

The Korean War

At the close of the Second World War the U.S. stood at the pinnacle of power — both economically and militarily. No nation on earth could seriously challenge the might of the U.S. In 1945 General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, reported to the Secretary of War:

Never was the strength of American democracy as evident nor has it ever been so clearly within our power to give definite guidance for our course into the future of the human race.

At the conclusion of the world's second global conflict (which resulted in the deaths of approximately fifty-five millions) the Anglo-Saxon, democratically ruled nations of America, Britain, and the Commonwealth, plus the other Western Democracies were powerful enough to maintain peace and order in the world.

When President Truman first took office in 1945, he made it clear that under his leadership the U.S. would not be pushed around by Stalin and the Communists.

But somewhere along the line President Truman appears to have veered away from his original resolute firmness. When the Communists confronted the United Nations in the Korean struggle, the U.S. lost its nerve. Neither the U.S. President nor the top civil and military leaders in Washington appear to have grasped the full significance of the situation in the Far East.

Only a few military men, such as General Douglas MacArthur, really understood the Oriental mentality. They realized that America and the Western democracies would have to stand up to the Communists with firmness, with unflinching resoluteness, or all of the Far East would eventually fall under the heel of Communism.

Causes of the Korean War

Japan gained control of Korea in 1895, but when the Allies defeated her in 1945, both the U.S. and Russian forces moved into Korea. The Russians occupied Korea north of the 38th parallel (north latitude), and U.S. troops occupied Korea to the south of that parallel.

In 1947 the United Nations General Assembly declared that elections should be held throughout Korea in order to choose *one* government for the entire country. Since Russia opposed the U.N. resolution, free elections were never held in North Korea, but elections resulted in a democratic government being established in the south.

The Communists set up a government in the North, called the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. They then built up a strong army, receiving Russian military aid.

America withdrew her troops from South Korea in June, 1949. The Communists of North Korea believed this was the signal for them to attack.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea. On June 30th President Truman authorized the use of American land, sea and air forces to aid South Korea. He had authorized U.S. air and naval support on June 27th.

At the same time the U.S. requested the United Nations Security Council to send UN troops to help defend the integrity of South Korea. At the time, the Russian delegation to the UN was boycotting the Council. When the final vote was taken, the Security Council voted to send UN troops to help oust the Communist aggressors from South Korea.

The Korean War was the very first war in which a world organization played a military role. This Korean conflict was the first major challenge for the young United Nations — which had only been born five years earlier.

Sixteen United Nations countries eventually sent troops to help the South Koreans, and military aid, food or equipment was contributed by forty-one countries.

It should be noted, however, that the United States contributed more than *90 percent of all the troops*, military equipment, and supplies during the entire Korean War! Communist China eventually entered the war on the side of North Korea, and Soviet Russia supplied military equipment to the North Koreans.

The Korean War turned out to be one of the bloodiest wars in history. During that see-saw war, South Korea lost about one million civilians, and several millions were made homeless. In addition, South Korea had about 400,000 casualties — with 58,127 killed and 175,743 wounded. Another 166,297 were missing in action.

The *United States* sustained 162,708 casualties, with 54,246 dead, 103,284 wounded, and 5,178 missing.

Other UN countries had a total of over 17,000 casualties.

But Communist casualties were much higher. Communist North Korea sustained 624,000 casualties, with 522,000 dead and 102,000 of their men taken prisoners. Communist China sustained 967,000 casualties, with 945,000 dead, and 22,000 prisoners taken by their enemies.

All told, the United Nations forces sustained a little over a half million casualties; but the Communist casualties numbered nearly three times that figure.

Outbreak of Korean War

When North Korea attacked South Korea, the Communist North Koreans had an army of 135,000 men, many of whom were battle-toughened soldiers who had fought in Russia and China during World War II. North Korea also had airplanes, artillery, and tanks.

The South Korean Army numbered about 95,000 men, most of them inexperienced and poorly trained. They had few planes or heavy guns — and no tanks!

The combined UN forces, at their peak strength, amounted to almost 1,110,000 men. About 590,000 of them were South Koreans, and approximately 480,000 were Americans. Roughly 39,000 came from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Great Britain, The Netherlands, South Africa, Turkey and other UN member countries.

The North Korean Army grew to over 260,000 during the war, and Communist China sent well over a million troops to help them.

When General MacArthur learned of the North Korean attack on South Korea, he said it was as though he was having a nightmare:

How, I asked myself, could the U.S. have allowed such a deplorable situation to develop? I thought back to those days, only a short time before, when *our country had been militarily more powerful than any nation on earth*. General Marshall, then Army chief of staff, had reported to the Secretary of War in 1945: "Never was the strength of American democracy as evident nor has it ever been so clearly within our power to give definite guidance for our course into the future of the human race." But in the short space of five years this power had been frittered away in a bankruptcy of positive and courageous leadership toward any long-range objectives. Again I asked myself, "*What is United States policy in Asia?*" And the appalling thought came, "*The United States has no definite policy in Asia.*"

When the Communist North Koreans attacked the South, the ill-equipped and ill-trained southern troops were sent reeling back. Before long, however, American troops joined the South Koreans. On July 5th American troops fought the North Koreans for the first time at Osan, about 30 miles south of Seoul.

With the approval of the UN Security Council, Truman named General Douglas MacArthur as Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations forces in Korea. MacArthur now was given command over all the Allies — Americans, South Koreans, and other UN troops.

General MacArthur directed operations from his headquarters in Tokyo. He named Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker (who was later killed in a

freak jeep accident) as field commander of the Allied Ground Forces in Korea.

As pressure mounted, the UN forces were driven back and back, until they only had a toe-hold left in the southeast corner of the Korean peninsula — the Pusan perimeter. The picture looked very dark.

The Inchon Landing

General Douglas MacArthