on the Problems of Korean Unification (Korea University, Seoul, Korea, 1970), p. 198.

²⁸Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, p. 234.

East.²⁹ American authorities feared "passive resistance, if not violent disorder, and a general strike by the infuriated Koreans,"³⁰ for even a mere mention of the word "trusteeship" immediately precluded any "normal process of reasoning" on the part of the Koreans.³¹

Embarrassed by these reports, the Army Chief of Staff, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, instructed General MacArthur to appease the Koreans by emphasizing that provision was being made for steps to integrate promptly the two zones, that provision for earlier establishment of a democratic provisional government would be taken, and that the trusteeship terms would be framed by the Joint Commission in consultation with the Korean Provisional Government which would be established soon.³² But these assurances fell far short of tranquilizing the inflamed sentiments of the Korean people.

Korea's suspicion of trusteeship was justifiable. As the Chief Commissioner of the American delegation to the

²⁹Hodge's report to MacArthur, Dec. 30, 1945. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1154. For Article 79 and its background, see Leland M. Goodrich, Charter of the United Nations (New York, 1969), p. 488f.

³⁰An explanatory marginal note in the telegram CA 56471 (from MacArthur to Army Chief of Staff). F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1154, n. 69.

³¹Hodge's telegram to MacArthur, 311235 I, Dec. 31, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 1155, n. 70.

³²Eisenhower's telegram to MacArthur, Dec. 30, 1945, *ibid.*, pp. 1154-1155.

Joint US-USSR Commission, General A. E. Brown, stated later, the Moscow decision had no details of trusteeship and the exact manner in which it should be exercised. The details were not known to anyone even in February, 1947, because of the impasse in the Joint Commission over the principle of trusteeship, not to mention how to implement it. More important, the difference of the four-power trusteeship over Korea from the United Nations trusteeship system was not mentioned in the Moscow decision.³³

At first, the Koreans, regardless of right or left, were fiercely opposed to it. Then, in a matter of a week, the Communists and most of the leftists changed their attitude to supporting it, saying that trusteeship meant nothing but assistance.³⁴ In fact, most of the Korean rightists erroneously believed that such vicious measures as trusteeship must have been proposed by Soviet Russia, until General Shtykov clarified the fact.³⁵ The Military Government was placed in an awkward position because the anti-trusteeship rightists now

³³Summation, USAMGIK, No. 17, Feb., 1947, pp. 20-21.

³⁴Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I, pp. 278-279.

³⁵Shtykov's press interview as reported in CGUSAFIK to the War Dept., TFGBI 170, Jan. 27, 1946. CCS 383.21 Korea, Section No. 4.

intensified their suspicion of the American policy in Korea, thus paving the way for non-cooperation.

Before the Moscow Conference, Sam-Yong Kim, a top-ranking Communist in south Korea responded to a report of the New York Times³⁶ regarding the Allied plan of trusteeship for Korea with furor and blasted the trusteeship as a "shocking fact that stems from an erroneous perception of Korean realities and ignores the people's will" ³⁷ After the Moscow Conference, the Communists were no less infuriated by the trusteeship clause. A Communist Chosŏn Inmin-Po charged, on December 29, that "traitors made trusteeship possible."³⁸ This kind of criticism continued in the same vein until January 3, 1946.

T'ae-Sik Chŏng, a renowned Communist, reportedly said: "If it is true that trusteeship is to be imposed on Korea, we are absolutely opposed. Even if it were for five months, not to mention five years, we would oppose trusteeship."³⁹ Pak, Hŏn-Yŏng, the leader of the

³⁶The New York Times, Oct. 21, 1945, p. 22.

³⁷Kim's statement as quoted in Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 276.

³⁸As quoted in USAFIK Commanding General to the War Dept. TFGBI 157, Jan. 26, 1946, CCS 383.21 Korea, Section No. 4. (All documents bearing the title CCS and cited in this dissertation are preserved at the Section of Military Records, the National Archives and Records Service.)

³⁹Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 277.

Korean Communist Party made it known to General Hodge on January 1, 1946, that he and his party were totally opposed to the trusteeship.⁴⁰ The Central Committee of the Korean People's Republic, from which many of the leftist parties had departed by then, even offered to dissolve the Republic as a political group and join Kim, Ku's Chungking group in the fight against the trusteeship.⁴¹

The excitement and furor of the Korean people were more than the United States anticipated. To add confusion to the already entangled political situation, Secretary Byrnes suggested in his radio report on the meeting of the Foreign Minister that trusteeship might be dispensed with in the process of consultation between the Joint Commission and the Korean Provisional Government.⁴² The Secretary was merely mentioning the basic attitude of the United States in dealing with international questions. Against its initial intent, however, this suggestion weakened the position of the American Military Government and General Hodge, in particular,

⁴⁰As quoted in USAFIK Commanding General to the War Dept., TFGBI 157, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4.

⁴¹Ibid. Korean People's Republic was dissolved as a governmental organization, but the name was used continuously as the title of a political party.

⁴²Department of State Bulletin, Dec. 30, 1945, pp. 1035-1036.

who had been making a desperate effort to persuade the Koreans to accept the trusteeship.⁴³

The trusteeship question began to assume a new connotation for both the United States and Soviet Russia. The United States immediately found itself being caught in the dilemma of adherence to the international agreement and to its traditional ideal of freedom. It was the United States that had tenaciously pursued trusteeship for Korea, but now she found it hard to push the plan against the free will of the Korean people. Never denouncing trusteeship openly, America now began to search for some kind of reconciliation between the two seemingly incompatible choices.

Soviet Russia, which had been rather passive regarding the trusteeship issue, now changed its attitude to positively supporting it. Possibly, the Soviets saw in the trusteeship issue a chance to widen the gap between the American Military Government and the Korean rightists who were considered the main source of support to the former. Or, the Soviets may have felt that trusteeship was necessary for Korea until conditions for Communist revolution in that country were ripe. Simultaneously, the Korean Communists banned the term

⁴³JCS 1483/27, Feb. 2, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 628 f.

Shin-t'ak T'ong-ch'i (trusteeship) after the about-face and adopted in its place a new term of Huwŏn (backing-up).⁴⁴

The about-face of the Communists as will be treated in the next section, was one eloquent example of how the Korean Communists were responsive to Soviet Russia and how the latter was determined to take advantage of the changing tide. Trusteeship which was proposed as a means of solving the Korean question through international cooperation now began to reveal the difficulties that lay ahead in the negotiation. It was clearly envisaged that the trusteeship issue might develop into a cause of international conflict and non-cooperation contrary to the original intention.

A citizen's rally against trusteeship was scheduled for January 3, at the initiative of Seoul City's People's Committee (Communist) and a Communist front group, the Committee on the Joint Struggle Against Facism. But the rally was skillfully manipulated by the Communists and was turned into one of supporting the Moscow decision, the essence of which was, of course,

⁴⁴Since the sudden about-face of the Communists, they strengthened their propaganda by equating "anti-trusteeship" with "anti-Moscow decision," which was far from correct. See Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., pp. 278-279, and n. 65 on p. 279.

"trusteeship." This incident displayed what an extremely regimented and intensively indoctrinated individual or group could do, while in south Korea Hodge's desperate efforts to bring the non-Communists together to supporting the trusteeship were far from a success.

According to Pak, Il-Wŏn, the then Chief of the Youth Department of the Korean Communist Party of Kyŏng-Ki Province, the party politburo was contacted immediately after the announcement of the Moscow decisions by Mr. A. I. Shabshin, Soviet Vice-Consul in Seoul. Pak, Hŏn-Yŏng, made a hasty, secret trip to Pyŏngyang. Upon returning to Seoul on January 2, Pak called an enlarged Central Committee meeting and there, he made the issue of trusteeship one of Party loyalty and a resolution to support the Moscow decision (trusteeship) was adopted.⁴⁵ Thus the about-face was ready by January 3.

Pak, the head of the Korean Communist Party, reportedly argued the next day that he would "not be adverse to one-power trusteeship by the Soviets following which Korea might well become a Soviet Fixed State."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Il-Wŏn Pak, Nam-no Dang, p. 42, as quoted in Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 277.

⁴⁶Hodge's report to the War Department dated Jan. 4, 1946. TFGCI 190, Feb. 10, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4.

The about-face by the Communists was denounced by the Tong-A Ilbo, a daily newspaper, as "an unpardonable action" because the Communists improperly used the citizens' excitement which had been opposing trusteeship. The paper stated that the betrayal by the Communists was closely tied with Soviet-supported pro-trusteeship demonstration north of the 38th parallel.⁴⁷

Soviet Russia compelled the Korean Communists to change their mind, but the price they had to pay was high. The Korean Communists were, since the incident, never to enjoy the degree of support and sympathy they had in south Korea immediately following the liberation. And as it was made evident at the Economic Conference and the Russo-American Joint Commission in January and March, respectively, Soviet Russia was determined to compensate for the loss of prestige of the Communists by a counter-attack against the Korean rightists who were opposed fiercely to trusteeship. Trusteeship now became to the Soviets a matter of political prestige without which they could not command Korean support for the ultimate Communist revolution.

Before the Communists changed their attitude on trusteeship, the rightists gradually soft-pedaled their opposition to it. Kim, Ku assured the people that

⁴⁷Tong-A Ilbo (a daily newspaper), Jan. 6, 1946.

trusteeship could be avoided and suggested that there would be no active opposition unless and until it was imposed.⁴⁸ He urged the Military Government employees to go back to work and asked for the return of peace and order. It is, therefore, easy to guess how outrageous it must have sounded to these rightists when Pak reportedly said that he would rather welcome one-power trusteeship by Russia.

Seeing the seriousness of the havoc and disorder brought about by the division over the trusteeship issue, the major political parties began to search for some kind of political coalition. Representatives of four main political parties met on January 7 and adopted a communiqué in support of the "spirit and intent" of the Moscow Conference. It further stated that the trusteeship question "should be resolved by a Korean government based upon a spirit of self-determination and independence."⁴⁹ But the extreme rightists were now suspicious

⁴⁸Statement on Jan. 1, 1946. Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 4, Jan., 1946, p. 282.

⁴⁹Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 280. The communiqué which was supported by the Korean Communist Party, the Korean People's Party (leftist), and the Korean Nationalist Party (center) specified that the trusteeship issue should be resolved by a Korean Government which would be established through the Joint Russo-American Commission. But the Soviet delegates at the Joint Commission insisted that the principle of trusteeship must be resolved by the two delegations before the Korean Government was established and consulted with.

of even the spirit and intent of the Moscow decision on Korea, and withdrew their cooperation from coalition efforts.

Then, a conference sponsored by the old Provisional Government group was held in Seoul during January 20-24. The two main leftist parties, the Korean Communist Party and the People's Party, refused to cooperate, and coalition was balked again. Both the rightists and leftists were demanding a coalition that could come under their own control, which was not likely to occur.

Aided by the trusteeship issue which proved incidentally a main asset for their cause, the rightists made the last gesture toward coalition by inviting all the major parties to a conference. The two major leftist parties refused again to attend. The conference, which convened February 1, lasted several days and ended with the establishment of the Taehan Tong-nip Ch'oksŏng-Hoe (Association for the Acceleration of the Independence of Korea). Syngman Rhee and Kim, Ku were chosen as the leaders of the Association. As a counter-measure to this rightists' coalition, the Communists and the leftists formed the Democratic National Front on February 15. The effort for a Right-Moderate-Left coalition, which the Military Government had been seeking after the trusteeship

controversy flared up, ended only in a sharp division between the rightists and leftists.

In the meantime, the Russian-supported Communists were solidifying their position in north Korea. In contrast to the confusion and the social disorder caused by the trusteeship controversy in south Korea, the Communist north appeared to be enjoying peace and order in a united support for trusteeship. The Soviets had reportedly organized popular demonstrations to support trusteeship, and had placed the right-wing nationalist leader Cho, Man-Shik, in protective custody under Russian guard and forced his resignation from the party because of his refusal publicly to support the Moscow proposals.⁵⁰ All the people in north Korea had to support the Moscow decision unconditionally to get the passport without which they could not travel.⁵¹

The leadership of north Korea was taken officially by Kim, Il-Sŏng, with the establishment of the Temporary (Interim) People's Committee on February 8. The Committee, they asserted, was organized to "prepare for the basic ground work for establishing a progressive

⁵⁰Benninghoff's report to the Secretary of State, Jan. 23, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 616.

⁵¹Lauterbach, Danger, p. 124.

democratic nation abiding by the Moscow decisions."⁵² At the same time, propaganda against south Korea was further intensified. Kim criticized the American Military Government of south Korea for having subjugated the "sovereignty" of south Korea and having failed to implement such basic reforms as nationalization of industry and land reform.⁵³ He declared that the capability of Korea to run a democratic nation had developed rapidly as was evidenced by the establishment of the Temporary People's Committee and the perfect implementation of land reform.⁵⁴ But he failed to present reasonable explanations as to why four-power trusteeship was still essential and indispensable for Korea if Korea's capability for democracy had developed that much.

Kim intentionally equated trusteeship with the Moscow decision itself and attacked the anti-trusteeship groups of south Korea for not abiding by the Moscow decision on Korea. He precluded any possibility of consultation with and participation of the anti-trusteeship groups in establishing the Korean Provisional Government to be formulated at the Joint Commission. He equated anti-trusteeship with anti-democracy and argued that only those who realized the "historical mission of

⁵²Il-Sŏng Kim, Chosŏn Minchu-Chui Inmin-Konghwakuk Surip-ŭi Kil (Pyŏngyang, 1947), p. 110.

⁵³Ibid., p. 118.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 36.

establishing a democratic Korea" should be allowed in the Korean Provisional Government. He then jumped to the conclusion that the correct understanding that "the liberation of Korea was the gift of the democratic force under the Russian leadership" was the basis for the fulfillment of the historical mission imposed upon the Korean people, and that the Moscow decision was "none but the product of historical necessity of the global victory of Soviet Russia."⁵⁵

But again, Kim failed to explain reasonably why the Moscow decision which was made without regard for the wishes of the Korean representatives and without popular basis of the people concerned had such a binding force as to demand an absolute and unconditional obedience by the Koreans if, as Kim asserted, Soviet Russia was "the liberator" and brought Korea's sovereignty back to its people. One thing, very clear at this point, is that Kim was desperate to exploit maximum Soviet support in strengthening his leadership over other Communists.

Tass asserted that Russia tried to arrange for everything the Koreans had wanted before and at the Moscow Conference, and that she wanted to grant immediate independence to Korea but was thwarted by Americans who

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 36-38.

proposed a ten-year trusteeship.⁵⁶ Kim, Il-Söng distorted the Tass dispatch and asserted that the United States proposed at the Moscow Conference to place Korea "more than ten years" under "military occupation."⁵⁷

Communist attempts to throw south Korea into an uncontrollable disorder were further manifested when the Soviet authorities in north Korea announced on February 12 that they had completed the north Korean branch of All Korean Central Government. In the local newspapers of south Korea appeared announcements by the Communists that since Koreans had a People's Government in north Korea and the Democratic National Front in south Korea, the problem of an Interim (Provisional) Korean Government as stipulated in the Moscow decision was a simple get-together of the two.⁵⁸ North Korea was going its own way solidly under Russian tutelage.

Efforts to achieve political integration in south Korea failed. The difference between the two zones lay in that while north Korea enjoyed unanimity as it asserted, confusion and division were the trademark of

⁵⁶Hodge's letter to JCS on the Russian propaganda as reported in Tass. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 628f; also, see Forrestal, Diaries, p. 135, entry for Feb. 15, 1946.

⁵⁷Il-Song Kim, op. cit., p. 109.

⁵⁸Hodge's letter to the Secretary of State, received on Feb. 24, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 640-642.

south Korea. A Right-Moderate-Left coalition with the support of the Military Government resulted in the establishment of the Representative Democratic Council, composed of representatives of political parties including Yŏ's leftist People's Party, on February 14. Unlike the north Korea's People's Committee which was an administrative body, the Representative Democratic Council of south Korea was but an advisory body to the American Military Government.

Most significantly, Yŏ's People's Party agreed to join the Council. Yŏ, as a leading member of the Council, was scheduled to speak at the first meeting of the Council on February 14. But he failed to show up. Then, his party announced that it would withdraw from the Council, and the following day the party joined hands with the Communist Party to form the Democratic People's Front. There were rumors that the Communists were trying to terrorize Yŏ for his approach to the right.⁵⁹

The State Department instructed the Military Government to find strong, competent leaders who were not extremists of the right or left in the process of political integration. But Hodge reported that it was inevitable that the Military Government should include

⁵⁹CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 291, Feb. 16, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 5.

Syngman Rhee and Kim, Ku, the extreme right wing, if it were to succeed in its effort to create a consultative body on the basis of coalition.⁶⁰ Hodge found Rhee and Kim cooperative with his plan of coalition. In any event, the Representative Democratic Council was established as the result of the coalition movement, but it began more as a vehicle of the right, with twenty rightists, four moderates, and four leftists.

Setting up of the Representative Democratic Council signaled an important shift in America's basic attitude toward the politics of Korea--reconsideration of its traditional attitude of refraining from supporting any particular group. Though the Representative Democratic Council was not quite satisfactory to the American authorities because of its overwhelming rightist color, the Americans had no choice other than to accept it as the duly constituted consultative body.⁶¹ It was the first major political program of the Military Government in south Korea.⁶²

The Council adopted a resolution in which it pledged to serve and to cooperate in an advisory capacity

⁶⁰CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 285, Feb. 15, 1946, *ibid.*

⁶¹OPD 337, Feb. 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 5; also, see F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 645.

⁶²Before the official inauguration of the USAMGIK, the word "military government" was used to designate the units for the civilian affairs within the occupation army.

with the Commanding General, United States Army Forces, in his effort to prepare for an interim government of Korea, and to coordinate all their activities and devote their efforts to help improve conditions among the Korean people and to hasten thereby the realization of Korea's complete independence.⁶³ The advisory capacity of the Council was thus confirmed by the members.

In preparation for the forthcoming Joint Russo-American Commission which was to consult democratic parities and social organizations of Korea, registration of political parties was ordered by the Military Government. Any group of "three or more persons associated for political activities in any form" was required to register as a political party.⁶⁴ Both in north and south Korea, preparations for the upcoming economic conference and the Joint Commission meetings were on their way. Efforts to take maximum advantage out of these meetings were clear. In north Korea, Temporary People's Committee was organized entirely of Communists, and in the south, the rightist Representative Democratic Council and the left-Communist Democratic People's Front came into existence.

⁶³Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 5, Feb., 1946, pp. 283-284.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 282.

But the prospect of the Joint Commission was not bright. Anti-trusteeship sentiments among the non-Communists were still high, while Soviet propaganda, assisted by the Korean Communists both in north and south Korea, condemned these anti-trusteeship people fiercely. It became clearer that unless the outcome of the negotiations as stipulated in the Moscow decision was so made as to satisfy both pro- and anti-trusteeship groups, there would be no real solution of the Korean question. The Americans working in the Military Government and General Hodge were pessimistic about the success of the two important conferences, partly out of their own experiences of negotiations with the Soviets and partly because of their failure to change the minds of anti-trusteeship people.

More important, the enduring results of the improvised bilateral occupation, the socio-economic division of Korean society, the lack of any cooperation between the two occupational authorities, and the furious trusteeeship controversy had affected the conflict between the two zones so adversely that success of negotiation seemed almost impossible unless one of the two retreated substantially from its position. This was unlikely to occur. The two zones had gone too far in their own way to retreat. Every move in the other zone was looked upon with suspicion and

condemnation. The first major negotiation was convened in this situation.

The Russo-American Economic Conference was held in pursuance of the fourth paragraph of Section III of the Moscow communiqué. The first meeting was called on January 16, 1946, and continued for three weeks, ending on February 5. The two delegations had a total of fifteen formal sessions to discuss, as stipulated by the Moscow decision, the urgent economic and administrative problems created by the partition of Korea. The American delegation was led by Major General A. V. Arnold and the Russian delegation by Colonel General T. F. Shtykov.

Five months of economic and social separation between the agricultural south and industrial north had driven the Korean economy into an extraordinarily unbalanced situation. Economic activities in both zones were limited seriously by the separation. Political and social unrest in south Korea added to the economic hardships. North Korean society was much better organized than in the south, and economic hardships were relatively less pressing there due to its high productivity in both agriculture and industry.⁶⁵ Unquestionably, both zones suffered acute economic difficulties due to

⁶⁵See tables 3 and 4 in McCune, Korea Today, pp. 56-57.

lack of needed materials--raw and manufactured--but by and large, the difficulties in the south far outweighed those in the north.

Economic cooperation was badly needed. But another important aim of the economic conference was to reopen the two zones socially. Since the divided occupation had taken place, there had been virtually no social intercourse between the two zones on an official level. North Korea was placed under a total blackout as soon as the Russians occupied it. The only flow of Korean people from one zone to the other took place at risk of life.

The agenda for the conference naturally gave weight to those topics through which the two zones might be reopened economically, including electric power and coal that were badly needed in the south and rice to the north. But the Soviet delegation categorically refused to include in the agenda discussion of free circulation of newspapers throughout Korea, combined radio network for the benefit of all parties on an equal basis, and a proposed prohibition of removal of capital goods from Korea.⁶⁶

The agenda agreed upon and the items rejected foreshadowed failure of the conference. What had been

⁶⁶Hodge's report to the War Department, Jan. 18, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 611-612.

agreed upon were primarily questions in the field of material exchange between the two zones. The agenda items rejected by Soviet Russia were mainly those that would have brought the two zones into a "unified, whole national life." The discrepancy in the attitude of the two delegations became more apparent as the sessions continued.

At the close of the conference on February 5, 1946, an official announcement was issued by the two delegations, which read in part:

The Soviet and United States delegations . . . reached [agreement] on the following items: 1. Railroad, motor, and coastwise waterborne transportation; 2. Movement of Korean citizens between the two zones; 3. Exchange of mail between the two zones; 4. Radio broadcasting frequencies within Korea; and 5. the future coordination between the two commands in regard to economic and administrative matters.

In addition to the above, the Soviet and the American delegations exchanged views regarding the exchange of goods, settlement of mutual account, and release of electric power.⁶⁷

In view of the variety and extensiveness of the urgent problems to be settled, the final communiqué was a total disappointment to most Koreans. Whoever was responsible, the communiqué gave a strong impression to the Koreans that the conference was to be a perfunctory one and that the really urgent and vitally important problems were left out intentionally. The pressing

⁶⁷Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 5, Feb., 1946, p. 284; also, CINCAFPAC to the War Department ZA 17511, Feb. 15, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 5.

difficulties of Korean society and the Korean people were eclipsed by the sharpened political confrontation of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Basically, Soviet Russia was reluctant to open north Korea because it was clear that south Korea would suffer far more by the continuation of the division of the country. The United States was no less responsible for the meager outcome. George McCune, who had until recently been in charge of Korean affairs in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, charged that Korea was still "looked upon as a step child in high government circles" in Washington at the time of the economic conference. "Even after five months of occupation," he said, "there is as yet no move toward the Korean problem with the emphasis and care which it deserves."⁶⁸

General Hodge, who had been working in Korea for five months amidst the torrents of criticism, misunderstanding, and frustration, complained that since his arrival in Korea, he had found nothing in the attitude of the Russians to indicate that they had any thought of unifying the Korean nation while the Americans kept forces in Korea. He was so disappointed during the Economic Conference that he frankly admitted: "My best

⁶⁸ McCune, "Occupation Politics, in Korea,"
p. 37.

guess now is that north and south will never be really united until the Russians are sure that the whole will be soundly communistic We are opposed by a strongly organized, ruthless political machinery designed to appeal to millions of Koreans."⁶⁹

The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee moved quickly in the preparation for the up-coming Joint Commission, and while the Economic Conference was still in session it adopted on January 28 a Policy Paper for Korea.⁷⁰ It was made manifest in the Paper that the American government considered establishing an interim government as the most pressing task in Korea. The American government possibly thought that even if the Economic Conference failed, such baffling problems as the economic and administrative division of Korea could be resolved once and for all by setting up a Korean government at the Joint Commission. The Paper overlooked that it was almost impossible to establish an interim Korean government unless some extensive social and economic exchanges had been realized first between the two zones. It had already been made clear at the Economic Conference by the Soviet's denunciation of those basic

⁶⁹Hodge's letter to JCS, JCS 1483/27, Feb. 2, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 628f.

⁷⁰SWNCC 176/18, adopted on Jan. 28, 1946. Ibid., p. 623f.

measures to open up the two zones that the Soviets would not permit a unified Korea except on the terms they preferred.

General Hodge was outspokenly worried over the possible misconception of the Korean situation on the part of American policy makers. Upon receiving the SWNCC Policy Paper, he responded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that unless complete freedom of speech, press, and movement of Koreans within Korea had been accomplished first, the Joint Commission would be unable to freely consult Korean parties and leaders and to learn the desires of the Korean people regarding their government, which were the prerequisites stipulated in the Moscow communiqué.⁷¹ His judgment was that giving full consideration to these points with considerable vigor was more essential than any hasty joint consideration by the Joint Commission of the structure of the interim government.

As a matter of fact, there was growing suspicion among the non-Communist Koreans that the United States might be outmaneuvered by the Russians to make concessions which would lead to the communization of all Korea. This uneasiness made its first appearance when

⁷¹Hodge's message to JCS, CA 57792, Feb. 2, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4; also, see F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 632-633.

it was disclosed that it was not Soviet Russia but the United States that proposed trusteeship for Korea at the Moscow Conference. The uneasiness was bolstered after the economic conference ended ineffectively. The Americans on the spot feared that the inherent xenophobia might be rekindled among the Koreans. "Should the Koreans reach the conclusions that the United States talks big but acts little, not prepared to live up to its promise," the political adviser in Korea, H.M. Benninghoff, warned, "the Koreans will be at the mercy of Soviets' highly-organized steam-roller technique."⁷²

Hodge was clearly mindful of the growing distrust of the United States among the Koreans and felt it necessary to restore waning popularity of the American occupation authorities by giving publicity to Russian intentions in Korea. In his report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff referred to previously, he strongly recommended that if the Soviet delegation in the Joint Commission displayed reluctance to come to agreement on the free flow of press, radio, and people between the two zones as the prerequisite to a successful realization of the Moscow decision, he would "discreetly make known to the Korean people . . . that the United States has from the beginning tried to break down barrier

⁷²Benninghoff's letter to the Secretary of State, Feb. 9, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 631.

of 38th parallel but that USSR has failed to follow our lead."⁷³

Hodge thought that such a disclosure would strengthen the American hand and might cause the Soviet delegation to accede to America's desires. It is highly doubtful if such a disclosure would have resulted in any significant change in the Russian attitude at the negotiation table. But Hodge's judgment was based upon his experiences in Korea and worth listening to as he concluded that "the more we open up the country and convince the people of our real aims, the greater will be the chances of achieving truly democratic rather than a Soviet directed communistic government."⁷⁴

Communist propaganda had changed little in its basic character since the about-face on the trusteeship question. Closing their society ever tighter, the north Koreans were ready to respond to any proposal or decision made at the initiative of Soviet Russia at either the Economic Conference or the forthcoming Joint Commission. For them, it was a fait accompli that north and south Korea had developed themselves into two distinctively different and unbridgeable societies, and that the only alternative left was the integration of the two zones to their liking.

⁷³Supra, n. 74, Hodge's message to JCS.

⁷⁴Ibid.

In south Korea, pessimism mounted day by day after the Moscow Conference. On January 19 when the Joint Economic Conference was started, the rightist Tong-A Daily of Seoul editorialized that despite the division of Korea and the Soviet's blackout of the northern part, Korea was one nation with its own history and culture, that every effort should be made by the two occupying powers to disentangle the knotty problems with an eye to establishing one, unified nation, and that unless the United States and Soviet Russia took the desires and aspiration of the Korean people seriously in their negotiations, these efforts would surely fail.⁷⁵ This illustrated the non-Communist Koreans' distrust of the Allied Power, which, as Hodge and Benninghoff pointed out, was almost universal.⁷⁶

The most immediate stumbling block at the joint Economic Conference was the problem of sending rice to the north. The American delegates refused to promise to send rice even though they fully recognized that rice was the major food crop for the Koreans and that south Korea was the main rice-producing area. Actually, the Americans were unable to meet the Russian demand for rice.

⁷⁵Tong-A Ilbo (A Daily; rightist) as quoted in CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGBI 164, Jan. 28, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4.

⁷⁶Supra, n. 72 (Benninghoff) and n. 71 (Hodge).

On the other hand, the Russians demanded payment for the electricity and other materials sent from north Korea to the south.

One of many reasons why the Americans were unable to pay in rice was the practice of hoarding of rice among the Korean landlords and businessmen. To resolve the immediate shortage of rice, the occupation authorities seized all warehouses in October, 1945, to be followed by quick inventories and arrangement for the seized rice to be sent to the needy places.⁷⁷ In other words, the shortage of rice had already become acute even in south Korea by the time of the Joint Economic Conference. In January, rice was declared a critical item by General Notice No. 6 of the Military Government, with a price ceiling. But as soon as the Notice was declared, rice practically disappeared from the open market,⁷⁸ and the black market prevailed.

Among other reasons for the shortage of rice were the sudden influx of hundreds of thousands of Koreans into south Korea from Japan, Manchuria, north Korea, and other overseas areas, the change of economic pattern due to the partition of Korea into two, and the psychological reaction of the Korean people to the

⁷⁷Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 1, September-October, 1945, p. 187.

⁷⁸Ibid., No. 4, January, 1946, p. 287.

postwar socio-economic situation. Especially, the second and third factors played a vital role in the Korean economy.

Before liberation, south Korea shipped rice to north Korea and Japan. It produced more rice than needed for south Korea alone. But the export of rice was possible only because other important food crops such as wheat, beans, corn, and millet were brought in from north Korea and Manchuria. South Korea produced, in 1944, 64 percent of all the rice and 91 percent of all the barley, while north Korea produced in the same year 58 percent of wheat, 71 percent of millet, 91 percent of corn, and 65 percent of soybeans.⁷⁹ Now that the flow of these major food crops between the north and south stopped completely, it was only natural that the capability of south Korea to export rice was sharply reduced. The economic pattern in terms of the flow of major food crops changed essentially.

The population of south Korea in 1946 was 19.4 millions,⁸⁰ while that of north Korea for the same year

⁷⁹Table 3 in McCune, Korea Today, p. 56.

⁸⁰Haepang Ishim-nyŏn (Twenty Years Since the Liberation), Kirok-p'yŏn (Part of Records) (Seoul, 1965), p. 114. No source is available for the population of south Korea for the year of 1945.

was 9.3 millions.⁸¹ South Korea's population amounted to 67 percent of the total while it produced 74 percent of the rice.⁸² In 1945, a bumper rice crop was expected by the Military Government. The Bureau of Agriculture and Commerce of the Military Government estimated the rice production of the year at 15.9 million Sŏm.⁸³ But the real figure after the harvest dropped to 12.8 million Sŏm, a 19 percent decrease from the original estimate.⁸⁴ No statistics are available for north Korea for the year of 1945 but if it is assumed that the percentage of rice production was not very far from that of the year of 1946, and when other crops such as wheat, corn, millet, and beans are added, north and south Korea were almost on a par in the production of food crops in proportion to population.

⁸¹Central Statistical Board Under the State Planning Commission of the D.P.R.K., Statistical Returns of National Economy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 1946-1960 (Pyŏngyang, 1961), p. 16.

⁸²Calculated on the basis of the reports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as quoted in Haepang Ishim-nyŏn, p. 124 (12 million sŏm--roughly 3.07 million tons), and reports of Statistical Returns by DPRK, p. 83 (1.05 million tons). Since the report of south Korea is shown in sŏm that equals 4.9629 bushels (20 bushels = 1 short ton) and that of north Korea is shown in tons (not clear whether in long or short ton), there could be some margin in the percentage.

⁸³Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 3, Dec., 1945, p. 193.

⁸⁴Haepang-Ishim-nyŏn, p. 124.

Nevertheless, at the Economic Conference, the Soviet delegation insisted on receiving rice. The presence of a quarter million of the Red Army in north Korea could have raised the demands for rice. They were dependent largely upon foods produced in Korea. It had been widely witnessed and reported by the Koreans that the Red Army affected the crop situation of north Korea adversely by such reckless actions as to feed to horses agricultural products such as rice, corn, and other crops, to cut the unripe rice in order to feed their horses, and to damage the rice fields in many places.⁸⁵ These damages could have been minor economically. But the reports certainly had some psychological repercussion among the Korean people in north and south Korea. Significantly, these reports came from the major rice-producing areas in north Korea. In addition, there were reports that the Russians were taking rice and other crops as well as other manufactured goods to their own country.⁸⁶

⁸⁵OSS R&A, XL 26109, 215484-2, a report of Professor Kyu-Yong Lee, the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Wŏnsan, north Korea; *ibid.*, 215484-5, a report by Rev. Kwan-Sik Kim, the Moderator of the United Church of Korea, in Songdo (Kaesŏng).

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 215484-5 and 215484-10, a report by Revs. Youn, Ha-Young and Han, Kyung-Chik, both in Sinŭichu city. The city was the main railroad transportation connection between Korea and the Southern Manchurian Railroad.

The Joint Economic Conference reached an impasse when the American occupation authorities found that they had no measures within their reach to supply the Russians with the requested amount of rice, despite south Korea's growing dependence on electricity, fuels, and other materials from north Korea. The Soviet delegation was quite unwilling to discuss economic cooperation unless there was some hope of getting rice. At this juncture the south Koreans manifested a strong psychological reaction.

The south Koreans were experiencing a drastic shortage of electricity and coal. Despite the two-to-one ratio of population, more than 60 percent of the minimum requirement of electricity for south Korea had to come from north Korea.⁸⁷ Shortage of coal was as serious as that of electricity. In October, 1945, south Korea faced a shortage of 150,000 tons of bituminous and 167,000 tons of anthracite coal a month. It was estimated that the local production of anthracite by December 31, 1945, would not exceed 62,500 tons a month, compared with an estimated requirement of 230,000 tons a month.⁸⁸ In addition to the acute shortage of electric power and coal, south Korea which was primarily an

⁸⁷Table 5 in Haepang Ishim-nyŏn, p. 116.

⁸⁸Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 1, September-October, 1945, p. 189.

agricultural area needed about 400,000 tons of fertilizer annually, and almost all had to be supplied by north Korea.⁸⁹

Prices of agricultural products which used to be supplied by north Korea had been soaring. For instance, the retail price for 1 mal (14.6 kilograms) of soybeans jumped from 45 wŏn in August, 1945, to 300 wŏn in May, 1946. For wheat flour, it soared from 130 wŏn per 22 Kg. to 1,100 wŏn, and for millet, from 66 wŏn per mal to 340 wŏn.⁹⁰

South Koreans naturally became fearful of the stoppage of trade between the north and south, and they turned to the hoarding of daily commodities, including rice, as a way to ameliorate the resulting economic hardship until the new crops would be available in the fall. Collection of adequate supplies of rice to furnish the deficit areas still constituted the principal agricultural problem in the American zone, let alone shipping rice out to any country or place, including north Korea, even in February, 1946.⁹¹

Given this situation, the Russian demand for rice could not be met by the Americans, and the prospect

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 187.

⁹⁰Chosun Bank, Monthly Statistical Review, as quoted in McCune, Korea Today, p. 338, table 3.

⁹¹Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 1, September-October, 1945, p. 189.

of the Economic Conference rapidly deteriorated. But this economic problem, however real, was not the most disturbing factor that doomed the conference from the outset. From the adoption of the agenda through the final communiqué, the two delegations approached the issues regarding the urgent economic and administrative integration of the two zones from diametrically different positions.

The American delegation adhered to the principle that Korea should be considered as "an economic, administrative unit." They strongly felt the desirability of removing the barrier of the 38th parallel on the justifiable ground that the primary objective of the line had already been achieved. In compliance with the desires of most of the non-Communist Koreans, the American delegates strove to attain the goal of a unified national life by unifying such important facilities as transportation and public utilities. Unification of these basic facilities into a single administrative unit definitely outweighed any question at this point.⁹²

By contrast, Soviet Russia desired negotiation strictly on the basis of the dual system that had existed since August, 1945. To the Russians, the Economic

⁹²Benninghoff's report on the Russo-American Economic Conference to the Secretary of State, Feb. 15, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 633f; also, see Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, p. 222.

Conference was strictly a 'negotiation' between the two commands. Exchange of goods and coordination were considered as a matter between the two adjoining yet separate zones of military responsibility. They were adamant throughout against any discussion that would require them to give up any of the command prerogatives to a joint conference. They insisted that the exchange of goods must be on a quasi-barter basis between two different zones. They were unwilling to cooperate unless a balanced exchange was realized.⁹³ It soon became evident to the American delegation that the Russians were sent to the conference with the instruction to get as much rice as possible from south Korea.⁹⁴

Under the situation, the balance naturally tipped heavily toward north Korea as far as the value of the goods exchanged was concerned. This was intolerable for the Russians. They even said that if the Russian requests were not met by south Korea, they would have to market the Korean goods elsewhere.⁹⁵ There was no question that Russia definitely regarded Korea only in the

⁹³CINCAFPAC to the War Department, TFGBI 169, Feb. 27, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4.

⁹⁴Benninghoff's report, Feb. 15, 1946. F.R., 1946, VII, p. 633f.

⁹⁵Russian statement at the eighth session, on Jan. 28. CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFBBI 173, Jan. 29, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section No. 4.

light of "Russian Korea" and "American Korea" rather than "a Korean nation."

Technical problems on the supply of materials, basic discrepancies in the approach of the two delegations to the problems of Korea, Russia's lack of interest in the conference unless rice could be obtained, Washington's failure to accord Korea a high priority, the character of the conference itself as a preliminary meeting for the forthcoming Joint Commission, all worked adversely. The south Koreans were greatly disappointed in the outcome of the conference. Many of them quite erroneously believed that the meeting had been called to decide the trusteeship question and were disappointed on this account. General Hodge pleaded for patience and order on the part of Koreans by saying that he himself "got impatient with what appeared to be slow progress."⁹⁶

The United States, which had occupied Korea without preparation, had no programs--political, social, economic--for Korea. The American occupation authorities were extremely aware of Russian entrenchment in north Korea and adopted an anti-Communist stance. The American Military Government was rejected by the Communists and many of the leftists, and did not enjoy full support of

⁹⁶CGUSAFIK to the Information Section, the War Department, TFGCG 283, Feb. 12, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea. Section No. 4.

the rightists, either. The cold war confrontation between the two occupying powers only helped further splits among the Koreans. The first attempt at negotiation at the Economic Conference failed. Now the two governments looked to the Joint Commission, largely from different motives. America looked forward to ending its undesirable commitment to Korea as soon as practicable, and Russia appeared determined to strengthen its position in Korea by adhering to the Moscow decision, the heart of which was trusteeship.

CHAPTER IV

FAILURE OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

The outcome of the US-USSR Economic Conference that ended on February 5, 1946, was quite a disappointment to many of the Korean people, especially after the controversy over the trusteeship issue split the nation in a most disastrous way. The two occupation authorities now proceeded to preparing themselves for the scheduled political negotiation at the US-USSR Joint Commission. Though pessimism about the negotiation was high among the south Koreans, political parties of south Korea looked to the Joint Commission as a meeting where Korea's future would be decided and, as such, they lost no time in arming themselves to make their opinion and assertion heard and reflected in the final decision of the Commission.

The rightists were generally supportive of the American Military Government and continued to criticize fiercely the idea of trusteeship under any circumstance. They demanded the abandonment of the 38th parallel as the indispensable prerequisite to enabling the Koreans to have a really representative government based upon popular will. However, inter-party rivalries, an

inevitable consequence of person-centered Korean politics, prevented the rightists from taking a united action beyond the trusteeship issue. There had been reports that north Korea tightened its control over the people in every phase of political, economic, and cultural life through the People's Committee and Poan-Dae (Security Corps), but these reports could not bring together the divided rightists who were extremely anti-Communist.¹ The moderate, middle-of-the-roaders differed from the rightists only in that their opposition was milder and more mindful of the Military Government than the rightists. The leftists of south Korea were also making desperate efforts to marshal popular support to their cause. They were extremely critical of the Military Government and advocated immediate implementation of trusteeship along with the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government strictly in accordance with the Moscow decision. This coincided with the position taken by the Russians and the Communists of both north and south Korea.

The American government, which was not fully prepared for the Economic Conference, moved exceptionally quickly in the preparation of the Joint Commission. A directive for the guidance of the American delegation at

¹About the social regimentation in north Korea, see supra, Chapter II, section 3.

the Joint Commission was adopted by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee as early as January 28, 1946.² The directive, which was transmitted to General MacArthur on February 11, stressed that the American delegation at the Joint Commission must strive to have a Korean provisional government established before the Joint Commission took up the trusteeship issue. It further stipulated that the decisions reached at the Joint Commission were not final. They should be presented to the four governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Great Britain for consideration before they were implemented. The Commission was to act for, and not in the place of, the four powers. Lastly, the directive called for finding measures to help and assist the Korean people to make political, economic, and social progress as an independent nation. But the directive stated clearly that the Commission might or might not recommend a trusteeship. An instruction from the Operation and Planning Division of the War Department to General Hodge categorically stated that negotiation in connection with the proposed trusteeship was not the primary function of the Joint

²Enclosure to SWNCCC 176/18, "Political Policy for Korea," Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, VIII (Washington, 1971), p. 623f.

Commission.³ In short, the American government took the view that a trusteeship was not only the last step to be taken to help Korea but its form should be adapted to Korea's needs.

This flexible approach to trusteeship existed even before the trusteeship controversy flared up among the Korean people in early 1946.⁴ In a press conference of January 25, 1946, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson reiterated that the trusteeship might be necessary, but if it was necessary, it should be for no longer than five years. More important, he said that the trusteeship for Korea was "not put forward as a concrete plan but as a suggestion as to the basis of discussion" at the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers.⁵

General Hodge had been very suspicious of Russian intentions in Korea. As he saw it, little could be accomplished by the Joint Commission unless Russian propaganda was countered effectively by the United States and freedom of speech was restored throughout Korea. He contended that there had been nothing in the attitude of

³OPD 091 Korea, War 96200, Feb. 6, 1946, to General Hodge, CCS 383.21 Korea, Section 4.

⁴Secretary Byrnes' radio report on the Moscow Conference, Dec. 30, 1945.

⁵The Department of State Bulletin, XIV, No. 344 (Feb. 3, 1946), p. 155.

the Russians to indicate that they had any thought of "unifying the Korean nation until the Russians were sure that the whole of Korea would be soundly communistic."⁶

The American government was also worried about Russian propaganda activities and their impact upon the Koreans. It, therefore, instructed General Hodge to press as a matter of principle for agreement on freedom of speech, press, and travel of Koreans within Korea as soon as the Commission was opened. It was clear that America aimed at achieving its objectives without yielding to the Russians in matters of principle.⁷

The American delegation was advised to avoid giving the Russians excuses for breaking off the negotiations. For instance, the SWNCC directive stated that should the Russians not agree to the freedom of speech, press, and travel of Koreans, the American delegation should reserve their position in respect to these freedoms for final decision prior to the time the provisional Korean government began to function, press for initial agreement on travel by Commission members and their staffs throughout Korea to consult with Korean democratic

⁶Radio from General Hodge to General MacArthur, TFGCG 272, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 629.

⁷SWNCC 176 series: telegram, Guidance for Initial Meeting of Joint Commission on Korea, *ibid.*, p. 644f.

parties and social organizations, and proceed to consider the structure of the provisional government.

Thus, the United States faced the meeting of the Joint Commission with the basic attitude that final decisions on Korea were to be made only through reference to the four powers, and that the decisions at the Commission should be made on the basis of a full representation of the Korean people.⁸ Although trusteeship was advisable for the Koreans, it, nevertheless, was a matter to be decided after consultation with the Koreans once they had established a provisional government.

On March 20, 1946, the first meeting of the long-awaited Joint US-Soviet Commission met at the Dōksu Palace in Seoul. This meeting was the first after the Japanese capitulation to discuss the overall problems of the present and future of Korea. At the opening session, General T. F. Shtykov, head of the Soviet delegation, read a statement which clarified the basic stance and policy of Soviet Russia in dealing with Korean questions. He made the following important remarks: The Korean people had earned the right to independence and a free way of life; the future provisional Korean

⁸For the American concern in a fully representative government for Korea, see paragraphs 4. d, and 4. e, of SWNCC 176/18, *ibid.*, pp. 625-626; also, President Truman's message to the Congress, January 14, 1946, DSB, XIV, No. 344, p. 139.

democratic government had to be created on the basis of all the "democratic parties and organizations supporting the decisions of the Moscow Conference"; the Soviet Union had a keen interest in Korea "being a true democratic and independent country friendly to the Soviet Union"; trusteeship corresponded with the fundamental interests of the Korean people; and People's Committees had been formed as an organ of democratic self-government.⁹

These remarks sounded embarrassing to the American delegation whose approach so far to the Joint Commission had been largely based on a different interpretation of such terms as "democratic" or "reactionary," and suggested that the Commission faced difficulties. Shtykov made it clear that Russia considered the Korean question in the context of her national security. He demanded that an independent Korea should be friendly to Russia. But the problem was that under the circumstances there was virtually no chance that an independent Korea could maintain friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and the United States. The cold war confrontation between the two occupying powers had so developed in Korea that only a far-reaching compromise

⁹Statement by Colonel T. F. Shtykov at the opening session of the US-Soviet Joint Commission, March 20, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 652-654.

could have solved the Korean question. The Korean situation had so developed during the past seven months that if security needs were important to Soviet Russia, national prestige in the cold war showdown became important to the United States.

Shtykov's statement that Korea must not be allowed to become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union did not impress the non-Communist Koreans. His remarks on the trusteeship issue left no choice to the Koreans and presented a challenge to the anti-trusteeship Koreans. They complained that the Russian assertion would place Korea in a conquered, and not in a liberated, status. They found it difficult to reconcile Russia's unconditional adherence to the trusteeship clause with Shtykov's reference in the same statement that the Soviets upheld the principle of "self-determination and free existence of any nation." His criticism of the non-Communist Koreans as reactionaries and anti-democratic only contributed to deepening confusion concerning what was meant by the terms "democratic" and "reactionary."

Shtykov further stated that a trusteeship would serve Korea's interests. It is not clear what he implied by "interests," but the expression provoked those Koreans who had been desperately opposing trusteeship. Since the disclosure of the Moscow decisions, opposition to the trusteeship had been the central

political issue in south Korea. In north Korea, Soviet pressure caused the leadership to accept trusteeship and blocked outspoken dissension among the people.¹⁰ In the south, anti-trusteeship had become almost synonymous with anti-Communism. Naturally, Shtykov's demand that opponents of trusteeship be excluded from all consultation with respect to the establishment of a Korean provisional government was received by the non-Communist Koreans as a device to get rid of them. The Russian aim of excluding the non-Communist Koreans from Korea's future politics was made clear in Shtykov's assertion that the Communist-imposed People's Committee was the only true organ of self-government.¹¹

From the outset, the discrepancy between the Russian stand on the trusteeship question and the American view that trusteeship was no more than "a suggestion for discussion" stood in the way of agreement. The United States also demanded removal of existing restrictions on free travel of Koreans and free circulation of information by radio, newspapers and public speeches prior to the formation of a provisional government.¹² Any

¹⁰For more details, see supra, Chapter II, section 3.

¹¹For more details, see supra, Chapter II, section 3.

¹²Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces in Korea (to be shortened hereafter to CGUSAFIK) to the War Dept., DTG:21/1825 Z, Mar. 21, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

attempt to implement the Moscow decision while the nation was divided socially and economically impressed the non-Communist Koreans as futile.

The Russians, on the other hand, held fast to the idea that the Joint Commission must not consult with those who had opposed the Moscow decision, even though these Koreans opposed only the trusteeship clause and not the Moscow decision itself. The Russians proposed to question the political platform of the parties and organizations before they were consulted.¹³ They also demanded that the Joint Commission proceed without delay to prescribe the constituent form of the new Korean state and that the Commission write the basic document for the provisional Korean government.¹⁴ These Russian proposals led the American delegation to conclude that the Russians intended to select arbitrarily the personnel of the provisional government and determine its structure after consulting only those parties and organizations to their liking. General Hodge reported to the War Department after the first meeting of the Commission that even though it was too early to be pessimistic, one could not but wonder whether the Soviets

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴From CGUSAFIK to the War Department, DTG:21/1830, I, Mar. 21, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

"have any genuine desire to put an end to the present status quo in Korea."¹⁵

In compliance with Ordinance No. 55 of the Military Government, 134 parties and organizations registered in south Korea by the end of February, 1946.¹⁶ This was certainly not a desirable result and illustrated how the ordinary people were manipulated by a small number of politicians. Shtykov argued that many of these parties were not known to the Korean people and were not supported and participated in by the people. He demanded that only those parties officially recognized by the Russian and American commands be consulted.¹⁷

The American delegation, though embarrassed by the extraordinarily large number of parties, had no other choice but to recognize them officially unless they were in violation of the regulation in Ordinance No. 55. Undeniably, many of them consisted of hundreds and even tens of people. And unquestionably, it was hard for these small parties to act effectively, especially when consultation was becoming the central issue at the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Summation, USAMGIK, No. 6 (March, 1946), p. 9. For the contents of Ordinance No. 55, see Summation, Japan and Korea, No. 5 (Feb., 1946), pp. 281-282.

¹⁷ Report of the second meeting of the Commission by CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFURC 6, Mar. 24, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

Joint Commission. The organizational weakness of south Korea increased already existing difficulties.

In north Korea, there were about thirty parties registered.¹⁸ The point, however, was that most of the parties were oriented toward Communism. No party was free to ignore Soviet policies. There were nominally two non-Communist parties: Ch'ŏng-U Dang (Young Friends of Ch'ŏn-do-kyo Religion Party) and Chosŏn Minju Dang (Korean Democratic Party). But the leaders of these non-Communist parties were being selected from Communist ranks. Party policies or actions had to be approved in advance by Communist authorities.¹⁹

After a week of meetings no progress had been made. It became more evident to the American delegation that to the Russians trusteeship was a "foregone conclusion to be settled even before the Provisional Korean Government was formed." It was equally clear that the Russians interpreted any non-Communist view as "undemocratic, fascist, and pro-Japanese."²⁰ The representatives of the Soviet Union sought to avoid all publicity concerning the procedures of the meeting. They defended

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I, p. 340.

²⁰CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 331, Mar. 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

this position with the argument that the Koreans were interested in results and not in procedures.²¹ The Communists and some leftists in south Korea faithfully echoed what the Russians asserted at the Commission.

The American government took a firm position in the negotiations. America rejected any idea that dislike of trusteeship should be made a criterion for excluding Korean individuals and organizations from consultation. "The final decision with regard to trusteeship," the State Department contended, "rests neither with the Commission nor with Korea but with the four governments" in accordance with the Moscow Agreement.²²

While America was prepared to accommodate its views on procedural matters to those of the Russians, it refused to compromise on the objective of establishing a truly representative government for Korea.

Heated debates continued on the issue of Korean representation at every meeting, with no avail. At the ninth meeting on April 5, for instance, Shtykov asserted that all the people in north Korea supported the Allies and the Moscow terms on Korea, implying that they were qualified for consultation. He then argued that in south Korea leaders who returned home after the

²¹See the documents of supra, n. 14 and n. 17.

²²Secretary Byrnes to William Langdon, April 5, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 657.

liberation were without contact with the masses and therefore not qualified to be consulted with.²³ It was repeatedly made clear by the Russians that support of the Moscow decision meant support of trusteeship. But this interpretation could not be accepted by the Americans who upheld Korea's right to free speech. They even insisted that final decision on trusteeship was in the strict sense "not the subject of the Joint US-Soviet Commission."²⁴

A procedural compromise was proposed by the American delegation at the April 6th meeting. They proposed that parties and organizations to be consulted with must declare that they would cooperate with the Joint Commission. This American compromise was embodied finally in communiqué No. 5 issued on April 17, which demanded that all the parties and organizations that wanted to be consulted were required to declare in written form their support of the "aims" of the Moscow decision on Korea to reestablish the country as an independent state and to abide by the decisions of the Joint Commission in working out the basis of the future Korean

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²³CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFURC 18, April 8, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

²⁴Discussions at the eleventh meeting, CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFURC 20, April 9, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

government.²⁵ The National Society for the Rapid Realization of Independence, the largest amalgamation of the rightists of south Korea, adopted a message after communiqué No. 5 was issued that it would cooperate with the efforts of the Joint Commission.²⁶

As a result, the Joint Commission took on new life. But the basic question emanating from the trusteeship issue remained unresolved. The declaration to be signed by the Koreans was supposed to support the "aim" of the Moscow decision, while what really mattered was the "method" of implementation. The central issue was put into the background for a while. More important, there existed a gap of interpretation between the two delegations regarding the act of signing the declaration. The Russians interpreted it as the sign of an outspoken support of the trusteeship clause. The Americans, however, insisted that the act of signing assured the signers of the "privilege of expressing their views to the Commission either for or against trusteeship."²⁷

This American interpretation was justifiable in the light of communiqué No. 6 signed by General A. V. Arnold and General T. F. Shtykov. The communiqué

²⁵Commanding General, XXIV Corps to the War Department, TFURC 26, April 14, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6; also, see Summation, USAMGIK, No. 7 (April, 1946), p. 15.

²⁶Ibid., p. 14.

²⁷Ibid., p. 15.

stated emphatically that the purpose of the questionnaires to be attached to the declaration was "to obtain for the Joint Commission a broad and clear understanding of the opinions of the Korean people" and "to give consideration to their advices and proposals on the question of the structure and principles of organization of the provisional Korean government."²⁸

The Joint Commission reached an impasse as early as the beginning of April, as reported by the Associated Press. There was a rumor that the American government was planning to set up a Korean provisional government in south Korea only.²⁹ The State Department and the American authorities in Korea denied it instantly, but the prospects for an early conclusion of negotiation appeared gloomy.

Both the Soviet and American delegations were unwilling to compromise on principle. Neither of them wanted to see the decisions of the Moscow Conference carried out in a way prejudicial to its own position in Korea. The American occupation authorities were getting more and more alarmed by the fact that the Communists and leftist parties in the two zones were closely

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 388, April 8, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

identified in their demands and activities. America's suspicion of Soviet tactics in Korea deepened.³⁰

The American and Russian governments strove to take advantage of the seeming weakness of the other in Korea. The Americans, for instance, pressed the Soviet authorities to lift the black-out immediately and to allow complete freedom to the non-Communist groups in north Korea. The Russians, on the other hand, attacked the Americans for their relationship with the anti-trusteeship extreme rightists and for not abiding by international agreements.³¹ The Soviets already showed that their major concern was the establishment of a friendly Korea and one amenable to working with them. The Americans were equally determined to prevent such a development. The United States wished to prevent Korea from becoming a center of international struggle and sought the creation of a Korean government which would prepare the way for an independent country not subject to domination by any outside power and presumably friendly to the United States. Neither the United States nor Soviet Russia, it became clear, would give up its control

³⁰Department of State file, 740.00119 PW/4-1046, from Walter B. Smith to the Secretary of State, 1116, April 10, 1946.

³¹State Department's circular letter, from the Secretary to certain diplomatic officers, April 23, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 661.

over half of Korea in exchange for a united Korea which might wind up in the opposite camp. The interests of the Korean people were not the major factor in their calculations.

General Hodge, like other Americans who worked in the Commission, was quite disappointed by the developments that had taken place. He was more and more convinced that the Korean Communists who opposed him had the support of the Soviets.³² He believed that there was little hope of having an effectively operative Korean central government so long as the two-nation occupation continued. He, therefore, resumed recommendation of withdrawal of both occupation troops from Korea. He doubted that even if a liberal democratic government was established in Korea, it would be allowed to function in north Korea as long as the Russian forces remained.³³

The Department of State did not concur with Hodge's proposal. In spite of the difficulties of the Joint Commission, the Department did not wish to leave the impression that the United States was prepared to surrender its responsibility in Korea. The Korean

³²CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 331, Mar. 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 5.

³³Commanding General, XXIV Corps to the War Department, TFGCG 352, April 27, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6; also, see Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, May 8, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 674.

rightists, learning that America took a firm stand at the Commission, began to mollify their critical attitude toward the Military Government and supported in general the American effort at the Joint Commission. The view prevailed in the American government that there was no reason for the United States to retreat when its position in Korea was stronger than ever.³⁴

The American delegation remained committed to establishing a provisional Korean government as fully representative as possible. They believed that more publicity about the Commission would strengthen the American position among the Koreans. They proposed to publish the questionnaires regarding the provisional charter and platform of the provisional government in order that the Korean parties and organizations would be able to make preliminary studies. The proposal was rejected by the Russian delegation on the ground that selection of parties and organizations to whom the Commission sent out the questionnaires must come first.³⁵ Deadlock was apparent.

³⁴OPD No. 370.5 TS, May 11, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6.

³⁵Commanding General, XXIV Corps to the Departments of War and State, TFURC 37, May 4, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6.

It became clear in early May that there could be no meeting of minds between the two delegations. As the meetings began to show signs of deadlock, each delegation endeavored to give the appearance of working hard and that the lack of progress was due to the other side. If the American delegation proposed, for instance, to study measures for helping and assisting the political, economic, and social progress of the Korean people and measures of developing a democratic self-government and establishment of national independence of Korea, the Soviet delegation would propose in response the study of measures in fields of economic, internal and external trade, financial, training Korean personnel, national culture, justice, etc.³⁶ It was evident that none of these measures could be implemented effectively unless the work of establishing a provisional Korean government made at least some progress. Even by May no progress had been made toward consulting the Korean representatives, the very first step for establishing a provisional government.

The Americans worked on the hopeful assumption that the Soviets would finally agree to consult all the democratic Korean parties because imposing conditions on

³⁶An informal memorandum by the Soviet delegation, dated May 2. William Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, May 8, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 668.

consultation exceeded the authority of the delegation to the Joint Commission. Exclusion of those who voiced opposition to trusteeship was never warranted by the Moscow decision explicitly or implicitly. The American delegation upheld consistently the position that all parties or individuals were free to express their views on any political matter not affecting military security.³⁷

As General Hodge emphasized, the Americans worked on the principle "not to defend any school of political thought, not to permit obstruction to the fulfillment of the Moscow decision, nor to defend views that trusteeship may unduly delay Korea's independence."³⁸ The United States held that it was impossible to deny the democratic parties and organizations the right guaranteed by the Moscow decision to participate in the formation of their own government solely because they had expressed honestly and openly their preference of immediate independence rather than a trusteeship.

³⁷The American draft of press release on the adjournment of the Joint Commission, CGUSAFIK to Departments of War and State, TFURC 40, May 7, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6.

³⁸Hodge's report on the Joint Commission to the Secretary of State, undated, received by the State Department on May 9, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 667; also, see Summation, USAMGIK, No. 8 (May, 1946), p. 19.

On the other hand, the Russian delegation strove to make the trusteeship the 'meat' of the Moscow Conference. They insisted that there was no alternative to it, that opposition to it was subversive, and that the Koreans had no moral right to question the plans which their liberators had for them.³⁹ The Russians ruled that the groups of the Representative Democratic Council should be excluded from consultation,⁴⁰ because Kim, Kiuric, the Acting Chairman of the Council and the leader of the moderate group, declared that the Council would cooperate with the work of the Joint Commission, with the understanding that after the formation of the provisional Korean government they would be able to express freely their opinion on political issues, including opposition to trusteeship.⁴¹ The Soviets openly stated on occasion that the Koreans were not ready for the Soviet form of democracy.⁴²

Kim's statement can be considered as a reasonable concession. Since the demand of the Korean people for immediate independence was great and growing greater,

³⁹Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, May 8, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 669-670.

⁴⁰Summation, USAMGIK, No. 8 (May, 1946), p. 19.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Langdon's report, F.R., 1946, VII, pp. 669-670.

the Korean rightists and moderates decided to postpone expression of their dislike of trusteeship until the more urgent job of establishing a provisional government was completed. The Russians now made it clear that they would not allow any expression of opinion against trusteeship even after the establishment of a provisional government. In view of the Moscow decision in which the two delegations were required to cooperate with the provisional Korean government in matters of helping the Koreans, including trusteeship, this stubbornness displayed by the Russians was a serious violation of the letter and spirit of the Moscow decision. Russian adamancy eventually served to weaken further the Soviet's position in south Korea.

It was evident especially after communiqué No. 5 of April 17 and a negative reaction to it by the Soviet delegation later that the Joint Commission was going to fail. The American delegation found no reason to continue fruitless discussions. On May 8, Shtykov told Hodge that he had orders from his superior commander to stop work with the Commission and to return north at once. This marked the end of negotiation. The United States looked forward to finding a way to disengage itself from south Korea without imperiling the independence of the whole of Korea; the Soviet Union wanted to place the whole of Korea under its influence and to

exclude anti-Communist rightist groups from the political scene of Korea in the future; and the Koreans were anxious for an opportunity to restore independence.

None of these expectations were fulfilled. The confrontation between the United States and Soviet Russia deepened further. Americans associated with the Joint Commission condemned the Russians for delaying intentionally the work of the Joint Commission in order to exhaust American patience and bring about a decline of American interest in Korea. They likewise believed that the Soviets sought to increase local dissatisfaction with the division of the country.⁴³ The Russians, in turn, charged the United States with instigating the Korean rightists to denounce the Moscow decisions.⁴⁴

The American political adviser in Korea, William Langdon, sought to save the Commission by advising the State Department that the United States needed a more concrete proposal on the trusteeship question. He suggested that some kind of compromise had to be achieved on recognition that the Soviet government treated trusteeship as something absolute and almost sacred, that the United States had from the beginning been the chief

⁴³CGUSAFIK to Departments of war and State, May 24, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 6.

⁴⁴Izvestia's article, as quoted in the New York Times, May 16, 1946.



proponent of trusteeship over Korea, and that Korea needed not only initial help and guidance but that the Koreans would likely be reconciled to a trusteeship when they saw the extent of authority enjoyed by the provisional government.⁴⁵ The desire to soft-pedal the trusteeship issue in the negotiations with Soviet Russia was gaining strength. Walter B. Smith, the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, for instance, contended that the United States could achieve its objective of establishing a truly representative government in Korea by being more flexible on trusteeship.⁴⁶

But the Military Governor Archer L. Lerch was pessimistic about Langdon's suggestion that the Koreans would readily be reconciled to trusteeship. "I do not believe it," he said. "If the Joint Commission announced establishment of the Provisional Government to be followed by two [sic] years of trusteeship," he continued, "we should see much disaster and rioting."⁴⁷ More important, nobody was clear about how much soft-pedaling was necessary to succeed in the negotiation and how to implement it. There was no assurance that a truly representative government could be established. If the United

⁴⁵ May 8, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 670.

⁴⁶ Walter B. Smith to the Secretary of State, May 18, 1946, ibid., p. 680.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 675.

States did compromise, the question remained as to how much the Russians would compromise. The sense of confrontation at the negotiation table had been such that any move toward a unilateral concession was tantamount to a unilateral loss of prestige and bankruptcy of policy.

Thus, the first Joint US-Soviet Commission went sine die. Few people had a clear idea that the failure at the first main negotiation would result in immeasurable cost in the months and years to come for Korea. In fact, the first Joint Commission proved later to be the first and the last sincere attempt to resolve the Korean questions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Afterwards, the two nations had strengthened their own positions, making any opportunity for compromise remoter still. Nor were the relations between the two nations improving in other areas of the world.

The frustration, doubt, and impatience of the Koreans in the wake of the adjournment of the Joint Commission was almost explosive. The Korean rightists felt justified in their long-held doubt that there could be a compromise between the United States and Soviet Russia as long as Russia adhered to its definition of democracy. The Communists and most of the leftists of south Korea harshly denounced the position taken by the American delegation. In general, however, the non-Communists of

south Korea, as a sampling of public opinion reportedly indicated, had an awareness that the American position was in defense of the principle that the Koreans had the right to be heard in the formation of their own government.⁴⁸ Understandably, this awareness was closely associated with a sense of despondency concerning the prospect of independence. The Koreans were tired of seeing conferences dragging indefinitely.

Under the circumstances, the idea of a separate provisional government in south Korea crept into the scene. Despite denial, it was known that Syngman Rhee and his faction had favored some form of limited South Korean Assembly which might present Korea's case directly to the United Nations in case the Joint Commission broke down completely.⁴⁹ Colonel Preston Goodfellow, the adviser to General Hodge, was quoted as saying that if the Soviet delegation did not return to the Joint Commission, the United States should go ahead with the job of "setting up a separate government in south Korea."⁵⁰

The American government denied that it intended to set up a separate Korean government in south Korea.

⁴⁸Summation, USAMGIK, No. 8 (May, 1946), p. 21.

⁴⁹Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, June 16, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 704.

⁵⁰The New York Times, May 24, 1946, reported by Richard J. H. Johnston.

Nor did the American Military Government consider a separate government for south Korea advisable under the situation.⁵¹ However, the concern of both the American government and the Military Government over a representative body which would assist the Military Government in matters of legislation and would assure the Koreans of more chance for the administrative work was bolstered undeniably after the impasse at the Joint Commission.⁵² One conceivable reason for this growing awareness was America's realization that the Russians had placed Koreans in office and were "making political capital out of the situation in [American] zone" where everything was done directly by the Military Government officials. The United States now felt it necessary to get off this spot as soon as possible in order to strengthen its position further among the south Koreans.⁵³ Despite the denial

⁵¹State Department file, 740.00119 Control (Korea)/6-446, telegram TFGCG 397 from Seoul, June 4, 1946; also, see F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 690, n. 8.

⁵²As reported by General John H. Hildring, Assistant Secretary of state for Occupied Areas, at a meeting held on May 2, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 681-683; also, William Langdon and Charles Thayer, with Hodge's concurrence, to the Secretary of State, June 3, 1946, *ibid.*, p. 690.

⁵³A conversation at a meeting held on May 22, 1946, participated in by Secretary of State Byrnes, Secretary of War Patterson, Assistant Secretary of War Petersen, Assistant Secretary of Navy Sullivan accompanied by Captain Dennison, General Hildring, and Mr. H. F. Matthews, Acting State Department member to the SWNCC. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 681-682.

of the American authorities, the idea of more Korean participation in governing south Korea consistently found its expression in a separate provisional government. And this made the American government anxious not to give the impression to the Russians that it was going to break the frame of the Moscow Agreement for a unilateral action of setting up a separate Korean government in its own zone.⁵⁴

In the Soviet zone, Communist control was intensified. The newspapers published in north Korea had shown no criticism of the Communist administration or of the Soviet policies being applied in north Korea. Using almost exclusively the title "democratic forces" in reference to itself, the Communist Party had assumed complete control of the economic, religious, and social life of North Korea, "drawing a political noose tighter" about the nine million north Koreans.⁵⁵ Only the Communist Party and many of its front organizations existed in north Korea. The Chosŏn Democratic Party, one of the two non-Communist parties, had announced already on April 30 that its headquarters had been moved to Seoul. Cho, Man-shik, who was still under Soviet custody, continued nominally

⁵⁴John H. Hilldring to the War Department, June 6, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 693.

⁵⁵The New York Times, May 23, 1946.

as president.⁵⁶ In the south, the Communists and leftists were organized into the Democratic People's Front, while no far-reaching coalition had been achieved among the rightists and moderates. The American authorities feared that the United Front as advocated by the Russians and Korean Communists would doubtlessly simplify Soviet control over Korea and would eventually communize the whole of Korea.⁵⁷

Disputes concerning the trusteeship issue continued in south Korea. The National Society for the Rapid Realization of Independence, the most powerful coalition of the rightists and moderates, elected Syngman Rhee as chairman and both Kim, Ku and Kim, Kiusic as vice-chairmen, at a national convention held in June. Rhee and Kim, Kiusic were the chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the Representative Democratic Council. The Society again went on record as opposing trusteeship and the continuance of the 38th parallel.⁵⁸

In response, the Democratic People's Front started a campaign urging reopening of the Joint Commission. A

⁵⁶F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 678.

⁵⁷Langdon's analytical report to the Secretary of State on Korean situation, May 24, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 685-686.

⁵⁸Summation, USAMGIK, No. 9 (June, 1946), p. 16.

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policy announcement in the Central Times of Korea on June 2 stated that adhering "strictly to the decision of the Moscow Conference was the imperative prerequisite" of achieving the independence of Korea. "It is absolutely impossible," the statement stressed, "to change the decisions of the three Foreign Ministers."⁵⁹ The trusteeship controversy was invigorated further as it was known publicly that the question was the main stumbling stone at the Joint Commission.

A press release by General Hodge on the suspension of the Joint Commission asserted that it was impossible for the American delegation to penalize any democratic elements for expressing their views on opposing trusteeship.⁶⁰ Undeniably, the United States' "unexpectedly firm stand" vis-à-vis the Russians at the Joint Commission was a big comfort to the non-Communist Koreans, and the disappointment in the result of the Joint Commission was offset to a large extent by the firm position taken by the American delegation.⁶¹ But the freedom of speech was only one of many reasons that brought the Commission to a deadlock. The United States was more concerned about the Russian intention to

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁰F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 667.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 687.

dominate Korea by excluding the right-wing Koreans from future politics of Korea.⁶² This concern remained rigid after the Joint Commission. The United States sought to persuade the Russians to return to the Commission but not at the cost of this concern. Even William Langdon and Charles Thayer now advised that if the United States stood firm, it was not unlikely that "Russia will find her long range interest best served by reaching a compromise."⁶³

America's doubt on the objectives of the Russians and the Korean Communists was enhanced more decisively by the disclosure of a huge Communist counterfeit ring in south Korea. A counterfeit ring that had reportedly been supplying funds to the Korean Communist Party was smashed on May 10, 1946. The printing shop was situated in the building that housed the headquarters of the Communist Party, and the printer, Kim, Chang-Sun, reportedly confessed that he had been supervised by the Director and Assistant Director of the Financial Department of the Korean Communist Party.⁶⁴ The three million wŏn, printed by the ring, seemed to have had a serious effect upon the south Korean economy, as was indicated by the report that

⁶²The New York Times, May 18, 1946.

⁶³F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 686.

⁶⁴The New York Times, May 11, 1946.

one out of five 100 wŏn notes submitted for deposit in the banks in the first week of April was counterfeit. The resentment of the non-Communist Koreans was such that the Korean police and the American military police had to guard local Communist headquarters and leftist newspaper offices against possible attack by the indignant Koreans.⁶⁵

There had been no development in Korea since the first Joint Commission that would brighten the hope of reopening negotiation between the two occupation authorities. Both of them were waiting for a substantial concession to be made by the other side, a most unlikely development. Ten weeks had passed before General MacArthur finally decided to recommend to the War Department an approach on the government level.⁶⁶ While recognizing that it might eventually become necessary to approach the Soviet government, the American government, however, showed a reluctance to follow the recommendation instantly in the fear that such a move by America might mislead the Russians to take it as a sign of impatience or even

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Commander-in-Chief, American Forces, Pacific Area Command, to the War Department, C 63158, July 17, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7.

weakness of American position in Korea.⁶⁷ Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States seemed willing to take an initiative to resume the suspended negotiation. Bringing the Russians back to the negotiations became a pressing problem to the American authorities.

After the deadlock in the Commission, the Americans came to realize more fully that broadening the basis of support among the Koreans was urgent to reinforce their cause at the negotiation table. A sizable coalition of all the non-Communist elements of south Korea was desirable. Awareness of this need was further enhanced by the alarming reports of military training of various Communist organizations by the Soviet Army, intelligence indicating that the Soviets were sending a number of Korean youths to Russia for education and indoctrination and that the Soviets were reorienting public facilities of north Korea for the establishment of a separate north Korean economy, unrelated to that of the south.⁶⁸

South Korea's Democratic People's Front was under the complete influence of Communists and its individual

⁶⁷Appendix "B" to the SWNCC 176/22, July 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7; also, see J. H. Hilldring's memronadum for the SWNCC, F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 718-719.

⁶⁸Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, July 28, 1946, *ibid.*, pp. 720-721.

members had no opportunity to express themselves. Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng, head of the People's Party, which was one of the two main parties in the Democratic People's Front, and chairman of the People's Front, frankly admitted that he had half-heartedly supported trusteeship under Communist pressure. He further admitted that at least two members of his party's Executive Committee had Communist Party cards, and that he was no longer able to control the party.⁶⁹ Yŏ's younger brother and a top-ranking leader of the People's Party, Yŏ, Un-Hong, declared in May on his departure from the party that with such Communist control of the party it was no longer possible to achieve the initial aims of the party.⁷⁰ This lent credence to what the elder Yŏ admitted earlier. The elder Yŏ was thought to have been surrounded by the Communists against his will. And the American authorities in Korea thought it feasible to bring him into a middle-of-the-road coalition if he so desired.

With the back-up of the Military Government, Kim, Kiusic and Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng met several times during June in search for a coalition of more moderate left- and right-wing groups. Unity among the moderate political

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 687.

⁷⁰Summation, USAMGIK, No. 8 (May, 1946), p. 15.

factions, it was hoped, would decrease the influence of the highly vocal extremists and provide the basis for increased Korean participation in the government. Kim, Ku, an extreme rightist, was largely ignored by the Military Government, while Syngman Rhee appeared to be cooperating still with the Military Government. He, for instance, exercised his influence in discouraging anti-Allies demonstrations and sought to rally all shades of opinion toward a coalition of parties. General Hodge did not necessarily feel that Rhee was essential or even desirable in a future provisional government, but Hodge thought that so long as Rhee was one of the few nationally known leaders among the non-Communist elements his cooperation could hardly be dispensed with in order to achieve a broader coalition of non-Communist parties.⁷¹

General Hodge had been pushing the coalition plan strenuously. He thought it necessary to encourage those Koreans who were appreciative of America's strong stand at the Commission but who had no assurance of what would be going to take place next month or next year. Hodge suggested that if coalition on a wider basis than that of the current Representative Democratic Council was achieved, he considered creation of a Korean Cabinet and a Legislative Body which would function until the

⁷¹F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 689.

Provisional Korean Government as stipulated in the Moscow decision was established.⁷² The Military Government hoped that the Legislative Body would not only enact regulations and laws subject to Hodge's supreme authority but give the initiative to the south Koreans to hasten the realization of their independence.

Military Governor A. L. Lerch made it public on June 29 that the Military Government needed a Korean legislative body which would help him determine the wishes of the Korean people in legislative matters.⁷³ Though this plan fell far short of what was being done in north Korea where everything was done by the Koreans themselves, it nevertheless was considered an important move by the United States "to win popular Korean support for United States policies and . . . strengthen the United States position in future negotiations with the Soviet Union."⁷⁴ This legislative body was created in November, as we will see later.

After the first Joint Commission closed sine die, fear of the American military about the possible Russian pressure to withdraw all foreign troops from Korea before a satisfactory implementation of the Moscow decision was

⁷²TFURC 48, *ibid.*, p. 688.

⁷³Summation, USAMGIK, No. 10 (July, 1946), p. 12.

⁷⁴F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 694.

strengthened. America's basic policy concerning the troop withdrawal, as manifested in the decision of the JCS, was that a simultaneous withdrawal should be contingent on the successful establishment of the Korean Provisional Government and, more important, establishment of such government authority over all armed forces in the north or its integration into a representative army.⁷⁵ But the situation was so developing that the United States was worried about the practicability of this policy vis-à-vis Russia. Strict social regimentation under Communist control, reports on the movement of the Russian Army to and within north Korea, intensified military training of north Korean youths, and particularly the inauguration of the North Korea People's Army and the opening of the Officer's Training Center, both in July of 1946, justified south Korea's fear of possible military takeover by the north. General MacArthur was instructed by the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to make every effort to "foresee a developing threat" and to "report specific circumstances in order that they might furnish him specific guidance applicable to a particular situation."⁷⁶

⁷⁵The Joint Chiefs of Staff, to General MacArthur, War 98991, May 27, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 10.

⁷⁶Ibid.

A growing concern was observed in the American government about the necessity of discouraging the Russians in their military plans by indicating to them in every possible way that the United States "is determined to remain in Korea until United States objectives have been achieved" in that country.⁷⁷ America's determination to resist any Russian move that might endanger her prestige and cause further trouble in Korea was clearly indicated by President Truman when he wrote Edwin W. Pauley that "our commitment . . . requires that we stay in Korea long enough to see the job through."⁷⁸

This American attitude was reinforced by the result of the Pauley mission. Edwin Pauley, the Presidential envoy, arrived at Pyŏngyang on May 31, 1946, to make a survey of the reparation program in Korea. The Soviets refused to permit the Pauley team to visit Hŭngnam and Ch'ŏngjin areas which were the two largest centers of heavy industry of Korea and where the heaviest industrial stripping by the Russians had been reported. The Russians based their decision on the grounds that there was great demobilization of troops in those two areas, and that for the allowed minimum stay of five

⁷⁷SWNCC 176/22, Appendix "B," July 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7.

⁷⁸As quoted from J. H. Hilldring's memorandum of the SWNCC meeting, July 25, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 719.

days these areas were too far away to visit.⁷⁹ The visit of the Pauley team was shortened by the Soviet authorities themselves to five days from the American proposal of 15-30 days.⁸⁰ Hŭngnam was not far from Wŏnsan which the Soviets allowed the Pauley team to visit. The railroad that connected Wŏnsan and Hŭngnam was one of Korea's main transportation lines. Thus, the Soviet's excuses gave a strong impression that they did not want the Pauley team to visit these areas for other than the alleged reasons. Pauley had to return empty-handed as regards the real situation of Russia's industrial stripping witnessed and reported by so many Koreans.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Commanding General, XXIV Corps to the War Department, REPAIR 39, May 31, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7.

⁸⁰ Secretary Byrnes' letter dated May 13 to Russian Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov, both of whom staying in Paris, asked three to five days for the Pauley team to stay in north Korea (F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 511). After then, the American government asked the Soviets that the Pauley team would need 15 to 30 days to fulfill its assignments. But the Soviets rejected extension of days and increase of the number of personnel in the team (ibid., p. 520).

⁸¹ Pauley gave only one short remark on the result of this survey regarding Russia's industrial strippings, saying that the Russians "are taking (not, have taken) no substantial amount of capital equipment, although they may be taking certain stocks and products of current production." He was allowed to visit the Pyŏngyang area, Sinŭichu area (Supung Dam area was excluded from visiting), and Wŏnsan city. His tour was conducted by General Romanenko. See Pauley's report to the President (F.R., 1946, VII, p. 707), and Summation, USAMGIK, No. 9 (June, 1946), p. 17.

The Pauley mission, however, provided the United States with an opportunity to have a first-hand observation of north Korean society although it was handicapped by its short stay and the limited area it was permitted to visit. "Frankly, I am greatly concerned with our position in Korea," Pauley wrote in his report to the President. Korea was a small country and in terms of America's total military strength was a small responsibility. But it was an "ideological battleground upon which [America's] entire success in Asia may depend." Korea was, in Pauley's opinion, "not receiving the attention and consideration it should."⁸² He concluded that the Soviets were not willing to do anything that might in any way hamper their entrenching themselves more firmly in north Korea, and were propagandizing a Soviet type of program which "would establish loyalty to Moscow as the highest form of loyalty to Korea." It was evident to him that Soviet Russia was going to make Korea a "puppet state."⁸³

⁸²For the whole text of Pauley's report to the President, see F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 706-709.

⁸³Pauley reported that the streets of northern Korea were decorated with Soviet Propaganda posters. Many of the posters read as follows: "For the Fatherland, for the Party, for Stalin"; "Long live Stalin, the creator of our victories" (ibid., p. 707). Kim, Il-Song concluded his address on the 27th anniversary of the March First Independence Movement (March 1, 1946) with "Long Live Stalin, the greater leader and patron of the people of the world" (Surip-ŭi Kil, p. 19).

The prospect for an early resumption of the Joint Commission was getting remoter, intensifying the sense of competition sharper between the two zones. Attempts of political consolidation were in progress in both zones in preparation for future negotiations. On July 22, 1946, the Democratic National United Front was established in north Korea as an amalgamation of all the political parties and social organizations of north Korea, and adopted as their political platform: exhaustive implementation of the Moscow decisions on Korea; assurance for the Korean people the freedom of free speech, publication, and assembly, and the right for equal participation in political and economic life regardless of difference in sex and religious faith; concentration of the democratic ability of the Korean people into reinforcing People's Committees and the United Front.⁸⁴

After Military Governor Lerch's announcement on June 29 regarding the election of a legislative body, efforts for party coalition were reactivated in south Korea. These efforts received favorable responses from local papers. Rhee and his group did not like the moderate-centered coalition but remained relatively quiet for the time being. Pak, Hŏn-Yong, leader of the

⁸⁴Minchu Kŏnkuk-e Isŏsŏ, pp. 207-209.

Communist Party that was dominating the Democratic People's Front of south Korea, refused to cooperate. But the Military Government authorities were rather optimistic in early July that the coalition movement by the Koreans themselves had gathered such momentum that it would be difficult if not impossible for any larger parties except perhaps the Communists to resist it.⁸⁵ Many Koreans who agreed to coalition undeniably looked to taking advantage of the momentum not so much because of their expectation in the proposed legislative body itself but rather because active participation in the coalition and cooperation with the Military Government would assure them better chances for their future political life after the Joint Commission was concluded.⁸⁶ To forestall criticism that the legislative body would constitute a separate government and would indefinitely postpone the resumption of the Joint Commission, General A. V. Arnold, Chief Commissioner of the American delegation, sent letters to the Soviets suggesting resuming the Commission.⁸⁷

Despite these efforts, both the Communists and extreme rightists continued to be suspicious of the

⁸⁵Langdon and Thayer's letter to the Secretary of State, July 3, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 710-711.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 720.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 711.

proposed legislative body. Communists and some leftists stuck stubbornly to reconvening the Joint Commission based on the narrow interpretation of the Moscow decision, while extreme rightists who were the most conservative and anti-Communist favored a separate provisional government for south Korea if the Soviets made no compromise on the principle of freedom of speech. Communists and some leftists expressed fear that the assembly would in effect be only a step-child of the Military Government without freedom of independent action and might contribute toward indefinite delay in reconvening of the Russo-American Joint Commission. The rightists were fearful that an assembly composed mainly of the moderate, middle-of-the-road people would likely be maneuvered to agreeing to a plan that might cost a free, democratic Korea under the pressure of Communists.

Syngman Rhee was bitter about being forced by the Military Government to give up his influence among the Koreans. It was around this time that Rhee considered breaking relations with the Military Government, especially General Hodge, and gave thought to pursuing his own program for Korea's independence. Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng was still under Communist influence although he was not a Communist himself. Kim, Kiusic was moderate in his political philosophy and generally enjoyed popularity among the moderate elements of south Korea. But his

weakness lay in that, whatever the reason, he did not have a large organized following.

General Hodge stated on the occasion of the first anniversary of V-J Day that the American people had been relatively unaccustomed to the Korean problems but they had "now developed . . . through many thousands of Americans [who served in Korea] . . . [an] interest in Korea."⁸⁸ On the same occasion, Kim, Il-Sŏng stated that the Koreans "should build a unified democratic government . . . based upon the democratic construction in north Korea."⁸⁹

So far, the United States government had relied largely upon short-term plans formulated in response to particular situations in Korea vis-à-vis Soviet Russia. But the result was far from satisfactory. Negotiation after negotiation only confirmed that America would be unable to achieve its objectives in Korea in the face of Communist Russia who was armed with well-defined policies in Korea. After almost a year of confrontation with the Soviet Union, America belatedly perceived that the Korean problem deserved well-defined, long-term policies, closely associated with those of the rest of

⁸⁸ Summation, USAMGIK, No. 11 (August, 1946), p. 16.

⁸⁹ Kim's address at the first anniversary of liberation, August 15, 1946, Surip-ŭi Kil, p. 120.

the Far East. The time was rapidly approaching when the United States must reappraise and reshape its Korean policy.

CHAPTER V

IN SEARCH OF LONG-TERM POLICY

America's unpreparedness for the occupation of Korea and the effective build-up of Communist control in north Korea under Russian tutelage sharpened the confrontation between the two occupying powers. The Moscow decision of December, 1945, on Korea was aimed at peaceful resolution of the Korean question, but the subsequent negotiations at the economic and political conferences to implement the decision were a complete failure. Each side interpreted the decision in its own way, demanding intransigently that the other side give in. The negotiations contributed only to deepen the sense of cold war confrontation.

The United States had endeavored to make Korea an independent country in the conviction that domination of Korea, especially by Soviet Russia, would further endanger Nationalist Chinese control of Manchuria and thus lessen the prospect of creating a strong and stable China.¹ Russian concern grew out of its interest in

¹Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, VIII (Washington, 1971), Appendix "B" to "Policy for Korea," June 6, 1946, p. 697; also, President Truman's Message to the Congress on the State of the Union and

maintaining and increasing her political influence in this area vis-à-vis the United States. Soviet Russia enjoyed the advantage of having a better-planned and well-controlled policy in Korea than did the United States. The Communist regime of north Korea rendered her almost unconditional support. By contrast, the American occupation authorities in south Korea faced serious dissension. Moreover, minor dissonance developed between the State Department and the American personnel on the spot in connection with the solution of the Korean problem. Equally disturbing were the poor relations between the Military Government and some rightist Koreans, although the non-cooperation and antagonism of these Koreans was not the decisive reason for the failure of negotiations.

Adjournment of the Joint Commission without any agreement having been reached brought the work of creating a provisional Korean government to a halt. Prolongation of the unnatural division of, and America's involvement in, Korea became more certain. The American government, already having experienced great difficulties in Korea, felt compelled to reexamine and reappraise United States policies and objectives in Korea.

on the Budget for 1947, released January 21, 1946.
Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States:
Harry S. Truman, 1946 (Washington, 1962), p. 44.

American policy in Korea had been guided by two important political directives. The first one reached General Hodge on October 13, 1945. It was intended as a guide to the United States commander during what was expected to be the short period between the Japanese capitulation and the anticipated early unification of the American and Russian zones and the creation of a Korean government.² The second one, adopted by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee on January 28, 1946, was designed to guide General MacArthur in conducting negotiations with the Soviet command in north Korea. It specified the initial powers and functions of the Joint Commission provided by the Moscow communiqué and the formulation of plans for the creation of a provisional Korean government.³

The basic objective of American policies as embodied in various directives since the beginning of the occupation was to cope with problems as they arose on a short-term basis. American policies rested on the expectation that the Korean issue could be resolved before long through US-USSR cooperation. And that expectation suffered little change throughout the

²SWNCC 176/8. For contents, see F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1073f.

³SWNCC 176/18. For contents, see F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 623f.

Moscow Conference, the Joint Economic Conference, and the first Joint Commission.

But the adjournment of the Joint Commission created a fundamentally new situation in Korea and policy reappraisal was inevitable. The State Department, with the concurrence of the Departments of War and Navy, prepared a new policy directive and dispatched it to Generals MacArthur and Hodge on June 7, 1946.⁴ A memorandum, dated August 14, by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East recommended that discussions be promptly initiated between the State, War and Navy Departments and the appropriate Congressional committee regarding "long-range implications of the new directive" and the introduction of any necessary legislation.⁵ The United States had finally concluded that the Korean situation deserved long-term consideration in American Far Eastern Policy.

The new policy directives reaffirmed that the independence of Korea was the fundamental U.S. objective. This objective, it stressed, should be achieved as agreed upon at the Moscow Conference by a progressive

⁴For the contents, see *ibid.*, p. 693f.

⁵A Memorandum by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East, attached later (August 14, 1946) to the "Interim Directive for Military Government in Korea" (SWNCC 176/23, dated June 7, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7).

development of several successive steps beginning from bilateral military occupation through the completion of independence, with subsequent membership in the United Nations. An independent and sovereign Korea had to be "free from all foreign domination."⁶

The idea that only a free, independent, and sovereign Korea could head off any possible international struggle in the country and contribute to the general peace of the Far East had been the backbone of America's Korean policy. With the power vacuum created by the collapse of Japan, the civil war in China, and with Soviet Russia strengthening its position particularly in north Korea and in the Far East in general, America's Korean policy was almost entirely oriented to curbing the Russian advance and restoring a balanced power relationship. The continued occupation of southern Korea was necessary to forestall any situation detrimental to maintaining a balance of power.

American determination to pursue this goal was strengthened by the ever intensifying confrontation with Russia, the seeming success of Communists in north Korea in comparison with the confusion and discontent in the south, and the growing awareness of the discrepancy of policies between the United States and Soviet Russia.

⁶SWNCC 176/23, p. 136, *ibid.*

The bitter experience of the Joint Commission seemed to justify such American determination.

Means of achieving the objective came under reexamination in the new political directive but the objective itself remained unchallenged. The directive did not fail to emphasize that the independent Korea should be "a democratic government fully representative of the freely expressed will of the Korean people."⁷ This meant an explicit adherence to political democracy as practiced in the United States. The Soviet's definition of "people's democracy" had nothing in common with the American concept. The clash at the Joint Commission came over American insistence on the principle of freedom of speech and Soviet determination to prevent certain avowedly anti-Soviet Korean leaders from participation in a provisional Korean government by branding them as "undemocratic" reactionaries.⁸

The two nations likewise clashed on the interpretation of the terms of the Moscow decision. The Russian delegation insisted that opposition to trusteeship constituted a violation of the Moscow decision. The American delegation refuted this Russian view and asserted

⁷Ibid.

⁸Annex to the Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas John H. Hilldring. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 698.

that there was nothing in the Moscow decision that required or implied that only those parties and organizations which supported trusteeship and the Moscow decision were to be consulted by the Joint Commission. The Soviet interpretation of the Moscow decision was rejected as purely unilateral.⁹ Furthermore, as General Hodge pointed out, there was nothing in the Moscow decision "that restricted the application of the word 'democratic' to organizations or parties belonging to schools of social thought favoring certain classes over others." Hodge argued that only those who were opposed to popular rule by elected representatives and to equal rights for all classes of the people were undemocratic.¹⁰

The Russian allegation that some south Koreans opposed the trusteeship for the purpose of instigating mass opposition provided an abrasive issue. The American delegation took the view that "mass opposition to the work of the Joint Commission" was no more than the legitimate "exercise of freedom [by the Koreans] to express their desire . . . in the formation of their own government."¹¹ The American government had

⁹General Hodge's letter to General Chistyakov, dated Aug. 13, 1946, TFGCT 461, CGUSAFIK to the War Department, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 7.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹General Hodge's reply (Nov. 1, 1946) to General Chistyakov's letter of Oct. 26, *ibid.*, p. 759f.

confidence in the "ultimate soundness" of its Korean policy.¹²

There was undeniably some confusion among the Koreans in the interpretation of trusteeship. As the American authorities in Korea observed, many Koreans who opposed trusteeship did so because they had a highly erroneous concept of trusteeship. "[The Koreans] have jumped at the conclusion," the Americans observed, "that it would be the same or similar to the protectorate over Korea assumed by the Japanese." They charged the Koreans with having failed to study the Moscow decision in a spirit of fair-mindedness.¹³ The more fundamental sources of confusion among the Koreans, however, lay in the wavering attitude of the Americans themselves and the omission of a precise definition of trusteeship in the Moscow decision. Secretary Byrnes and other Americans had not held firm to the trusteeship provision, implied it was not of basic importance, and then failed to take it seriously in the political negotiations with Soviet Russia. Even as late as in November, 1946, General Hodge reminded the Koreans that "the first task

¹²Acting Secretary of State William L. Clayton's letter to William Langdon, the political adviser in Korea, Sept. 13, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 736.

¹³Summation, USAMGIK, No. 14 (Nov. 1946), p. 21; also, ibid., No. 17, p. 16.

of the Joint Commission is to get the Korean Provisional Government established" and that the Moscow decision regarding the measures of helping and assisting 'trusteeship' would be worked out after the establishment of the Provisional Government.¹⁴

Nor was the proposed trusteeship precisely defined in the Moscow communiqué.¹⁵ The Korean opposition to trusteeship undeniably tended to be emotion-packed. However, it was equally undeniable that such opposition was grounded, at least partially, on the ambiguity of the term. Nobody knew or was told exactly what the trusteeship was to be. General Hodge, who blamed the Koreans for not having studied the Moscow decision, frankly admitted in the same statement that "in spite of all the discussion about trusteeship no one knows what the concrete terms will be . . . because they have not been worked out."¹⁶

Nevertheless, the Koreans were blamed for having materially contributed to the cause of the adjournment of the Joint Commission by opposing trusteeship. "The leaders would be much more patriotic," General Brown contended, "to spend their time and energy on constructive

¹⁴Ibid., No. 14 (Nov., 1947), p. 22.

¹⁵See paragraph 3 of the Moscow decision on Korea. F.R., 1945, VI, p. 1151.

¹⁶Summation, USAMGIK, No. 14 (Nov., 1946), p. 22.

matters and an effort to cooperate in establishing a Korean Provisional Government"17 The resentment of the United States over the outspokenly anti-Soviet and anti-trusteeship views of Syngman Rhee and others is understandable. Rhee and his group had advocated a provisional government in south Korea since the end of the first Joint Commission. But this was a result and not the cause of the failure of negotiations. These same Koreans cooperated in efforts to establish a provisional government during the first Joint Commission though they were fiercely opposed to trusteehip. To be sure the American delegation would have been relieved of many of the difficulties at the Joint Commission had the rightist Koreans been less outspoken in their opposition to trusteehip and Communism, but as long as the United States stood for the freedom of speech in a democratic society, she could not force the Koreans to silence even if this would have advanced the negotiations. The American dilemma was also made difficult by the fact that to agree with the Russian insistence on denying a voice to all opponents of trusteehip could only result in a Communist Korea.

In this situation, and in an effort to create conditions suitable for reconvening the Joint Commission,

¹⁷Ibid., No. 17 (Feb., 1947), p. 16.

the Americans found a scapegoat for the failure of the Joint Commission in the extreme rightists of south Korea. These Koreans were branded as having hindered the union of north and south Korea and having jeopardized the cause of Korean independence.¹⁸ As was clear in the new political paper prepared after the Joint Commission was adjourned, the United States was now determined to get rid of these extreme rightists from south Korea's political scene. They were considered as unrepresentative of Korean political opinion. They were even "not essential to the establishment of Korean democracy or the attainment of the United States objectives in Korea."¹⁹

Any agreement with the Soviet Union seemed possible only if common ground for agreement could be found or if the Soviet authorities were persuaded to modify their position by the force of Korean public opinion ranging itself in support of United States policies as opposed to Soviet policies in Korea. The first possibility was quite remote. Therefore, the new policy directive concluded that only the adoption of a course of action in southern Korea which would win popular

¹⁸General Brown's report on the implementation of the Moscow decision, February, 1947, *ibid.*

¹⁹"Policy for Korea," F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 699.

support for United States principles and practices sufficient to influence the stand of the Soviet Union could resolve the existing impasse in America's favor. Forcing some anti-Soviet Korean leaders to retire from politics temporarily was considered necessary in order to broaden the basis of support for the United States.²⁰

Syngman Rhee's trip to the United States in December, 1946, to plead the Korean cause before the United Nations greatly alarmed American authorities in south Korea. Rumors, possibly forged by the extreme rightists, that the State Department was dissatisfied with the work of the Military Government in Korea were undermining their position. But the more fundamental problem for them was to avoid Koreans being misled regarding America's basic policy in Korea, that is, that Korean problems would be solved within the framework of the Moscow decision. General Brown, the Chief Commissioner of the American delegation to the Joint Commission felt it necessary in February, 1947, to declare that there was no instrument other than the Moscow Agreement which provided the measures for the achievement of Korean independence.²¹

²⁰Ibid., p. 698.

²¹Summation, USAMGIK, No. 17 (Feb., 1947),
p. 16.

Almost simultaneously with the issuance of the new directive of June, 1946, the question of the possible reduction of United States forces in Korea came to the fore. The War Department was surveying its current allocation of forces in order to see where a reduction could be made. It was suggested that about a 20 percent reduction of personnel in Korea could be made without impairing the effectiveness of the Military Government and without changing the general organization of General Hodge's command. The Strategy Division of the War Department went further and proposed plans which would eventually reduce American forces in Korea by as much as 50 percent.²² The State Department as well as General Hodge, in the light of the peculiar Korean situation, opposed this reduction plan. They found such a move based upon the "purely American domestic reasons" hard to justify to the Koreans. They feared that a reduction of American armed forces would undermine Korean confidence in the United States. Americans in Korea were deeply aware of the deep uneasiness that had resulted from the failure of the Joint Commission.²³

²²Memorandum of conversation, June 10, 1946, Department of State File, 740.00119 PW/6-1046. Participated in by Colonel Preuss, Strategy Division, and Lt. Col. Trevor N. Dupuy, OPD, both of the War Department, and Mr. Hugh Borton, Division of Japanese Affairs, State Department.

²³Ibid.

The peculiar situation of Korea was brought to the fore more clearly by Edwin Pauley who, as the Presidential envoy, visited north Korea in June. In his report to the President, Pauley concluded that Soviet Russia was attempting to establish "a Russian type of satellite" in north Korea by "stalling on taking any joint action with the United States toward setting up a trusteeship, toward forming anything resembling a provisional government, or doing anything that might in any way hamper their entrenching themselves more firmly in north Korea." The Soviet Army in north Korea, he reported, would prolong its stay. Soviet Russia, Pauley continued, was attempting vigorously to rejuvenate the Korean economy and to tie it to the Soviet Union in order to "provide an encirclement . . . of Manchuria . . ." where Russia had great interests.²⁴

Pauley urged strong measures to expose the Russian failure to comply with the Moscow decision and the strengthening of American propaganda on democracy in Korea "lest the Koreans should hear only of Communism." More positive action to reconstruct south Korean economy was recommended because delay of Korean unification, he contended, made it essential that the south proceed

²⁴Pauley's report to the President. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 706-708.

with the solution of urgent social and economic problems along lines embodying the will of the Korean people.²⁵

President Truman shared these views. He stressed that while the United States continued its efforts to persuade the Soviet Union to comply with the spirit and terms of the Moscow Agreement, the most effective way to meet the situation in Korea after the deadlock in the Joint Commission was to intensify and persevere in American efforts to build up a self-governing and democratic Korea, "neither subservient to nor menacing any power."²⁶

Demobilization, including withdrawal and reduction of American forces overseas, had been the persistent concern of American society since the end of the war. General MacArthur was also hopeful that American forces in the Pacific area could be reduced in late 1945.²⁷ But the Korean situation, after nine months' confrontation with Russia, was such that the American authorities in Korea were fearfully concerned about the possibility of a Russian proposal for the mutual withdrawal of both occupation troops. They believed that the fast build-up

²⁵Ibid., pp. 708-709; also, CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 471, POLAD Seoul No. 54, Aug. 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 9.

²⁶President Truman's letter to Edwin Pauley, July 16, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 713.

²⁷F.R., 1945, VI, p. 716.

of Communist power in north Korea and the socio-economic unrest of south Korea would end in the Communist control of the whole of Korea in case a hasty withdrawal of occupation troops took place.

The question of mutual withdrawal of troops was raised by G. M. Balasanov, Soviet political adviser in north Korea, when William Langdon visited Pyöngyang from October 3 through 7, 1946. Langdon agreed as to the desirability of mutual withdrawal, but added that it should come only after a provisional Korean government had been established. John Carter Vincent, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, concurred.²⁸

The Americans in Korea were increasingly concerned over Communist-conducted strikes and social disturbances in south Korea. These disturbances were "well-planned and organized by a small, but extremely active group of Koreans who received their direction from north Korea."²⁹ Continued warnings that a Russian-trained Korean army might attempt to "liberate south Korea" induced General Hodge to strongly recommend that the American forces in Korea be put at "T/O strength"

²⁸F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 745-746.

²⁹Ibid., p. 741.

without delay.³⁰ General MacArthur reported to the War Department that his headquarters had taken measures so that approximately 100 percent T/O strength enlisted men should be in Korea by November 30, 1946.³¹

The hope in Washington that forces could be pulled out from Korea was closely associated with the attainment of the American objective of establishing a reliable, strong, and nationally recognized central government in Korea. Late in 1946, however, the likelihood of establishing such a government in Korea was not great. "It may take ten years until we see [such a] government in Korea," General Hilldring, the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas, said. His opinion was that the prerequisite to troop withdrawal was not so much a unified government as a strong Russo-American Control Council. He, therefore, asserted that "if Soviet Russia proposes withdrawal tomorrow, we better decide to haul out."³² "Drain upon American resources in the form of occupation troops," and the expense to the United States as well as the insignificance of the strategic and

³⁰Hodge's letter to the Chief of Staff, Oct. 28, 1946, *ibid.*, pp. 750-751; also, see the address by Kim, Il-sŏng, on the first anniversary of liberation (Aug. 15, 1946) in Surip-ŭi Kil, p. 120f.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 753.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 764.

economic value of Korea were often cited as reasons for withdrawal.³³

But the military leaders were rather hesitant to endorse such views. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Army Chief of Staff, was of the opinion that while Soviet Russia would not initiate a war "short of five years," she would in the interval continue to export chaos, anarchy and confusion.³⁴ Nor did General and Secretary of State George Marshall agree with those who favored withdrawal.³⁵ Even General Hildring who had favored pull-out in November, 1946, changed his attitude in March, 1947. He said in a speech at the Economic Club of Detroit that America was not going to leave Korea because she had an important job to do.³⁶

Meanwhile, General Hodge renewed his warnings regarding the military danger from the north. Quoting what the American Liaison Officer in Pyŏngyang reported, Hodge said in May, 1947, that it appeared entirely possible that the Soviets might make a complete withdrawal from north Korea in the near future, thus opening the way to the demand that American forces withdraw immediately

³³Forrestal Diary, p. 265, entry for April 25, 1947.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., p. 273.

³⁶General Hildring's "Korea-House Divided" speech, Department of State Bulletin (March 23, 1947), p. 547.

or allowing the Korean Communist Army to start operations for the "liberation" of the south.³⁷ Although the danger was greatly discounted by the headquarters of General MacArthur,³⁸ the United States never dismissed possible Soviet withdrawal lightly. When the Joint Commission resumed in May, 1947, the United States had already decided that it would agree to troop withdrawal only after a provisional government of Korea had been established and had taken authority over all armed forces, and had accomplished the demobilization of the Korean National Army of north Korea.³⁹

Along with the question of troop withdrawal came the issue of a more positive action directed to the economic rehabilitation of south Korea. As mentioned earlier, such action had been recommended by General Hodge and Edwin Pauley. President Truman admitted in a letter drafted on August 1, 1946, to Secretary of War Patterson that adequate funds and experienced personnel were prerequisites to the completion of American

³⁷CINCAFPAC to JCS, C-52282, May 1, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 10.

³⁸CINCAFPAC to the War Department, C-52560, May 11, 1947. Contained in the Enclosure "B" to JCS 1776/1, May 16, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 10.

³⁹F.R., 1947, VI, p. 639. A message substantially to this effect but taking account of further diplomatic developments and providing fuller military instructions was dispatched to General MacArthur on May 27, 1947. See *ibid.*, n. 64.

objectives in Korea. He remarked specifically that the new program called for action beyond the "disease and unrest" formula generally applied in occupied areas, and promised his support for additional funds if it was necessary.⁴⁰

As General Hodge complained, it was not easy to "outsit the Russians and sell American democracy" without an adequately funded program for Korea.⁴¹ The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee likewise believed in the necessity of having a more positive program not only for the benefit of the Koreans but for strengthening the American hand in the future negotiations with Russia. Congressional action to implement such a program was highly recommended.⁴²

The Representative Democratic Council clearly failed to achieve the initial objective of a broader popular support for the Military Government. The left-ists and Communists refused to join the Council. There was little chance for an extensive left-right coalition because the Communists and some leftists united

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1946, VIII, p. 721.

⁴¹ CGUSAFIK to the War Department, TFGCG 471, POLAD Seoul No. 54, August 26, 1946, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 9.

⁴² Forrestal Diary, pp. 241-242, entry for January 29, 1947.

themselves into the Democratic People's Front. In north Korea, the Interim People's Committee (Temporary People's Committee) took charge of administration.

American upheld the principle of the freedom of speech even at the risk of breaking off negotiations. This was done not because the Americans approved of the extreme rightists but because of loyalty to the American ideal of democracy. After the breakdown of negotiations, the United States realized that the extreme rightists had hampered the work of the Joint Commission rather than helped it. The increased opposition of the extreme rightists to the negotiations following the breakdown of the Joint Commission greatly embarrassed the American authorities. Such opposition was almost certain to jeopardize American efforts to reopen the negotiations.

On May 15, 1946, a week after the Joint Commission went sine die, the Military Government suspended publication of the extreme rightist paper Dai-Dong Il-Po for three weeks. This action was taken, according to General Hodge, to show the Korean public that the American authorities in south Korea were making a sincere effort to be impartial in their control over newspaper articles and public utterances which were considered "inimical to law and order and to good relations with the Soviets."⁴³

⁴³Langdon's letter to the Secretary of State, May 22, 1946, F.R., 146, VIII, p. 683.

Pursuant to the policy embodied in the new policy paper, the American authorities in south Korea now set out to crack down on extreme rightists and to establish a legislative body based upon a broader coalition of parties. They now decided to support and push negotiations between the right and left and to exclude from the coalition Syngman Rhee and Kim, Ku. To suppress any reaction by Rhee and his group, General Hodge issued a public statement, in which he supported Kim, Kiusic and Yō, Un-Hyōng in their unification efforts.⁴⁴ Rhee finally gave in. The prospect for party coalition seemed bright.

But when General Hodge announced on July 9, 1946, the American plan of establishing an interim legislative assembly that would replace the Representative Democratic Council, general response among the Koreans was "apathetic." Support came only from certain rightist groups and most of the leftists voiced opposition.⁴⁵ The leader of the Communist party, Pak, Hōn-Yōng, upon returning from Pyōngyang on July 22, asserted that he had the authority over the Communist elements in south Korea's Democratic People's Front, and proceeded to take measures to wreck the unity movement. He rejected the

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 710-711.

⁴⁵Langdon's letter to the Secretary of State, July 28, 1946, *ibid.*, p. 720.

coalition movement as another fiasco and cautioned Yŏ not to play the "American game." He advised Yŏ to "stand firm against rightists with north Korean leftist back-up."⁴⁶

Yŏ disagreed with Pak. Yŏ even reportedly hinted to the Military Government authorities that it was essential to the success of the unity movement that Pak be treated drastically, perhaps jailed by some juggling of the counterfeit trial. The Military Government declined to do so and told Yŏ that it was his own battle against the extreme leftists and Communists.⁴⁷ Yŏ was opposed to any action by the People's Front that might endanger the unity movement in which he was expected to take a leading role.

Despite Yŏ's efforts, the Democratic People's Front, however, adopted five conditions for the unity movement. They were (1) full acceptance of the Moscow decision and joint action to hasten reconvening of the Joint Commission; (2) land reform including confiscation and distribution of land without compensation, nationalization of important industries, and enactment of democratic labor laws and political freedom; (3) elimination of pro-Japanese, pro-fascist and traitors of the people,

⁴⁶Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, August 2, 1946, *ibid.*, pp. 722-723.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

suppression of terrorism, and release of all political prisoners; (4) transfer of administration of south Korea to a people's committee; and (5) opposition to the establishment of a Korean legislative body under the Military Government.⁴⁸ The American idea of a broadly based legislative body to appease the leftists, both moderate and radical, was ridiculed.

Despite American efforts to win over the leftists, radical elements among the leftists seemed to be completely committed to non-cooperation. They boycotted the Joint American-Korean surrender anniversary ceremonies on the 15th of August and held a mass celebration of their own, in which they passed sixteen political resolutions including at the top of the list opposition to prolongation, expansion, or strengthening of the Military Government.⁴⁹

The Military Government had been pushing a program of making the Coalition Committee of the moderate left and right the nucleus of south Korean party politics. Kim, Kiusic, Acting chairman of the Representative Democratic Council, had long been in favor of a moderate coalition and Yo, Un-Hyŏng grew positive toward the coalition plan after he had visited Pyŏngyang in September, 1946. The two leaders signed a coalition pact on

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 727.

October 4, in which they requested some basic reforms in the economic life of south Korea and petitioned General Hodge for an interim legislative assembly. They also sent a joint letter to the two commanding generals requesting the resumption of the Joint Commission.⁵⁰

The Coalition Committee made it clear that they desired to become the core group of a provisional Korean government to be established by the Joint Commission and based upon a unification of the right and left wings throughout south and north Korea. In a statement of October 7, 1946, the Committee proclaimed that it would endeavor to stop all terroristic actions throughout south and north Korea and to secure freedom of speech, assembly, and organization for the people throughout Korea.⁵¹ The statement was hailed by General Hodge. The Committee of Nine Political Parties, a radical left and Communist alliance, expressed their disapproval of the legislative assembly.⁵²

Ordinance No. 118, to elect the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly, was promulgated on October 13. Of

⁵⁰Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, Nov. 1, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 755-756.

⁵¹Summation, USAMGIK, No. 13 (Oct., 1946), p. 16.

⁵²Conversation of Charles Thayer, a U.S. member of the Joint Commission, at the State Department, July 16, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 15; also, Summation, USAMGIK, No. 13 (Oct., 1946), p. 18.

a total of ninety members, forty-five were to be elected and another forty-five appointed by the Military Government out of the candidates chosen by the Coalition Committee. The Assembly was scheduled to have its first meeting in early November. But the Communists and most leftist groups were still apathetic in the election. William Langdon feared that if they continued to show lack of interest, it was not unlikely that a majority of the rightists would be elected, as had happened earlier in the election of the now defunct Representative Democratic Council. It had been repeatedly suggested that Hodge might consider putting many leftists on the appointive members of the Assembly for a balance, but participation and cooperation of the left was prerequisite to such appointment.⁵³

Walter B. Smith, the American Ambassador in Moscow, was rather pessimistic of the formation of a legislative assembly with a balance of the left and right. He did not think that inclusion of a large proportion of representative leftists would quiet all the anticipated leftist outcry over the composition of the Assembly. "Independent liberals might be satisfied by such move," he said, "but scarcely those elements looking to USSR for guidance." He argued that only political

⁵³Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, Nov. 3, 1946, F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 763.

domination, and not a reasonable proportional representation, would satisfy the Moscow-directed leftists.⁵⁴

The election for the Assembly was held between October 17 and 29, 1946. All Coalition Committee delegates proceeded to provinces to observe the election. The election return showed that the forty-five elected consisted of thirty-one rightists, twelve independents, and two leftists. Dissatisfaction as to the conditions of the election was voiced immediately by the leftist elements of the Coalition Committee and Yŏ requested a new election at least in Seoul and Kangwŏn province. General Hodge conceded, on November 5, that the election in Seoul and Kangwŏn province was void, and the Coalition Committee recommended candidates for the appointive members of the Legislative Assembly. Yŏ wrote to Hodge that the confusion in south Korea was largely due to lack of permanent officials bearing full responsibility and suggested that the civil government be turned over to the Korean people and that Kim, Kiusic be made the head of it.⁵⁵ Yŏ, now the head of the Socialist Labor Party, continued to consolidate the moderate and nationalistic leftists and advocated an unconditional merger with the South Korea Labor Party (formerly, the Korea Communist Party) with an understanding that this united

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 765.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 774-775.

group support the Coalition Committee to which Yŏ was committed. Paek, Nam-Un, leader of the leftist Democratic Party, and Kang, Jin, leader of the Nationalist Communist Party, expressed their support to Yŏ after both of them returned from Pyŏngyang.⁵⁶

Out of the candidates recommended by the Coalition Committee, forty-five men and women were designated by the Military Government as members of the Legislative Assembly, and the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly was inaugurated officially on December 12, 1946, electing Kim, Kiusic as the Chairman.⁵⁷ Kim expressed his hope at the first meeting that the Assembly was only the first step toward the unification of north and south and that the second step would be "to enlarge the Assembly to include members from north Korea." But Kim's comment that the Koreans must establish their own interim government "without waiting for the reconvening of the Joint Commission which might be indefinitely postponed" was an embarrassment to the American authorities whose basic policy according to the new policy paper of June, 1946, was to resolve the Korean question only within the frame of the Moscow

⁵⁶Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, Nov. 14, 1946, *ibid.*, p. 768.

⁵⁷For the list of 45 appointive members, see Summation, USAMGIK, No. 15 (Dec., 1946), pp. 13-14.

decision. The American authorities viewed the Assembly as a way to "help the Koreans make progress in truly democratic practices and true representation of the people in government."⁵⁸ Such progress was considered as the surest way not only to stabilize the internal situation of south Korea but also to strengthen the American position in the future negotiation with Russia.

On January 11, 1947, Hodge made public a new exchange of letters between himself and General Chistyakov regarding the reconvening of the Joint Commission. The Soviet letter of November 26, 1946, proposed reopening the Joint Commission subject to a prior agreement that the Commission would accept the same principle that the Soviet delegation had advocated throughout the first Joint Commission; namely, to exclude from consultation the rightists who were opposed to trusteeship. On December 24, General Hodge responded to the Russian proposal by proposing that modification be made in order to give a greater freedom of expression to the Korean people concerning the formation of their provisional government.⁵⁹

⁵⁸General Hodge's address at the opening session of the Korea Interim Legislative Assembly, *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁹For the summary of both Soviet and American proposals, see *ibid.*, No. 16 (Jan., 1947), pp. 13-14.

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Following the publication of this exchange of letters, the anti-trusteeship movement intensified among the Korean rightists. To the surprise of the Military Government, the Korea Interim Legislative Assembly passed an anti-trusteeship resolution by a vote of 44 to 1 on January 20, 1947. An amendment to postpone the resolution failed by a vote of 17 to 43. The resolution criticized General Hodge for his alleged departure from the position he had taken at the adjournment of the Joint Commission regarding the freedom of speech of the Korean people. Embarrassed, he contended that he was deliberately misunderstood by some radical rightists and that there was no change in the American policy to guarantee freedom.⁶⁰

Hodge and the Military Government were stunned by the action of the Interim Assembly. He was reported by Kim, Kiusic to have regarded the anti-trusteeship resolution "as an act of opposition to himself and the American program in Korea rather than a simple disapproval of the principle of trusteeeship." Kim, Kiusic added further that the Legislative Assembly should give the view of General Hodge the most careful consideration.⁶¹

But the tension between the Legislative Assembly and the Military Government did not prevent the latter

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 22-25.

⁶¹Ibid., No. 17 (Feb., 1947), p. 12.

from striving to make the Assembly a really working body. In a letter dated February 17, 1947, the Military Governor Archer L. Lerch requested the Assembly to consider such basic and pressing matters as the review of the entire Military Government ordinances since the beginning of the occupation with an eye to updating them, a careful screening of all Korean personnel in the Military Government, the early enactment of a universal franchise, a careful consideration of the economic and financial problems of south Korea, the enactment of constructive labor laws, the proposal concerning disposition of former Japanese property, plans of food collection and distribution, the enactment of a land reform program, etc.⁶²

One purpose of America's new policy was the ultimate "Koreanization" of the Military Government. The Legislative Assembly was only a part of the program. In February, 1947, Ahn, Chae-Hong was nominated as the Korean Civil Administrator, and Ordinance No. 135, dated March 15, stipulated turning over to the Koreans full responsibility for the appointment to public office. On May 17, "the Korean elements of United States Army

⁶²Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Military Government in Korea" were designated as the South Korean Interim Government.⁶³

Since December, 1946, the extreme rightists had been pushing their own program to wreck the United States policy in Korea by building up in the United States and the United Nations sentiments against American policy and the Moscow decision. Syngman Rhee asserted that working for coalition in south Korea while leaving north Korea to be solidified under Communists would lead the entire nation to be dominated by Communists. He, therefore, demanded an anti-Communist government in south Korea as the first step of north-south unification.⁶⁴

The north Korean Communist regime had been asserting that the unified Korean government in the future must be based on north Korea--politically and otherwise.⁶⁵

Rhee's action appeared to the Military Government "irresponsible." It expressed regret that a large group of people in Korea might be excluded from the Korean Provisional Government by going along with Rhee.⁶⁶ Hodge,

⁶³For Ordinance No. 141, see F.R., 1947, VI, p. 678.

⁶⁴Langdon's report to the Secretary of State, received by the Department on Dec. 10, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 775-777.

⁶⁵Kim, Il-Söng's address on August 15, 1946, Surip-üi Kil, p. 120.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 778.

fully aware of Rhee's activities in the United States, warned that the United States "can not and must not overlook [Rhee's] potential to do irreparable damage unless carefully handled."⁶⁷ The American authorities in Korea were concerned particularly about the possibility that Soviet Russia might confuse Rhee's pleading with American policy, since they might still think that Rhee was an American puppet.⁶⁸

The anti-trusteeship movement of the extreme rightists was transforming itself into an anti-Military Government movement by January, 1947. They cried out that the Koreans must immediately be saved from "conditions of slavery under the Military Government."⁶⁹ These challenges from the Korean rightists were taken seriously by the Military Government, and induced them to recommend a more positive action at governmental level for the reconvening of the Joint Commission as soon as practicable so as to save the confidence of the Koreans in the Military Government.⁷⁰ General MacArthur even suggested taking the Korean problem out of the frame of the Moscow decision for an early solution.⁷¹

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 785-786.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 772.

⁶⁹F.R., 1947, VI, p. 599.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 601.

⁷¹Ibid.

On the eve of the resumption of the Joint Commission in May, 1947, the extreme rightists boycotted the consultation by the Joint Commission and asserted that the word "trusteeship" should be omitted and only "help and assistance" be used, and that since the word "democratic" meant one thing to the United States and another to Soviet Russia, "an agreed definition of the word should be presented to the Koreans."⁷² Establishment of a free, democratic Korea as the Americans understood it had been the goal of American policy. Now, it became clearer that the United States had to struggle not only against the Soviet Union but also against a large group of Korean people who claimed to uphold the American democracy but differed as to the means to achieve it.

While continuing efforts to resume the Joint Commission through contacts between the two occupation commanders and two governments, the American government had a Special State-War Committee on Korea organized to prepare policy recommendations for the Secretaries with regard to Korea. By the end of February, 1947, a general agreement was reached in the Committee to cope with the situation that developed after SWNCC 178/8 (October, 1945) and SWNCC 178/23 (June, 1946). A draft report prepared by the Special Committee had in it two important points as the basic assumption of United States

⁷²Ibid., p. 646.

action in Korea: Collaboration with Soviet Russia to resolve the Korean problems as soon as possible, and adoption of "positive and aggressive" plans within the letter of the Moscow Agreement for economic rehabilitation of south Korea. The report made a point that a politically independent Korea without economic stabilization would create only new difficulties.⁷³

Collaboration with Soviet Russia was recommended not so much because of any possibility for reaching an agreement with Russia on Korea but because the United States did not want to see her prestige damaged by Soviet counter-attack for breaking an international commitment. The desirability of referring the Korean question to a Foreign Ministers' conference or the United Nations was rejected as unsatisfactory. The report, however, added cautiously that if it was conclusively demonstrated that Soviet Russia was deliberately preventing a solution of the Korean question, then, it would be possible, upon careful deliberation, to take it to the United Nations.

The report reaffirmed the principle that an adequate safeguard against south Korea falling under Russian domination must be built before mutual withdrawal of troops was put into action. While recognizing that the stationing of United States troops in Korea had often

⁷³Ibid., p. 609f.

been the target of ill-willed condemnation of both Koreans and other nations, the report indicated greater concern about the result of a hasty withdrawal that might signify America's complete "political failure" vis-à-vis Russia and "loss of prestige and influence" not only in the Far East but in world politics.

A positive political, economic, and cultural program was recommended for the dual purpose of alleviating south Korea's internal difficulties and improving the American position vis-à-vis the Koreans and the Russians. Congressional action was urged for a three-year economic reconstruction program, beginning with fiscal year 1948, with \$600 million and a separate appropriation for Korea. The Special Committee was convinced that without such a program endorsed by Congress the Korean situation would so deteriorate as to seriously impair the U.S. world position.⁷⁴

While a new course of action was being studied and put into action in south Korea by the American Military Government, north Korea was also going its own way. The People's Interim Committee, established in February,

⁷⁴These recommendations were accepted in general by the government although Secretary of War Robert B. Patterson was rather doubtful of obtaining Congressional consent and the feasibility of rehabilitation program in south Korea. See Acting Secretary Dean Acheson's letter to the Secretary of War (ibid., pp. 621-622) and Patterson's reply to Acheson (ibid., p. 625f).

1946, was in full charge of administration in that part of Korea. Various political parties were unified into the United National Democratic Front in July. In November, following the election in south Korea for the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly, north Korea held elections to choose People's Committees at various levels and the 237 representatives of the People's Committee to inaugurate the National Assembly of North Korea, which first met February 17 through 20, 1947. Tass reported that the composition of the National Assembly of North Korea was 89 Labor Party (Communists), 29 Democratic Party (under Communist leadership), 29 Ch'ŏndo-Kyo Party (native religious group), and 90 independents. According to the report, two resolutions were passed unanimously at the first meeting--a letter of appreciation to Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union and a petition to the governments of USSR and the United States for an early resumption of the Joint Commission.⁷⁵

North Korea was proud of the result of land reform, nationalization of industries, and other reforms

⁷⁵Tass report of Pyŏngyang, dateline Feb. 24, 1947, quoted on the Izvestia, March 5, 1947, the Far Eastern Institute, University of Washington, Soviet Press Translations, II, No. 9 (Seattle, 1947), p. 13. Before reorganization, the Chosŏn Democratic Party was typically a non-Communist party. Now its leader was Yong-Kŏn Ch'oe, a former guerrilla leader in Manchuria and the Commander-in-Chief of the North Korea People's Army at the time of election.

in the socio-economic life of the north Koreans. The Soviet Communist Party organ Pravda asserted that these reforms in north Korea indicated that the People's Committee was the real democratic organ of government, reflecting the interests of the broad masses of the people.⁷⁶ The election of November, 1946, was reported as having involved the participation of 4.5 million people, or 99.6 percent of the total number of registered voters; the United Democratic National Front received 97 percent of all ballots cast. "There was no doubt," Pravda continued, "that the democratic reorganization accomplished by the People's Interim Committee of Northern Korea reflects the hope and interests of all the Korean people, including also the population of the southern part of the country."⁷⁷

Kim, Il-Söng broadcast on New Year's Day of 1947 that north Korea was heading for "solidification of the material basis for a democratic and independent country," while in south Korea "bloody struggles were under way by the masses for a new liberation through general strikes and heroic popular resistance."⁷⁸

⁷⁶Pravda, Nov. 2, 1946, Soviet Press Translations, I, No. 4, p. 19.

⁷⁷Pravda, Nov. 16, 1946, *ibid.*, II, No. 5, p. 9.

⁷⁸Kim's broadcast, Surip-ŭi Kil, pp. 158-159.

Undeniably, South Korea's social and economic unrest was intensified greatly by these strikes and sabotage, and the "heroic popular resistance" was suppressed resolutely by the Military Government because of its subversive character. Rice collection, which was to the Military Government "the only means to distribute equitably the meager food stocks to deficient areas," was labeled by the Communists as "robbing the farmer."⁷⁹

The American authorities in south Korea received warnings almost incessantly that many north Korean youths were sent into the south upon finishing military training, and some of them had gotten into the police force and constabulary of south Korea.⁸⁰ The labor movement of south Korea was controlled by the Communists, as Pak, Sei-Yöng, one of the chairmen of the Council of the All-Korean Labor Union, claimed that the organization had been guided and supported by the Communists.⁸¹

The party line of the Korean Communists was identical with the line followed by the Soviet delegation at the Joint Commission. Identical phraseology between them showed that it came from the same source. Communist

⁷⁹Summation, USAMGIK, No. 12 (Sept., 1946), p. 12.

⁸⁰Report to the Secretary of State by the new political adviser, Joseph E. Jacobs, August 7, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 745.

⁸¹General Hodge's message to the War Department, Aug. 20, 1946. F.R., 1946, VIII, p. 725.

and leftist propaganda was centralized and well-organized to assist the Soviet delegation of the Joint Commission. It became clear that their aim was to discredit and bar from consultation and participation in the Korean Provisional Government most of the non-Communist leaders, accusing them of non-support of the Moscow decision.⁸² By contrast, General Hodge and the Military Government were far from having a whole-hearted support of their own brain child, the Interim Legislative Assembly.

When it was agreed that the Joint Commission was to resume in May, 1947, the United States and the Soviet Union had gone further than ever in their own way. They were prepared better than ever to pursue their own course of action against the other, only to put a permanent end to the bilateral negotiations that had dragged on for more than one year.

Resumption of the Joint Commission in May, 1947, was the result of Soviet acceptance of the American proposal as contained in General Hodge's letter of December 24, 1946, to General Chistyakov. Because the correspondence between the two commanding generals regarding the reconvening of the Joint Commission did not make any progress for a long time, the Special State-War Committee

⁸²Ibid., pp. 699-703, Langdon's report to the Secretary of State.

on Korea had advised the State Department to seek governmental level contact with Soviet Russia, and Secretary Marshall took the initiative accordingly. Soviet Foreign Minister V. Molotov finally agreed to resuming the negotiation in May, 1947, two months after the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine.⁸³

The conditions proposed, amended, and finally agreed upon by the two governments to reopen the negotiation were entirely concerned with whom among the Koreans they should consult. In October, 1946, William Langdon made an unofficial visit to Pyŏngyang as the political adviser and exchanged views on the possibility of reopening the Joint Commission. Based upon this exchange of views, the American delegation proposed later that individuals or parties to be consulted "shall not foment or instigate mass opposition to the work of the Joint Commission or the fulfillment of the Moscow decision."⁸⁴ Difference of opinion as to what constituted fomentation or instigation remained unsolved despite exchange of letters between the two commanders in Korea.

⁸³For details of exchange of letters, see Summation, USAMGIK, Nos. 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, and 20; also, see Department of State, Korea's Independence, Department of State Publication No. 2933, Far Eastern Series No. 18.

⁸⁴Langdon's report on his visit to north Korea. F.R., 1946, VIII, pp. 743-746, 748.

Then, General Hodge presented another formula for consultation in his reply on December 24, 1946, to General Chistyakov. It read in part:

The persons, parties and social organizations invited for consultation with the Joint Commission, after the signing of declaration contained in communique No. 5, should not fan up or instigate active demonstrations against the work of the Joint Commission or against one of the Allied Powers or against the fulfillment of the Moscow decision.⁸⁵

Soviet Russia agreed to this formula in May, 1947, as the basis of consultation.

The word "trusteeship" which caused so much trouble at the first Joint Commission remained undefined when the Commission reconvened. Its concrete form, as the American delegation hoped, would be determined at the Joint Commission in consultation with representatives of the Korean people. General Hodge told the Koreans in an effort to get their cooperation that when the detailed measures for "helping and assisting" came under consideration, it was expected that Korean consultees would express clearly their opinions as to the character of these measures.⁸⁶

Hodge's hopeful statement, however, fell far short of wiping out the suspicion of the extreme rightists that they might be denied the opportunity of

⁸⁵Summation, USAMGIK, No. 20 (May, 1947). p. 18.

⁸⁶Ibid., No. 17 (Feb., 1947), p. 23.

expressing their opinion clearly regarding trusteeship. Even William Langdon who had worked hard to pave the way for resuming the Joint Commission doubted that they would be free to do so. "Unless and until a simple, clear, definite, and specific agreement can be reached with the Russians to accord freedom of expression of opinion to Koreans regardless of their vocal expression of non-agreement with certain principles of the Moscow decision," he said categorically, "no concrete result can be expected by reconvening the Commission."⁸⁷ He, therefore, recommended, with the concurrence of Genrals Hodge and Brown, that the basis of reconvening the Joint Commission be Secretary Marshall's proposal that the Joint Commission should be charged with expediting its work "under the terms of the Moscow Agreement on a basis of respect for the democratic right of freedom of opinion."⁸⁸

Thus, the Joint Commission resumed without clarifying such issues as definition of democracy, of freedom of opinion, of trusteeship, and of upholding the Moscow decision. As Secretary Marshall admitted three weeks after the Commission reconvened, the United

⁸⁷F.R., 1947, VI, p. 642.

⁸⁸Secretary Marshall's letter of Soviet Foreign Minister V. Molotov, May 2, 1947, Summation, USAMGIK, No. 20 (May, 1947), p. 6.

States was still in a dilemma. To give in to the pressure of the Korean rightists to modify the trusteeship concept meant a departure from the Moscow decision. Any public statement departing from the Moscow decision, as had often been suggested by some Americans, was certain to endanger the work of the Joint Commission.⁸⁹ The only choice seemed to be to persuade the Koreans to cooperate with the work of the Commission, hoping that some compromises, without costing American principle, might be worked out with Soviet Russia in the process of negotiations.

Nor was there agreement among the three wartime Allies on how to resolve the Korean question. China proposed in April, 1947, a full consultation among the United States, Soviet Russia, Great Britain, and China if the occupying powers could not reach an agreement soon.⁹⁰ Great Britain, on the other hand, preferred letting the two directly concerned reach a settlement and showed no particular interest in the Chinese proposal of four-power consultation.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Secretary Marshall's letter to William Langdon, May 23, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 648.

⁹⁰ A letter of Wang Shih-chieh, Foreign Minister, Republic of China, to the Secretary of State, April 15, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 631.

⁹¹ Conversation of E. F. Drumright, First Secretary, U.S. Embassy in the United Kingdom, with D. F. MacDermot, head, Japan-Pacific Dept., Foreign Office, April 24, 1947, *ibid.*, pp. 636-638.

The first meeting of the Second Joint Commission took place on May 21, 1947. And Subcommittee No. 1 set out immediately to deal with the question of consultation of Korean political parties and social organizations. The United States preferred a wider basis of consultation, and Russia dropped the plan of consulting thirty parties in each zone.⁹²

Russia, however, rejected the American proposal of adding "freedom of opinion" to the three points mentioned in Hodge's letter of December 24, 1946, arguing that the proposal made in Secretary Marshall's letter was not a valid part of the Moscow Agreement. A vicious controversy around "freedom of speech" resumed again. The United States asserted that the Moscow decision did not prohibit the freedom of speech explicitly, while Soviet Russia opposed freedom of speech on the ground that it was not mentioned explicitly in the Moscow decision. Difference of position again came to the fore. Soviet Russia was concerned about the anti-Communist group of south Korea while America could not let the Communists and leftists dominate the Korean Provisional Government.

In this situation, the first main agreement on the issue of consultation came on June 7 in the form of Decision No. 4. The main points of the decision were:

⁹²Langdon's report, June 1, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 660.

Consultation with democratic parties and organizations which would declare in a written form their support of the aim of the Moscow decision and the decisions of the Joint Commission; and the number of representatives would be determined by the Joint Commission in accordance with their membership and, as far as possible, taking into account their influence.⁹³ In addition, it was also agreed that parties and social organizations reply to a questionnaire regarding the political structure and policies appropriate to the Provisional Korean Government by July 5.⁹⁴

The United States, in the final stage of establishing a Korean government, was particularly concerned as to whether it was to be established by appointment, as suggested by the Soviet Union, or through election as America favored. The Department of State instructed the new political adviser Joseph E. Jacobs that the American delegation might accept the Russian proposal of appointment of Korean officials if definite provision could be made for holding a general election at the earliest practicable date, either for a legislature which would select a government or for a direct election of

⁹³Ibid., p. 669.

⁹⁴Decision at June 25th meeting, *ibid.*, p. 679. For the contents of the questionnaire, see Summation, USAMGIK, No. 21 (June, 1947), pp. 22-25.

personnel of the provisional government. In any case, the instruction stressed, both delegations should be mindful that south Korea represented two-thirds of the population and that the election should be carried out by secret ballot from freely chosen multi-party slates of candidates.⁹⁵

But then, an unexpected situation developed. The Soviet delegate G. F. Tounkin announced at the meeting of Subcommittee No. 1 on June 27 that Soviet Russia would insist on excluding all parties opposing trusteeship and reserved the right to exclude other rightist parties if they found it necessary. Arthur C. Bunce, the American delegate to the Subcommittee, did not agree and called Russian attention to Decision No. 4 and to Marshall's letter of May 2, in which Marshall said that representatives of "parties and organizations shall not be excluded from consultation with the Commission . . . because of opinion they might hold or may have expressed in the past" ⁹⁶

The question was brought up again at the session of July 2. The Soviets raised a question as to the fifteen south Korean parties that formed the Anti-Trusteeship Committee in January, 1947. Soviet delegates

⁹⁵F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 675-676.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 681-682.

declared the following day that the Moscow decision stated that the government for Korea should be "democratic," that is, "people's." Throughout the meeting, they pressed for initiating consultation with organizations not under suspicion and demanded that members of the Anti-Trusteeship Committee must repudiate any affiliation with it.⁹⁷ This Russian proposal was not acceptable to the Americans because it was in violation of Decision No. 4 and would undo the work of the Joint Commission. The American delegation counter-proposed on July 3 that only those groups with more than 10,000 members be consulted and that any decision for those with a lesser membership be deferred until a later time. No agreement was reached on this matter.⁹⁸

On July 12, the Soviets presented a list of political parties with whom to consult. It eliminated twenty-seven parties which represented "large and important groups of the rightists and moderates" in south Korea. If the Soviet proposal was followed and if the moderates were counted as rightist, the ratio between left and right in the consultation would be two-to-one in favor of the left, according to the American analysis. Furthermore, the American delegation had no assurance

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 688-689.

⁹⁸Ibid.

that further elimination of rightist parties would not be attempted by the Soviet delegation.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the American authorities in south Korea were engulfed with difficulties arising from political disorder in their zone. Extreme rightists were desperate in their objection to trusteeship. The focus of these rightists now turned to the Moscow decision itself. They asserted that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had any right to prescribe a trusteeship for Korea. The basic attitude of this group continued to be that since north Korea became communized with Soviet assistance, the United States, in turn, had to assist the anti-trusteeship group of south Korea and thereby achieve a balance of power and final non-Communist unification of Korea.¹⁰⁰

Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng was assassinated in July, and the moderate-leftist groups which had been under his influence came to identify themselves more with the radical leftists. The leftists became more and more hostile to the American type of political democracy. They produced political martyrs by instigating mass opposition to the

⁹⁹United States Chief Commissioner Albert E. Brown's report on the Second Joint Commission, July 31, 1947, Summation, USAMGIK, No. 22 (July, 1947), p. 30.

¹⁰⁰Conversation of Syngman Rhee with General Hodge and Political adviser Joseph E. Jacobs, July 17, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 709.

political and economic program of the Military Government. They were closely identified with the Communists in their socio-economic programs although not all accepted Marxist theory.¹⁰¹

The moderate, middle-of-the-road groups found themselves increasingly frustrated, despite the back-up of the Military Government. They were dwarfed almost completely by the propaganda and activities of the extremes of both sides. One conceivable reason for this situation was that the means to implement the programs of the moderates did not appeal to the majority of the people who were anxious to see hard results immediately. The postwar Korean society allowed little room for anything but extremism. As Hodge put it, the extremist psychology of the Koreans made it almost impossible "to develop any truly moderate political strength."¹⁰²

After the Joint Commission meeting in Pyŏngyang on July 2 and 3, it became more apparent that the question of consultation would not be easily resolved. No progress was made in this matter until July 14. As the Chief of the American delegation, Albert E. Brown, stated on July 15, exercise of the unilateral veto power

¹⁰¹General Hodge's letter to the Secretary of State, July 2, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 683.

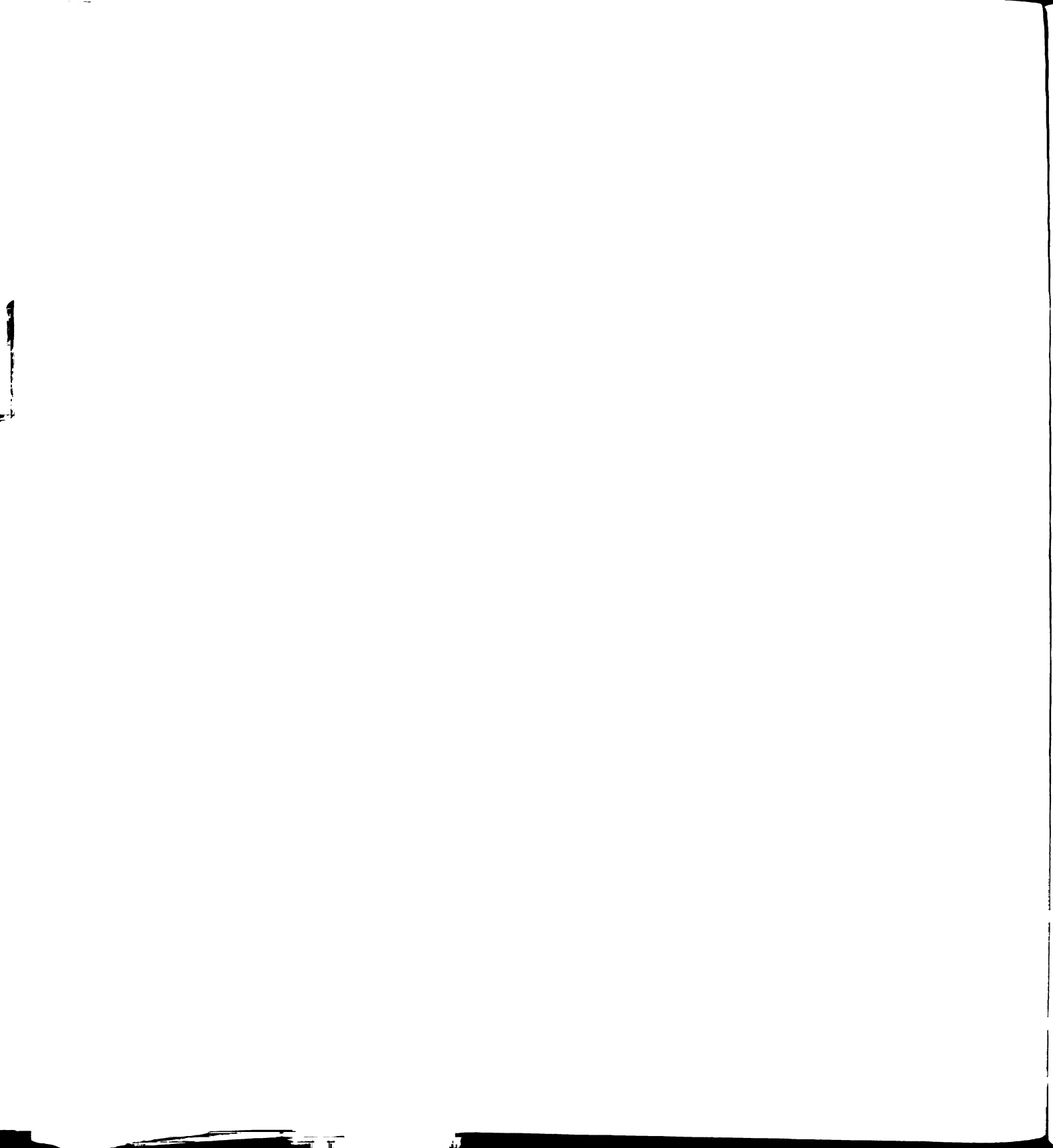
¹⁰²*Ibid.*

by one delegation in the selection of parties to consult with, and the eligibility for consultation of the member parties of the Anti-Trusteeship Committee, became the two basic issues involved.

The American delegation continued to oppose the Russian demand of exercising the veto power on the ground that exclusion from consultation should only be by mutual agreement of both delegations as specifically stated in the Marshall-Molotov letters. With regard to the Anti-Trusteeship Committee, Brown argued that the Soviet delegation had failed to bring specific charges against any one party of the Committee that it had actually fomented and instigated active opposition to the Joint Commission or the Moscow decision "after" signing the declaration of communiqué No. 5.¹⁰³

This statement was challenged by General T. F. Shtykov, the Chief of the Soviet delegation, on July 21. Shtykov defended the Soviet position by saying that many parties and social organizations of south Korea that applied for consultation were either non-existent or had an inflated membership. Thus, an unbridgeable gap appeared between the two delegations in their definition of the "social organizations" which the Moscow decision

¹⁰³Summation, USAMGIK, No. 22 (July, 1947), pp. 20-23.



stipulated should be consulted in the process of establishing a provisional Korean government.¹⁰⁴

It became clear that the difficulty of negotiation lay not so much in the technical problem of consultation as in the determination of both delegations not to yield to the other side. Neither Soviet Russia nor the United States was willing to accept a decision that might jeopardize the ideology and political-social systems they stood for. The exchange of interminable and fruitless polemics at the Joint Commission demonstrated that the two nations would not agree to any compromise of their own rigid positions.

Scepticism among the Americans associated with the negotiation increased by the end of July. They blamed the Russians for their adherence to "a narrow, technical interpretation, in some cases equivalent to distortion, of any agreement, decision, communique or minute" for the purpose of elimination from consultation parties and organizations which opposed a united Korea dominated by the leftists and Communists.¹⁰⁵ There was even a suggestion to skip the process of consultation entirely and proceed to the creation of a consultative

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 23-27.

¹⁰⁵Joseph E. Jacob's report to the Secretary of State, July 16, 1947, F.R., 1947, VI, p. 704.

body and a provisional government.¹⁰⁶ General Hodge, suffering frustration, went further to suggest that negotiations with the Russians under the Moscow decision be terminated and that the United States proceed with the establishment of an elected interim government for the American zone immediately, fostering "liberal rightist ideology."¹⁰⁷ The State Department was also giving careful study to what course of action to take in case of breakdown or indefinite prolongation of the stalemate in the Joint Commission.¹⁰⁸

The idea of a separate government for south Korea, provisional or otherwise, which had been rejected by the American government as late as the middle of July, was given new consideration by the end of the month by an ad hoc Committee created on July 23 to study and report on Korea.¹⁰⁹ The Committee made its recommendation on August 4 in the form of SWNCC 176/30 stating that if the impasse at the Joint Commission continued until August 7, the United States should report the work of

¹⁰⁶F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 731-733.

¹⁰⁷COMGENUSAFIK to the War Department, ZGCG 957, July 27, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 11.

¹⁰⁸Secretary Marshall's letter to Jacobs, July 25, 1947, F.R., 1947, VI, p. 734.

¹⁰⁹For rejection of separate government, see General Hilldring's letter to General Hodge, July 14, 1947, *ibid.*, pp. 702-703; for the recommendation by the ad hoc Committee, see *ibid.*, pp. 713-714.

the Joint Commission to Great Britain and China on August 17 and call for a four-power consultation. In case no agreement was reached between the four powers, the United States should announce its desire to submit the Korean question to the United Nations which was scheduled to open on September 16. Organization of a State Department working group was strongly recommended to prepare the Korean case for submission to the United Nations. At the same time, a recommendation was made to consider the possibility of granting independence to south Korea and to submit Grant-in-Aid legislation to the coming session of Congress.¹¹⁰

Proposals and counter-proposals continued to be offered throughout August and early September, but mutual distrust grew in such a way that no constructive result could be expected by then. Russia was bitter against the American attempt to include the parties of the Anti-Trusteeship Committee for consultation, and the United States found intolerable such Russian proposals as that the number of representatives from each zone in a provisional National Assembly must be equal.¹¹¹ The Joint Commission apparently bogged down by the end

¹¹⁰SWNCC 176/30, *ibid.*, p. 741.

¹¹¹USAFIK to JCS, URC 7836, POLAD 313, Sept. 3, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 12; also, see General Shtykov's statement issued on August 28, South Korean Interim Government Activities, No. 1 (August, 1947), p. 192.

of August. As General Hodge observed, "the time for politeness, accepted as weakness by the Communists and by the Russians," seemed over.¹¹² More Americans came to share the belief that Soviet motives had been to ensure a Communist-dominated government in Korea, and that the Soviet establishment of a Communist regime in north Korea and its machinations in south Korea of Communist groups substantially complicated the internal problems of Korea.¹¹³

At the 58th session of September 4, 1947, the Soviets agreed to General Brown's proposal that each delegation report to its respective government the failure to reach agreement on a joint report.¹¹⁴ Though contacts between the two delegations continued until October 18, the Joint Commission came to an end earlier. To the last moment, the basic assumption of both delegations remained unchanged. The United States insisted that all the organizations that signed the declaration attached to communiqué No. 5 should be consulted. Soviet Russia insisted on exclusion of anti-trusteeship groups

¹¹²General Hodge's letter to JCS, ZGCG 1066, Aug. 25, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 12.

¹¹³Albert C. Wedemeyer, Report to the President: Korea (Washington, 1951), p. 5. The report was made in September, 1947.

¹¹⁴USAFIK to JCS, ZURC 1111, POLAD 316, Sept. 5, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 12.

even if they signed the declaration. One thing they shared in common was their insistence that the other delegation violated the Moscow decision.

The Second Joint Commission took place two months after the United States made its struggle against Communism a universal principle of foreign policy in the Truman Doctrine. The American concern throughout the Joint Commission was, in short, to prevent Korea from being dominated by Soviet Russia and Communism and help Korea to achieve independence in a democratic way, while at the same time abiding by international commitment, especially the Moscow decision and the Charter of the United Nations.¹¹⁵ When stalemate in the Joint Commission became apparent beyond doubt in August, the United States found a justifiable ground to break its commitment to the Moscow decision in favor of establishing a non-Communist Korea through a four-power consultation or the United Nations. At first, this meant a unified Korea. But the subsequent developments in carrying out the decision of the United Nations ended up in the perpetuation of separation of Korea. The Korean situation, thus, began to develop in the direction which the United States was prepared for but which she had hoped to avoid.

¹¹⁵Recommendation by the ad hoc Committee on Korea, Aug. 4, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 738-739.

CHAPTER VI

FROM DRIFT TO POLICY: DISENGAGEMENT

The last stage of the Second Russo-American Joint Commission demonstrated America's determination to put an end to the interminably dragging negotiations with Soviet Russia. Of the various factors that helped the United States to make the determination, the most essential was her strong desire within the context of the general situation of the Far East to extricate herself from Korea and the rest of the Asian mainland politically and militarily. The Chinese Communists were expanding their control successfully in the fall of 1947. Congressional and popular sympathy for China in the United States and the military assistance that resumed in May, 1947, proved ineffective to save the Kuomintang government. America's interests in China were further eclipsed by her new economic aid programs for Europe. Economic reconstruction of Japan began to receive more attention in connection with the growing momentum of withdrawal from China in the American government.¹

¹For American relations with China in this period, see Warren I. Cohen, America's Response to China (New York, 1971), pp. 180-194; for Japan, see W. Macmahon Ball, Japan: Enemy or Ally? (New York, 1949), Chap. VII.

By August, 1947, it became clear that the two delegations were trying merely to justify their own position. The Commission was going to end for the second time without achieving the very first step of implementing the Moscow decision. The positions of the United States and Soviet Russia now became so fixed that it was almost impossible for them to retreat without a total collapse of their Korean policies. Soviet Russia was absolutely reluctant to take the Korean question out of the framework of bilateral negotiations because of the numerical inferiority of support either at the four-power conference or the United Nations. The American government, on the other hand, took the position that the deadlock at the Joint Commission justified search for other means of solution. America was evidently counting on the majority support outside the bilateral negotiations.

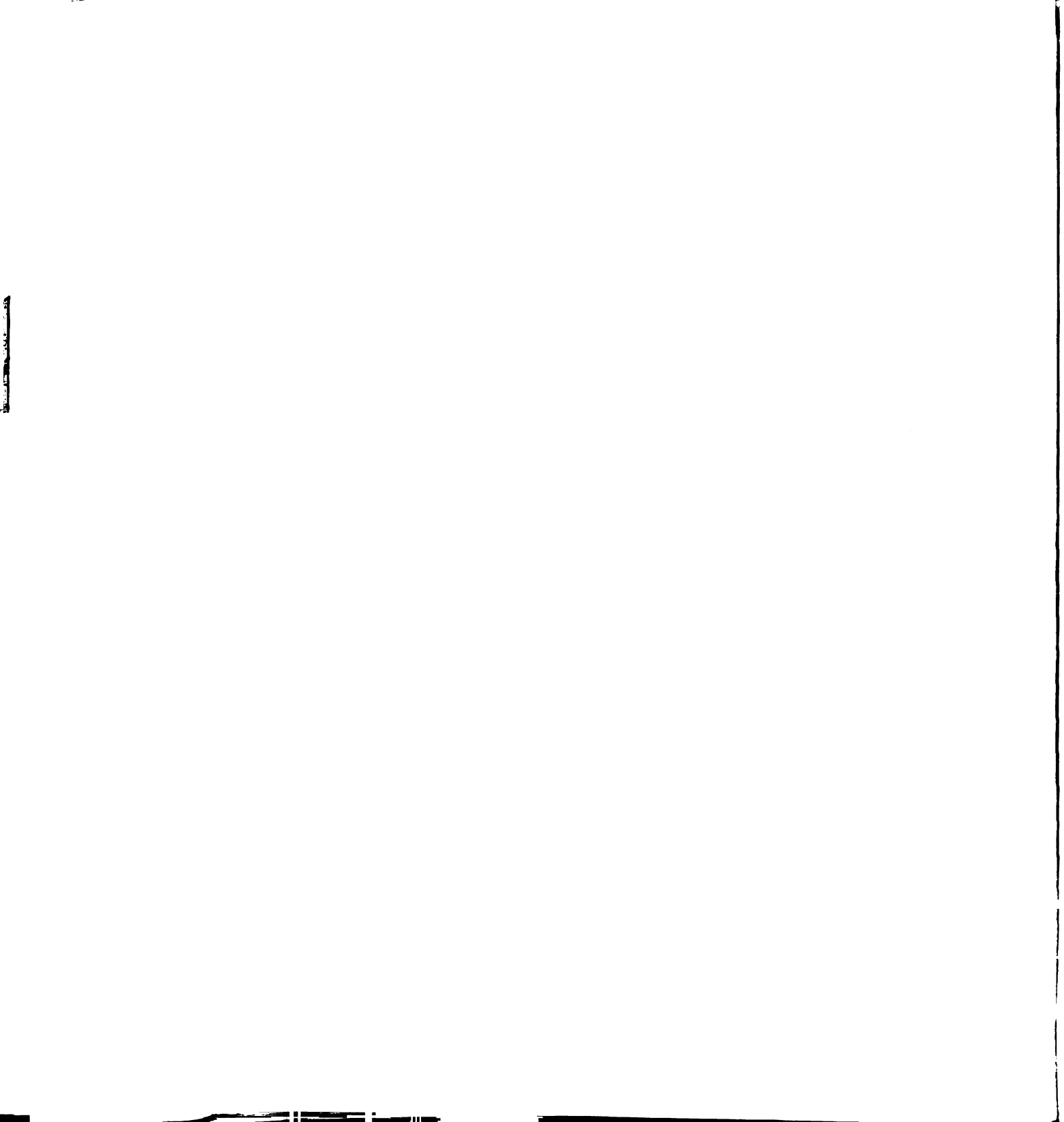
The American government finally decided to transfer the Korean question to a four-power conference, thereby opening a new epoch in US-USSR negotiation over Korea. The main points of the proposal contained in Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett's letter of August 26 established a Korean provisional government by skipping consultation of Korean parties and organizations and holding elections on the zonal basis, substituted the four powers for Soviet Russia and the United

States as the partners to discuss with the provisional Korean government the necessary aid and assistance to place the independence of Korea on a firm political and economic foundation, as stipulated in the Moscow Agreement, and placed the Korean question in a closer relationship to the United Nations while adhering to the aims of the Moscow Agreement.²

Skipping of consultation was a technical problem. Since there was no chance of agreement at the Joint Commission on whom to consult with, the United States thought it more practicable to hold elections in each zone for a zonal legislative body and merge the two into a national legislative assembly. This national assembly was to formulate a provisional constitution and to launch a provisional government of Korea. The thorny point for Soviet Russia, however, was that the two zonal legislative bodies were to be so composed as to represent proportionally the population of each zone. Soviet Russia rejected this proposal and demanded that the number of representatives from each zone in the National Legislative Assembly be the same.³ The proportion of

²For Lovett's letter and the proposals enclosed in it, see F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 771-775.

³USAMGIK, South Korean Interim Government Activities, No. 1 (August, 1947), p. 192. To be shortened hereafter as SKIGA.



population between the two zones at that time was two-to-one in favor of the south.

Substitution of the four powers for the United States and the Soviet Union as the consulting partners of the Korean Provisional Government was for the United States a matter of strategy. The Soviet Union was outraged by this proposal because they interpreted this as a departure from the Moscow Agreement. The Moscow decision of 1945 stipulated explicitly that the final decision on Korea should be made by the four powers on the basis of what had been decided at the bilateral negotiation between the two occupation authorities. Now that the bilateral negotiation reached nowhere and the prospect for a compromise appeared almost hopeless, the United States felt justified to skip several procedures required by the Moscow Agreement.

Omission of the two important procedures as referred to above was not an explicit departure from the Moscow decision. However, the proposal to place the Korean question in a closer relationship with the United Nations by means of inviting observers for the zonal election of Korea could be interpreted as indicating United States' readiness to dispense with the Moscow decision if she found it necessary. While adhering to the aims and spirit of the Moscow decision, the United States, nevertheless, seemed determined

to take strong, unilateral action despite Russian opposition.

Acceptance of the American proposal for a four-power conference came from China and Great Britain on September 4 and 5, respectively. But the Soviet Union rejected it. Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov charged that the stagnation in the Joint Commission was "primarily the result of the position adopted by the American delegation." He opposed the American proposal on the ground that the Joint Commission was still "far from exhausting all its possibilities for working out an agreed recommendation, which is entirely possible," and that a joint conference of the four powers "did not stem from the Moscow decision."⁴ If the Russian interpretation about the possibility of reaching an agreement was correct, then the United States must accept the blame for the hastiness it demonstrated by sending out invitations for a four-power conference. If this interpretation was not correct, then Soviet Russia, as the United States contended, was merely stalling for time, hoping for the collapse of the south.

⁴Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's letter to Secretary of State Marshall, dated September 4, 1947. Department of State, Korea, 1945 to 1948, Department of State Publication 3305, Far Eastern Series 28 (Washington, 1948), pp. 45-47; also, F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 779-781.

By the time the United States made the proposal, mutual incompatibility of purposes and policies was such that the inability of the two powers to reach an agreement was clear. At the same time, it was highly unlikely that Soviet Russia would accept a four-power conference where she was certain to be outnumbered by the Western allies and China. Russian rejection of the four-power conference was fully anticipated by the United States. America simply took advantage of the Russian opposition to justify its policy of taking the Korean issue to the United Nations.⁵

The Moscow Agreement came to a complete breakdown when Secretary of State George C. Marshall presented the Korean question to the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 17, 1947. Admitting the failure of bilateral negotiation within the frame of the Moscow Agreement, Marshall called for action by the United Nations because the United States believed that the Korean question had already become a matter which required the "impartial judgment of the other members [of the United Nations]." ⁶ This proposal was to transfer the

⁵ Acting Secretary of State Lovett's message to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, dated September 4, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 779.

⁶ Secretary Marshall's speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations, on September 17, 1947, Department of State, Korea, 1945-48, pp. 47-48; also, see Department of State Bulletin, 17 (Sept. 28, 1947), p. 620.

work of the Joint Commission to the United Nations; namely, setting up a provisional Korean government and consulting the provisional government on aid and assistance, including trusteeship. Soviet Russia opposed this transfer of function.

Russia disregarded the American action and proposed on September 26 mutual withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from Korea by early 1948.⁷ The proposal was repeated in Molotov's letter of October 9 to Marshall,⁸ arguing that only the withdrawal of troops from Korea would enable the Koreans to achieve their independence by themselves. Soviet Russia, it appeared, had confidence that withdrawal of troops without first setting up a Korean government would lead to a civil war in which well-trained and well-organized Communists could easily take control of the situation. The Russian authorities reportedly began to push a plan through several relatively unknown Korean moderates to have the Korean leaders discuss, free of interference by the two occupation authorities, the future of Korea. The Americans interpreted the plan as a device by the Soviets to promote in the United Nations the opinion that the

⁷Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S.S.R., The Soviet Union and the Korean Question (London: Soviet Press, 1950), p. 35f.

⁸Ibid., pp. 39-40.

Koreans could solve their problems if foreign troops withdrew, and rejected it on the ground that the reported eleven Korean leaders to confer included too many leftists.⁹

Mutual withdrawal of troops from Korea was not an unfamiliar proposal to the United States. In fact, the question had received serious consideration by those in responsible positions of the American government. There was a general agreement among them that troops should be withdrawn as soon as practicable but only after a central Korean government was established, as reaffirmed in the report dated August 4 by the ad hoc Committee on Korea.¹⁰ They had not reached this conclusion on the basis that Korea was essential to its own security. Korea was not regarded by the members of armed services as essential to America. The American government was more concerned with its prestige than with political interest or the strategic value of Korea.¹¹

⁹Jacobs' report to the Secretary of State, Oct. 8, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 823. The eleven leaders consisted of five leftists, two moderates, and four rightists.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 738.

¹¹A discussion on Korean situation at the Department of State. Participants: George F. Kennan, Director, Policy Planning Staff; John M. Allison, Assistant Chief, Division of Northeast Asian Affairs; Francis B. Stevens, Assistant Chief, Division of Eastern European Affairs. Sept. 8, 1947. Ibid., pp. 784-785. Also, Kennan's letter to W. Walton Butterworth, Jr., Director, Far Eastern Affairs, Sept. 24, 1947, ibid., p. 814.

The Russian proposal of troop withdrawal, in effect, helped the Department of State to brace up itself more effectively in pursuing the two vital aims of solving the Korean question by the United Nations and the pulling out of its troops from Korea as gracefully and promptly as possible. The view seemed widely shared in the American government that the American position in Korea was ultimately untenable even with expenditure of considerable money and effort.¹²

Out of this background came the United States resolution on Korea at the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 17, 1947. The resolution recommended two things: The occupation powers hold elections in their respective zones not later than March 31, 1948, under the observation of the United Nations as the initial step for a National Assembly and a National Government of Korea; immediately upon the establishment of the National Government of Korea, that government would constitute its own national security forces and would arrange with the occupation powers for the early and complete withdrawal from Korea of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. To discharge the

¹²Discussion at a meeting attended by Secretary of State; Under-Secretary of State; Mr. Kennan, Director, Policy Planning Staff; W. W. Butterworth, Jr., Director, Far Eastern Affairs; Dean Rusk, Director, South Pacific Asia; John M. Allison, Director, Northeast Asian Affairs; September 29, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 820.

responsibilities under this resolution, establishment of a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea was recommended.¹³

In response, the Soviet delegation submitted two draft resolutions, one to invite elected representatives of both north and south Korea to take part in the discussion of the Korean problem at the United Nations, and the other recommending mutual withdrawal of troops from Korea by early 1948. The proposal to invite the elected representatives of the Korean people to the discussion of their future was agreeable in principle. But in reality, it was very likely to delay any action on Korea. The Joint Commission had deadlocked on this same question as to who represented the will of the Korean people. Besides, as the American delegation at the United Nations argued, discussion with the Korean people could be made the function of the proposed Temporary Commission on Korea.

The Soviet resolution for the immediate withdrawal of troops received little support outside the Soviet bloc. This, if adopted, could have led to chaos detrimental to any free expression of the will of the Korean people. It would have assured the establishment of a Communist-controlled government since the superior

¹³For the text of the United States resolution, see F.R., 1947, VI, p. 857f.

organization, indoctrination, and discipline of the Communists could enable them to take full advantage of the resulting chaos.¹⁴

At last, the American resolution was adopted with minor amendment on November 14, 1947, by a vote of 46 to 0, with 6 abstentions, and the Soviet resolution was rejected by a vote of 34 to 7, with 16 abstentions. The resolution stipulated no provisions for a four-power trusteeship or other form of tutelage for Korea. Aid and assistance were to be provided by the United Nations and not by great powers.¹⁵

As the vote showed, the United States was in a position to marshal majority support in the United Nations in 1947. She was confident of defeating the alleged Russian strategy of delaying the solution of the Korean question only if the question were taken to the United Nations. This confidence found its best expression in Secretary of State George C. Marshall's address at the General Assembly in presenting the Korean question to the

¹⁴For instance, see the British view on the Soviet intention behind the troop withdrawal, *ibid.*, p. 854.

¹⁵For proceedings at the General Assembly, see United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Vol. II, pp. 882-858; for voting, *ibid.*, p. 858; for the text of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on November 14, 1947, see United Nations, Organization and Procedure of the United Nations Commissions, VIII. The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (New York, 1949), pp. 24-25.

United Nations, especially when he said that the Korean question deserved the impartial judgment of other members of the United Nations.¹⁶ Soviet Russia, fully aware of the numerical inferiority of her supporters, attempted to the last moment to keep the Korean question within the frame of bilateral negotiations, but failed.

The Russians claimed the American resolution violated the Charter of the United Nations. They were referring to Article 107 of the United Nations' Charter which stipulated that nothing in the Charter should invalidate or preclude action taken against an enemy state by the powers responsible for its defeat. The Soviet delegation asserted that this provision made the Soviet Union and the United States primarily responsible for determining the terms of settlement for Korea.¹⁷ The provision, however, did not necessarily forbid the appropriate organs of the United Nations to take action in the absence of any action by the powers who were

¹⁶United States representative to the United Nations Warren R. Austin's address at the American Association for the United Nations, September 20, 1947, DSB, 17 (Sept. 28, 1947), pp. 626-30.

¹⁷Speech by Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet representative to the United Nations, at the General Assembly, Nov. 13, 1947. United Nations, Official Records, Second Session, G.A., Vol. II, p. 822. Also, see A. Y. Vyshinsky's speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Sept. 23, 1947, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korean Question, pp. 33-34; also, see U.S. Department of State, Charter of the United Nations, Report to the President on the Results of the San Francisco Conference, Dept. of State Publication 2349, pp. 161-165.

directly responsible for the settlement. The United States maintained that the United Nations had the "power and authority" to discuss any matters within the scope of the Charter.¹⁸ Moreover, Korea was not an enemy state but "a free country" as declared explicitly by the Commander of the Soviet Army on the first day of occupation.¹⁹

In addition to the majority support available at the United Nations and the competence of the U.N. Organization to take up the Korean question, the strong desire of the United States to get itself extricated from Korea justified its action at the United Nations. Any action in the United Nations along the American line could have relieved the United States of the dilemma she had faced since the unprepared occupation of south Korea in late 1945--the dilemma of keeping Korea out of the control of Soviet Russia despite the fact that America's national interest in Korea was extremely minimal.

Many Americans had thought since the occupation that they assumed responsibility in spite of the absence of any positive interest in Korea. Extremes of both

¹⁸See Warren R. Austin's address, DSB, 17 (Sept. 28, 1947), pp. 626-630.

¹⁹Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (Tokyo, 1962), p. 8.

right and left wings in south Korea had been a constant source of political unrest. The American program of establishing a strong, moderate political group as the basis of the political stability of south Korea failed twice.²⁰ Economic unrest and hardships were intensified by the division of the country and the little exchange between the two zones. American aid that amounted to more than \$200 million since the beginning of the occupation had largely been limited to the disease and unrest formula.²¹ The first long-term, \$600 million economic aid plan recommended by the Special State-War (Inter-Departmental) Committee in February, 1947, was defeated by the Congress. Aid to Korea was then included in an appropriation for the fiscal year 1948 for government and relief in Germany, Austria, and Japan.²²

By the time the Korean question was referred to the United Nations, Korea had become a political and economic liability to the United States. But interminable commitments had to be avoided. As the political

²⁰The South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly was no less critical with the Military Government than the preceding Representative Democratic Council. For activities of the Assembly, see South Korean Interim Government Activities.

²¹Dept. of State, Korea, 1945-48, p. 39.

²²F.R., 1947, VI, p. 786.

adviser, Joseph E. Jacobs, argued in September, 1947, it was pressing to the United States to determine quickly when and how to relieve itself of the responsibility. More important, the decision of the strategists, as he contended, "should carry much weight as an offset against the danger of loss of prestige."²³

The strategic concept of the United States with regard to Korea remained much the same as it had been at the time of the Potsdam Conference. The basic points were that the United States had little strategic interest in Korea, and that Korea could possibly be only a military liability to the United States. In case of hostility in the Far East, American forces in Korea could not be maintained without substantial reinforcement, which was almost impossible to be realized at that time. Any offensive operation the United States might wish to conduct on the Asiatic continent most probably would by-pass the Korean peninsula. Moreover, it was believed that any hostility in and around Korea could be neutralized by air action, which was more feasible and less costly than large scale ground operations. These considerations led the JCS to advise, in September, 1947, that the two divisions stationed in Korea could well be used elsewhere. "The withdrawal of these forces from Korea," the JCS asserted, "would not impair the military position of the

²³Ibid., pp. 805-6, September, 1947.

Far East Command unless . . . the Soviets establish military strength in south Korea capable of mounting an assault in Japan."²⁴ No immediate danger, military or political, was foreseen in Korea. Potential danger of the Korean military situation to America's strategic interest in a long-term basis, as pointed out by General Albert C. Wedemeyer in his report to the President, was largely discounted by the American government.²⁵ Thus, limits of military manpower, the rather slight strategic value of Korea, lack of immediate military threats, and the large expenditure in continuing military occupation, all justified an early pull-out from Korea, and became a basis of the firm stand of the United States in the United Nations.

In the meantime, south Korean politics were inflamed again by the issue of troop withdrawal. The American program of a general election under the supervision of the United Nations and the Russian proposal of an immediate withdrawal of all occupation forces from Korea were the main source of controversy. Although a clear-cut line of distinction is impossible to draw,

²⁴JCS 1483/44, Sept. 22, 1947, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 13, pp. 368-369; also, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal's memorandum to the Secretary of State. F.R., 1947, VI, pp. 817-818.

²⁵Albert C. Wedemeyer, Report to the President: Korea (Washington, 1951), pp. 6-7, 8, 13, 14, 23-24, 25.

there were roughly four large responses among the Koreans in connection with the issue of troop withdrawal and unification of the divided Korea. The first group, consisting mainly of the moderates and represented by Kim, Kiusic, the chairman of the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly, favored a general election under the supervision of the United Nations Commission. Even though some rightists of this group favored an election in south Korea alone if the Soviet Union continued to refuse to admit the United Nations Commission into north Korea, this group generally tended to discount the possibility, and the serious effects, of a boycott of the election by the north Korean Communist authorities.²⁶

The second group consisted of the extreme rightists represented by Syngman Rhee. This group demanded an immediate general election in south Korea alone. Rhee asserted that the Soviet Union would probably boycott a general election in north Korea and so, there would in the long run be an election in south Korea alone.²⁷ Rhee had favored holding an election in south Korea even before the Korean question was referred to the United Nations. He continued to request General

²⁶ A statement on November 22, 1947, SKIGA, No. 26 (Nov., 1947), p. 188.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

Hodge to dissolve the Coalition Committee which, according to his accusation, was formed only for the purpose of inducing the Soviets to resume discussion at the Joint Commission.²⁸ Rhee who was disliked and rejected by the Military Government ever since the negotiations bogged down at the First Joint Commission now seemed determined to enlarge his political influence in south Korea. There were rumors, possibly spread by his group, that the State Department backed him.

The third group, which was a mixture of extreme rightists, moderates, and leftists, advocated a joint meeting of north and south Korean political leaders to consult on the means of unification and independence of Korea. They demanded lifting of the 38th parallel in order to enable the Koreans to have a free, equal and direct general election to set up a national assembly and an independent government. An election under the supervision of the United Nations was thus rejected implicitly by them.²⁹ This group, however, lost its influence by the end of November as several influential rightist parties departed from it and joined the first group in supporting the United Nations Commission.

²⁸Jacobs' report to the Secretary of State, October 9, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 838.

²⁹SKIGA, No. 26 (Nov., 1947), pp. 189-91.

The last group was represented by the South Korean Labor Party, the Communist party of south Korea. It maintained its previously announced stand that immediate withdrawal of American and Soviet troops was the only way to independence.³⁰

However, the principle of withdrawal of foreign troops was supported by almost every party and organization of south Korea because they identified the presence of occupation forces as the source of prolonged division of their country. The Korean people were dissatisfied in general with the failure of the Joint Commission, and became more skeptical of the ability of the occupation authorities to end the prolonged division of their country.³¹ Every party and organization desired to play a decisive role in the nation building to the exclusion of those who dissented. Blinded by the glittering hope and pressed by the need of achieving the long-awaited independence, they tended to underestimate the chance of civil strife in case the achieved independence did not

³⁰

Ibid., p. 191.

³¹ Syngman Rhee was opposed to mutual withdrawal until the Red Army in north Korea was disbanded under joint supervision, and demanded that the U.S. maintain a small force of security in south Korea until a government was organized, F.R., 1947, VI, p. 819; former Secretary of State Byrnes had a similar view on mutual withdrawal of troops, James Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, p. 223.

satisfy other parties, particularly between north and south Korea and between the extremes of both wings.

It was rather the Americans on the spot who were more sensitive to the foreseeable result of hasty withdrawal of troops from Korea. General Wedemeyer had already warned of the possibility of north Korean military invasion of south Korea or large scale, Communist-inspired riots and revolutionary activities in south Korea to the detriment of America's strategic interests. The Soviet-equipped and trained North Korean People's Army was reported far superior in number and equipment to the U.S.-organized Constabulary of south Korea.³² A highly placed American military authority in Korea was quoted by the New York Times to have affirmed the report of a north Korean plan to attack south Korea in force after withdrawal of the Soviet and American forces.³³ Doubts were voiced even in January, 1948, as to the advisability of taking action to effect a direct reduction in the military forces in Korea beyond the estimated projected Korean troop strength necessitated by current manpower shortages.³⁴

³²Wedemeyer, Report to the President, p. 6.

³³The New York Times, October 27, 1947.

³⁴January 2, 1948, CCS 383.21, Korea, Section 13. According to the projection, the American troop strength, assuming no replacement, by the end of June, 1948, was to be 17,225.

In any event, the United States moved quickly and determinedly at the United Nations to minimize bad effects of liquidating its commitment in Korea. The Soviet delegation of the United Nations made it clear that they would be unable to work with the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea unless their proposal to invite Korean representatives to the discussion of the Korean question at the United Nations was accepted.³⁵ The United States fully envisaged that there would be no election in north Korea if Soviet Russia continued to oppose it.³⁶ Chances for compromise and cooperation between the United States and Soviet Russia were growing remoter still as the delicacy of the Korean question was exposed without reservation before the world.

Several assumptions can be made in understanding the firm attitude of the United States toward Soviet Russia. The United States possibly thought that Soviet Russia would come to terms finally, or that the Russian position could be regarded lightly in view of its allegedly weak ground or the superior military and economic power of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet

³⁵United Nations, Official Records, Second Session, GA, Vol. II, pp. 823-832.

³⁶Lovett's letter to the United States Embassy in U.S.S.R., Sept. 4, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 779.

Union. In either case, the United States was firmly determined to take advantage of the United Nations to mobilize political and psychological pressures on the Soviet Union. Furthermore, this firm stand regarding the Korean question seemed in accord with America's firm policy against Communism in other parts of the world. Following the Truman Doctrine, the arms embargo to China was lifted and plans of economic aid to the Kuomintang government received favorable responses both in Congress and the Administration. The Marshall Plan was materialized in September, and thoughts were being given to NATO that would give a military muscle to the European recovery plan.

The United States finally succeeded in passing to the United Nations "a responsibility which the United Nations was far too weak to assume, and which the United States was unwilling to continue to carry."³⁷ But the result was a further solidification of the unnatural division of Korea. The Korean situation had so developed during the two years of bilateral occupation and bilateral negotiation as to preclude any possibility of agreement either at the bilateral conference or the United Nations. Korea had become a victim of cold war.

³⁷ Leland M. Goodrich, Korea: A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations (New York, 1956), p. 41.

The Korean question became essentially an international issue as the American resolution on Korea was adopted overwhelmingly at the United Nations. A majority of member states sided with the United States argument that the Russian proposal only delayed a solution of the Korean question one more year, for election of the representatives of the Korean people appeared impossible before the current session of the General Assembly expired.³⁸ The cold war impasse on Korea was now moved to a wider plaza of the United Nations, heading swiftly for a unilateral solution as if any solution whatever justified the results.

In accordance with the resolution of November 14, 1947, nine member states were designated to the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea--Australia, Canada, China, El Salvador, France, India, the Philippines, Syria, and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. No definite reason was given as to why these countries were selected. Except for China, none of these nations had any direct concern or interest in Korea. Understandably, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic refused to take its seat in the Commission. Canada was reluctant to join the

³⁸Address by John F. Dulles, Nov. 13, 1947, Dept. of State, Korea, 1945-48, pp. 62-63.

Commission on the alleged ground that its concern was in Europe and "did not want to waste its strength ineffectually" in other areas.³⁹

But, as is clear from the discussions at the General Assembly, the more fundamental question with regard to the Temporary Commission lay in the fact that the two nations directly concerned did not participate in the Commission, thus giving an impression of putting off the responsibility on such a weak Commission. The United States argued that a third party which was not directly involved in Korea had better chances of success. The United States' proposal rested on the premise that the two occupation authorities were responsible as members of the United Nations for cooperation with the Commission.⁴⁰ But the Soviet delegation made it clear repeatedly during the discussion that Soviet Russia would not cooperate with the Commission under the circumstances.

The resolution itself lacked clarity on some vital points despite the heated discussion prior to

³⁹Conversation between W. L. MacKenzie King, the Prime Minister of Canada, and U.S. Ambassador to Canada Ray Atherton, Dec. 27, 1947. F.R., 1947, VI, p. 880. Canada, however, decided to take part in the Commission; see F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1084.

⁴⁰Sections 6 and 7 of Part B of the resolution. United Nations, Organization and Procedure, VIII, pp. 24-25. Also, see John F. Dulles' address, Dept. of State, Korea, 1945-48, p. 65.

adopting it. The resolution stipulated that an election should be observed by the Commission but made no provision for the possibility that one of the two occupying powers in Korea might refuse to cooperate with the Commission. It did not clarify, either, who was to conduct the election.

The resolution contained a stipulation regarding the invitation of the Korean representatives to the discussion, as requested by the Russian delegation. But the nature of the "invitation" was transformed totally in the processes of discussion and adoption of the resolution. What Russia meant originally was to invite the elected Korean representatives to the discussion before any action including the establishment of the UNTCOK was taken by the United Nations. What the final resolution stipulated was that the UNTCOK would observe the elections to determine the representatives of the Korean people to be invited to the United Nations.⁴¹ This transformation completely blocked any chance for Soviet Russia to cooperate with the Temporary Commission.

On the other hand, John F. Dulles, the American delegate, charged that the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic maintained in the First Committee that there were no duly elected representatives

⁴¹Part A of the resolution. United Nations, Organization and Procedure, VIII, p. 24.

of the Korean people in south Korea, and that it was only in north Korea that such representatives could be found. The United States could not accept the Russian proposal which would have brought to the United Nations "some representatives of north Korea and no representatives of south Korea where two-thirds of the Koreans live."⁴²

The United Nations' assumption of the work that once belonged to the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union did not change the pattern of controversy peculiar to cold war confrontation as demonstrated abundantly at the Joint Commission. And as long as this pattern remained unchanged, there was little hope of achieving the unification and independence of Korea regardless of who took up the question and where it was discussed. Radio Moscow broadcast on December 27, 1947, that the Soviet Union had not agreed to the American resolution because it was necessary "to protect the national interests of the Korean people," and charged that the establishment of the Temporary Commission on Korea by the United Nations was the result of a "dollar voting machine."⁴³ The United

⁴²John F. Dulles' address before the General Assembly, Dept. of State, Korea, 1945-48, p. 63; for the contents of the discussion, see United Nations, Official Records, Second Session, GA, Vol. II, p. 823f.

⁴³SKIGA, No. 27, pp. 172-173.

States asserted that the right of the Korean people to have an independent government must not be denied because of the lack of cooperation of the two occupying powers.⁴⁴ Despite the fact that the basic incompatibility of the two policies pursued by the United States and the Soviet Union was made clear, the United Nations established the Temporary Commission and delegated to it the responsibility of observing elections and reporting the result to the General Assembly.

The Temporary Commission began working from January 12, 1948, reaffirming that the elections had to be conducted by the occupation authorities, that the function of the Commission was to be limited to observing and advising the elections and reporting the result to the General Assembly, and that every opportunity should be taken to make it clear that the sphere of the Commission was the whole of Korea and not merely a section of Korea.⁴⁵ This was a declaration that the responsibility delegated to the Commission could be fulfilled only with the cooperation of the two occupation authorities in

⁴⁴Marshall's address at the General Assembly, Dept. of State, Korea, 1945-48, p. 47.

⁴⁵United Nations Document, A/AC.19/1; also, United Nations, First Part of the Report of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, Vol. I, p. 24.

Korea and that the Commission did not want to get involved in the Russo-American cold war controversy.

The Commission continued its efforts to obtain the cooperation from the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Military Command of north Korea, to no avail. On February 6, the Commission adopted a statement that formally noted its failure to establish contact with the Soviet Military Command and to gain access to north Korea. Then, on February 9, it adopted a resolution by a vote of 4 to 0, with 4 abstentions, to consult with the Interim Committee of the United Nations regarding whether or not the Commission should proceed to implement the program as outlined in Part II of the resolution of November 14 in that part of Korea accessible to it.⁴⁶

As the vote showed, there was a sharp division of opinion within the Commission regarding the power and authority of the Interim Committee to decide on any change of the course adopted by the General Assembly. The Soviet bloc was boycotting the Interim Committee. Besides, while agreeing in principle to observe elections "provided that it was determined that elections can be held in a free atmosphere,"⁴⁷ the Commission was

⁴⁶UN Document, A/AC.18/27; also, see UN, First Part of the Report, Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁷UN, First Part of the Report, Vol. I, p. 26.

divided on whether a free atmosphere existed in Korea at that time.

The delegates of Australia, Canada, India, and Syria hoped to explore all possibilities of mediation between the opposing Soviet and American position and to avoid any step which might harden the existing antagonism and the division of Korea resulting from it. The Chinese, Philippine, and Salvadoran delegates felt that there was no chance of such mediation being successful, and favored observing the elections in south Korea for the limited purpose of choosing representatives who might be consulted by the General Assembly, as stipulated in Part I of the resolution of the General Assembly.⁴⁸

The opinion of the Koreans was also divided on this issue. As reported by Subcommittee II which had contacted political leaders of south Korea, Yŏ, Un-Hong, brother of the late Yŏ, Un-Hyŏng and a leftist himself, and Kim, Ku, an extreme rightists, strongly opposed holding elections in south Korea only, arguing that elections could not be held in a free atmosphere and that the elections would delay and make more difficult the achievement of unification. The rightist groups, including

⁴⁸Report of K. P. S. Menon, chairman of the Temporary Commission on Korea, to the Interim Committee, UN Document, A/AC.18/28.

Syngman Rhee, asserted that elections should be held in south Korea without regard to what happened in the north.⁴⁹

General Hodge and the Military Government people were strongly in favor of holding elections under the supervision of the United Nations Temporary Commission in south Korea alone.⁵⁰ They argued that after the UNTCOK came to Korea, north Korean authorities had visibly intensified their efforts to denounce any effort by the Commission. For one thing, the North Korean People's Assembly announced on February 7 establishment of the Korean Provisional Constitution Drafting Committee and that a special session of the People's Assembly would be convened in the middle of March for the purpose of discussing and adopting the provisional Korean constitution.⁵¹ In south Korea, the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly had also been working on a temporary constitution, despite the fact that the Military Government did not accord high priority to drafting a constitution.⁵² General Hodge judged that any chance for

⁴⁹For the contents of consultation with the political leaders of south Korea, see UN Document, A/575/add. 1, p. 58f; also, F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1099f.

⁵⁰F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1127.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 1122-1123.

⁵²Summation, USAMGIK, No. 22, p. 17.

cooperation between the two zones was almost completely gone by then.

Another reason that General Hodge and the Military Government supported elections in south Korea alone was that they had kept assuring the Koreans after the American resolution was adopted at the United Nations that there would be a general election in south Korea under the supervision of the United Nations Commission only. This promise had been made in order to ward off earlier elections demanded by some right-wing Korean political parties.⁵³ Hodge now found it difficult not to support the elections he had promised.

The American government had already decided in favor of elections when the American resolution passed at the United Nations. Philip C. Jessup, the American delegate to the United Nations, argued at the Interim Committee that since the adoption of the General Assembly's resolution there had been no developments that could not have been foreseen. Though the United States still hoped that the Commission would not be prevented from performing its functions in all of Korea, the American government, Jessup said, was not opposed to

⁵³See SKIGA, No. 26, p. 168; Military Governor William F. Dean's Press release, *ibid.*, p. 169.

having elections in that part of Korea to which the Commission had access.⁵⁴

The delegates of Australia and Canada dissented strongly. The representatives of these two nations questioned the legality as well as the advisability of the Interim Committee taking any action that would intensify the rivalry between north and south Korea. These nations were worried that any decision disregarding the political antagonism that existed between the south and north of Korea might throw the United Nations into difficulties from which it would be hard to get out without impairing the authority of the United Nations. The Australian delegate, for instance, argued that in the event of threats from north Korea, the United Nations might be forced to make a hard decision of either to support south Korea or to renounce responsibilities toward a government it had established.⁵⁵

The Interim Committee finally adopted on February 26 the American draft resolution to permit elections in south Korea only, by a vote of 31 to 2, with 11 abstentions.⁵⁶ Australia and Canada voted against it

⁵⁴UN Document, A/AC.18/SR. 6, p. 6; also, see Sec. of State Marshall's letter to the American Embassy in Australia, Feb. 9, 1948, F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1098.

⁵⁵UN Document, A/AC.18/SR. 9, p. 7.

⁵⁶For the contents of the resolution, see UN, First Part of the Report, Vol. I, p. 26.

and the resolution was adopted in the absence of Soviet Russia. Adoption of the resolution was to America another big step, as Jessup asserted, toward the solution of the Korean problem and making it known to the world that it was Soviet Russia who denied the Koreans the opportunity to elect their own government.⁵⁷ The resolution seemed to be a definite and final choice between two different approaches to the Korean problem, a choice strongly implied in the American resolution of November 14, 1947. The authority of the United Nations finally came to be used over the Russian opposition in implementing the American program to "give effect to the pledges made by the Allied governments during and after the war."⁵⁸

The American government had not always been satisfied with the proceedings of the Temporary Commission, particularly before the reaffirmation of the American position at the Interim Committee in February, 1948.⁵⁹ The Americans on the spot were more critical with the actions taken by some members of the Commission,

⁵⁷UN Document, A/AC.18/SR. 6, p. 6.

⁵⁸Lovett's message to Canadian Prime Minister King, Dec. 30, 1947, F.R., 1947, VI, p. 883f; also, Lovett's instruction to the American Embassy in El Salvador, Dec. 31, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 888.

⁵⁹Marshall's letter to the American Embassy in Australia, Feb. 9, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1099.

particularly the Australian and Canadian delegates. Supported by the delegates of India, Syria, and often of France, the two argued strongly against the American plan of holding elections in south Korea in case Soviet Russia continued to refuse cooperation with the Commission. The Syrian delegate was even quoted as saying that he would block American policy in Korea and sell Korea down the river to gain Moslem advantage on the Palestine question in the United Nations.⁶⁰ It was undisputable that the Korean question was far from providing the members of the Commission with a common ground of understanding.

Some of the members were extremely reluctant to assume the responsibility which, they believed, properly belonged to the United States and the Soviet Union. This reluctance continued even after the Interim Committee endorsed the principle of holding elections. Opinion was divided in the Commission as to whether it should accept the advice of the Interim Committee or to dissolve the Commission. March 1 was Korea's national holiday, and there was a wide-spread fear that the rightists would resort to violence if no decision was made soon on the elections by the Temporary Commission.

⁶⁰General Hodge's report to the Secretary of State, Feb. 14, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1110.

Under the circumstances, an informal meeting of the representatives present in Seoul was held on February 28, and in the absence of the chairman and the Canadian representative, decided unanimously to issue a public statement to the effect that the Commission would observe the elections in the area accessible to it no later than May 10, 1948, taking into account that the elections be held on the basis of a free atmosphere wherein democratic rights of freedom of speech, press and assembly would be recognized and respected.⁶¹ On March 3, General Hodge announced that elections would be held on May 9 in accordance with the General Assembly resolution and under the observation of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea. The decision made at the informal meeting of the Commission was confirmed officially on March 12 after three more days of debates following the return of the chairman and the Canadian delegate to Korea. The vote was divided again into 4 (China, El Salvador, India, Philippines) to 2 (Australia, Canada), with 2 abstentions (France, Syria).⁶² The debates and voting in the Commission demonstrated clearly that the Commission's final decision to observe elections in south Korea only was reached with much

⁶¹For the decision of the informal meeting, see UN, First Part of the Report, Vol. I, p. 27.

⁶²Ibid., p. 29.

reluctance and with full awareness of the dangers that lay ahead.

In early April, 1948, the National Security Council recommended to the President that the United States should be careful in pursuing its objectives in Korea so as not to get so irrevocably involved in the Korean situation that any action taken by any faction in Korea or by any other power in Korea could be considered as a casus belli for the United States, while not excluding the possibility of negotiation with Soviet Russia and encouraging continued United Nations interest and participation in the Korean problem.⁶³ It seemed that the Korean issue had become an integral part of America's East Asian policy, especially in connection with the situation in China from which America was going to disengage itself.

There was, however, a full awareness in the American government that the United States was morally committed by the spirit as well as the letter of United Nations resolutions to withdrawing its troops only after the creation of reasonably adequate native security forces, and under circumstances which would bequeath to the newly established government at least an even chance

⁶³Report of the National Security Council, "Position of the United States with Respect to Korea," April 2, 1948. F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1164f. This report was approved by the President. See n. 3.

of survival.⁶⁴ Plans for expanding, training, and equipping the south Korean constabulary as a means of providing, so far as possible, effective protection for the security of south Korea against any but overt acts of aggression by north Korea or other forces were strongly recommended by the National Security Council. Although every effort had to be made to reduce the drain on U.S. resources and to avoid underwriting a new Korean government to the extent that involvement in Korea might become so deep as to preclude disengagement, withdrawal of troops did not rule out the possibility of continuing post-withdrawal military and economic assistance to south Korea should such further assistance be deemed desirable in the light of developments.⁶⁵

While the preparation for a general election under the supervision of UNTCOK was on the way, with support from the Military Command and the Korean right-ists except Kim, Ku's group, opposition to the elections gained fresh momentum in March, 1948, as a North-South Leaders' conference received a favorable reaction among the Koreans. Kim, Kiusic, who resigned from the chairmanship of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in February, 1948, and became the chairman of the

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 1138.

⁶⁵Report of the National Security Council, *ibid.*, pp. 1168-1169.

National Independence Federation, and Kim, Ku, chairman of the National Congress, initially supported the United Nations Commission but opposed the separate elections in south Korea. These two leaders became the central force of the North-South Leaders' conference, joined by other groups of both right and left except Syngman Rhee's group.

A merger between Syngman Rhee and Kim, Ku failed in December, 1947, deepening the rupture between them.⁶⁶ But the moderate groups, having failed in November, 1947, in their effort to integrate under the Council of 12 Parties, continued to work together and finally organized themselves into the National Independence Federation, on December 20, 1947.⁶⁷ This integration of the moderates had been pushed persistently by the Military Government authorities, with the individuals in the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly having the leading role. The Korean Civil Administrator since February, 1947, and one of the leaders of the strong moderate Democratic Independence Party, Ahn, Chae-Hong, also joined the Federation.⁶⁸ Kim, Kiusic who at that time was the chairman of the Interim Legislative Assembly was elected chairman of the Federation. Creation of the Federation,

⁶⁶SKIGA, No. 27, p. 160.

⁶⁷SKIGA, No. 26, p. 189f (Council of 12 Parties).

⁶⁸SKIGA, No. 27, p. 157f.

however, put both the Military Government and the leaders of the Federation in a very delicate position because it was soon made clear that the former favored elections in south Korea if necessary while the official stance of the Federation was to oppose such elections.

The idea of North-South Leaders' conference had its root in the policies adopted by the Council of 12 Parties and then by the National Independence Federation on December 20, 1947,⁶⁹ in the wake of the failure of Rhee-Kim merger. Kim, Ku's National Congress never joined the National Independence Federation, but after the Interim Committee of the United Nations advised the UNTCOK in February, 1948, to proceed with elections in south Korea, Kim, Ku parted completely from Syngman Rhee and came to uphold a North-South Leaders' conference.

The North-South Leaders' conference was proposed officially to the north Korean authorities by Kim, Kiusic and Kim, Ku. But Kim, Il-Söng, chairman of the North Korea People's Committee, and Kim, Du-Pong, chairman of the Communist North Korea Labor Party, replied that they desired to meet only the fifteen political

⁶⁹The Federation's six policies included a meeting of North and South Korean political parties' representatives to expedite the establishment of a unified government, and immediate withdrawal of American and Soviet troops. Ibid., p. 158.

leaders of south Korea they chose. The fifteen consisted of two rightists, four moderates, three leftists, and six Communists belonging to the Communist-controlled South Korean People's Front. Kim, Kiusic and Kim, Ku lost much of the interest they initially had in the conference but felt that the conference was too important to be washed away.⁷⁰

The nature of the proposed conference was evidently changed when Kim, Du-Pong suggested that the conference, scheduled originally for a limited number of political leaders, would be transformed into one for hundreds of delegates of political parties that opposed the separate elections.⁷¹ Kim's statement opened in effect a way for the north Korean parties and organizations to send their representatives to the conference while many of the south Korean parties and organizations were excluded because of their position regarding the elections and the short time of notice. The two Kims of south Korea realized that the initiative of the conference was completely in the hands of the north Korean Communists.

⁷⁰A press statement by Kim, Kiusic and Kim, Ku, SKIGA No. 30, p. 155; for the political affiliation of those invited, see *ibid.*, p. 154, and SKIGA, No. 31, p. 157.

⁷¹SKIGA, No. 31, p. 158.

Kim, Kiusic did not decide to go to Pyongyang until April 20, one day after the conference actually began. Kim was quoted in the newspaper reports as being hesitant about going to north Korea because north Korea, according to Kim, was planning a Communist struggle by letting the Communists and leftists dominate the conference while he was entirely nationalistic.⁷²

The Military Government authorities learned on April 22 that S. H. Jackson, the Australian member, and George S. Patterson, the Canadian member, of UNTCOK called on Kim, Kiusic shortly before his departure and urged him to go to Pyŏngyang, saying that if Kim's or other reasonable terms were accepted, UNTCOK might postpone elections scheduled for May 10.⁷³ Anyway, Kim departed for Pyŏngyang on April 21.

It was immediately apparent that there was to be no discussion in the sessions. The various parties attending the conference submitted statements, which were read and adopted at the sessions, with no discussion or any question. Then, on April 23, the conference passed unanimously a resolution, the main points of which were the denial of the authority of the United Nations to take up the Korean question and called for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea.

⁷²Ibid., p. 159.

⁷³F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1180.

The finale of the conference was the meeting of the four Kims, which, in a communiqué, demanded elections after the withdrawal of foreign troops. The possibility of a civil war after the withdrawal of the occupying forces was definitely discounted by them.⁷⁴

It was possible that both Kim, Kiusic and Kim, Ku were sincere in their desire for the conference as the first step toward abolishing the 38th parallel and paving the way to unification. But the conference was a dismal failure because of the machinations of the Communists. The two Kims had no chance to discuss openly the future of Korea with the top leaders of north Korea. It became clear that the desire of the leaders of north Korea was not the same as that of south Korean moderate leaders.

The Military Government authorities were frankly worried about the possible effect of the North-South Leaders' conference. The possibility of a boycott of the elections by the moderates and some rightists was growing rapidly, and in such case it was certain that Syngman Rhee and his extremists group would benefit from the elections.⁷⁵ The American authorities in Korea had hoped that the moderates under Kim, Kiusic's leadership would develop themselves as the dominant

⁷⁴SKIGA, No. 31, pp. 160-162.

⁷⁵F.R., 1948, VI, p. 1170.

element in south Korean politics but that hope collapsed decisively as Kim and his group departed from the plan of the Military Government. Ironically, the Military Government now found that its policy was supported most enthusiastically by Syngman Rhee and his extremists group which it had endeavored to discredit ever since the First Joint Commission failed in May, 1946. Efforts by the Military Government to dissuade the Korean people from boycotting elections seemed ineffective.⁷⁶

The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea proceeded to prepare for the elections. Recommendations by the Commission regarding electoral laws and free atmosphere were accepted by the Military Government in general.⁷⁷ The Commission also began to make contacts with leading Koreans of various political parties in an effort to find out their opinion regarding the scheduled elections. In general, the Commission had enjoyed sufficient cooperation from the American authorities, and the elections took place on May 10, 1948.

Upon the conclusion of the elections, the Commission concluded that, having taken into account the

⁷⁶See Hodge's statement, *ibid.*, pp. 1172-1174.

⁷⁷UN, First Part of the Report, Vol. I. p. 31. The South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly had already passed an electoral law in August, 1947.

historical and cultural background of Korea and having observed elections of May 10, 1948, there existed in south Korea a reasonable degree of free atmosphere, that the elections were regarded as a step in the establishment of the independence of Korea, and that the results of the ballot of May 10, 1948, were a valid expression of the free will of the electorate in those parts of Korea which were accessible to the Commission and in which the inhabitants constituted approximately two-thirds of the people of all Korea.⁷⁸

As a result of elections, a National Assembly for south Korea came into being, and a national constitution was adopted by the Assembly on July 17. Upon this constitution was born a government for south Korea on August 15, 1948--a government predominantly conservative and outspokenly anti-Communist and anti-Russian. Ideological conflict in the context of the Russo-American cold war confrontation was sharpened further and continued to serve as the stumbling stone to the solution of the Korean issue. It was almost certain that a south Korean government would be countered by a Communist government in the north, which was actually proclaimed one month later. Pravda charged that "the American imperialists have openly demonstrated their

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 46-47.

intention to dismember Korea" after prolonged diplomatic preparation. The resolution of the Interim Committee, the Press asserted, was only one part of an overall plan for the transformation of south Korea into a base for American expansion in the Far East.⁷⁹

While recognizing that elections in south Korea only were far from ideal and satisfactory, the United States justified its policy in the light of the realities of cold war that had existed in Korea almost from the moment the two nations occupied the country. Under the circumstances, no solution seemed possible without sacrifice by one party.

Eventually, the United States, it appeared, was relieved of the burden it had assumed three years before. More significant, it was fulfilled under the auspices and with the overwhelming endorsement of the United Nations. But the solution had its limits in that the Korean question began and ended as a product of cold war. The implication of these limits were to be disclosed two years later.

⁷⁹Pravda, March 18, 1948, in University of Washington, Soviet Press Translations, Vol. III, No. 8, p. 227.

CONCLUSION

The presence of Russian troops in Korea during the last phase of the Pacific War and America's decision not to allow the Russians to occupy the whole of Korea turned the country into the only liberated nation that came under the bilateral occupation of the two super states which identified themselves as leaders of the two conflicting ideologies and social systems. This peculiar situation hopelessly entangled the Korean question with the cold war confrontation between the two occupying powers. A fundamental gap existed between the reality of Korea as perceived by the two occupying nations and the aspirations of the Korean people to whom cold war was but another power struggle.

Soviet Russia had a deep interest in Korea before the latter was annexed to Japan. When Japan was defeated in 1945 by the Allies including Soviet Russia, the Soviets naturally set out to reaffirm their interests in Korea. Russia's advantage over other nations was apparent. Japan was crushed completely, and China was torn by decades-long civil war. Great Britain showed little interest in Korea, and the United States had made it clear that she was not interested in Korea more than as

an occupying power whose responsibility would be relieved as soon as the task of repatriation of the Japanese and keeping order in its own zone was achieved.

The position of Soviet Russia in Korea was further bolstered by the existence of well-trained and well-indoctrinated Korean Communists who were ready to take over Korea for their own sake in line with Russian policy and interests. Many of these Communists endeavored in the initial stage to appear nationalistic by advocating anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. Militarily, the Red Army was in a position to demonstrate its strength to the Korean people, while the U.S. Army was still hundreds of miles away from Korea. More important, Soviet Russia was determined, especially after she entered the Pacific War, to improve her position in East Asia, including Korea. Even though Russia's policy in Korea might have still been amorphous at the time of occupation, to have a friendly Korea, possibly under Communist control, was one of her essential concerns.

By contrast, the United States occupied south Korea without any serious preparation or defined goals. Once the occupation began, however, the United States soon became aware that the problems emanating from dividing the occupation of Korea into two zones posed serious political and socio-economic problems distinct

from tactical ones. Pessimism due to the developments in the Soviet zone and the serious political division among the Koreans in the American zone grew day by day. Negotiations with the Soviets failed to bring agreement and the difficulties caused the United States to become more determined to search for a way through which America could withdraw from Korea without leaving her under Russian domination. Communist domination of China and Korea would portend, as Americans saw it, control of East Asia by the Soviet Union. But the mainland of Asia was not considered vital to America's national interests. Her national interest in Korea was minimal.

In south Korea, the American Military Government failed to maintain good relations with the Korean people. Communists and many leftists were dissatisfied with the Military Government because of lack of political and economic programs that would wipe out the remnants of the Japanese colonialism completely. The Military Government, on its part, took a strong position against the Communists and those leftists who allied themselves with the Communists. Rightists were discontented with the Military Government because, in their views, the latter was not fully anti-Communist. They asserted that the Military Government had to give full-fledged support to the rightists to counter the Russian-backed north Korean Communists. The moderate right and left, which were

relatively small in number and weak in influence, cooperated with the Military Government mainly because bolstering up the moderates as the center of south Korean politics was the basic policy of the Military Government, especially after the first Joint Commission.

The American Military Government authorities were oriented basically to anti-Communism, as was manifested in their attitude toward the Communists. But they did not support the extreme rightists who were the most anti-Communist because, among other reasons, doing so would certainly dilute the chances of agreement on the Korean issue with the Soviet Union. The extreme rightists of south Korea had advocated establishment of a south Korean government since the first Joint Commission ended in failure. Soviet Russia, on the other hand, made it clear that she was totally opposed to letting the south Korean extreme rightists have any voice in future Korean politics.

Thus, the Military Government was caught between the pursuit of liberal democracy as opposed to Communism and the desirability of achieving agreement on Korea with the Soviet Union. Lack of long-term policy added difficulties to drawing a broader support among the Korean people. The Military Government was a disappointment to those Koreans who had dreamed of exercising sovereign power as soon as the Japanese withdrew from Korea.

The impasse at the Joint Commissions of 1946 and 1947 made the United States anxious to put an end to America's drift in Korea. By the end of the second Joint Commission it had become clear that the positions of both the United States and Soviet Union in connection with the Korean problem were fixed.

In September, 1947, the United States found in the United Nations a means of achieving its objectives in Korea without impairing its prestige. The Soviet Union had so far been taking full advantage of America's lack of preparation and lack of long-term policy. Now the United States began to take advantage of the international organization which supported its policy. Taking the Korean question to the United Nations seemed in accord with America's long-held policy of internationalizing the question to forestall any power struggle in Korea. The American government chose not to delay further realization of the commitment it had made to Korea during the war. Also, American leaders believed that the United Nations should have the authority and power to solve the questions which could not be settled between the member states concerned. Thus, the American decision to take the Korean question to the United Nations not only resolved America's dilemma in Korea but appeared legitimate on both moral and legal grounds.

The China situation was deteriorating rapidly in 1948 despite American assistance to the Kuomintang Government. America was more and more identified as a loser in China. There was a growing concern in the American government over the necessity of modifying America's postwar Japanese policy, and restoring the Japanese economy. The call for a change appeared in the Strike Report and the Johnston Report. It seemed that in 1948 a more positive reevaluation of the American policy in East Asia was being considered by the American government, justified by the changing situation in that area and the Congressional cooperation the Truman Administration enjoyed in regard to East Asia.

In 1948 it became clearer that the United States wished to free itself of responsibilities in Korea by withdrawing. The United States finally restored independence to the Koreans. Though American leaders were fully aware that a government in south Korea was not a satisfactory result, they hoped that this government could at least be the initial step toward non-Communist unification. They justified the establishment of the south Korean government by pointing to the unlikelihood of reaching an agreement with Soviet Russia.

Second, the United States finally relieved itself of the burden it had assumed in Korea. The

American government had concluded that Korea was a political and military liability to the United States. Involvement in south Korea was entirely unacceptable to the American people and the government both politically and emotionally. Under the circumstances, extrication from Korea without bad effects was made the ultimate goal of the United States policy in Korea. With the endorsement of the United Nations, the United States finally paved the way to pull out of Korea entirely and gracefully.

Third, the Korean question became tied up with the United Nations and with it moved the legal responsibility toward the south Korean government to the international organization. The United States still felt a moral responsibility in Korea, especially when it was certain that the north Korean People's Committee would assume the function of a government more explicitly and that south Korea was overwhelmingly inferior in military strength of north Korea. The American government was also mindful of the weakness of south Korea's economy. But, basically, the responsibility for the situation after the withdrawal of troops fell upon the United Nations that created a south Korean government.

Later events demonstrated, however that the United States had not extricated herself completely from Korea but rather had sown the seeds of a new commitment

in East Asia. Even though the United States had little choice other than setting up a south Korean government in the face of Soviet non-cooperation, a government that would be unable to exercise its administrative authority over the whole of Korea was certain to perpetuate the political and ideological division of Korea, to the detriment of the peace and stability of the Far East.

All these developments within and without the United Nations were brought about in defiance of the reality that Soviet Russia was one of the two occupation powers of Korea. United States policy had majority support in the United Nations but the feeling in the United Nations was that the American plan could be effective only with the full consent of Soviet Russia. The United Nations endorsed the American plan despite the fact that they were fully aware of the impossibility for the United States to obtain Russian consent. Any plan that would leave out Russia in the attempt to resolve the Korean question was unrealistic.

Thus, the cold war confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union--Russia's unbending insistence of seeing a friendly Korea, preferably under Communist control and America's persistent desire to get out of Korea without leaving the country under Communist control--contributed essentially to solidifying

the division of Korea. The two occupying powers stuck stubbornly to their own policies and subordinated the interest of Korea to theirs. As a result, both of them failed to fulfill their commitment, moral or otherwise, because the establishment of two separate governments in Korea was by no means the real solution of the Korean problem.

With the two governments in Korea, the Korean situation became one in which there was neither winner nor loser. An internal struggle in Korea was inevitable.

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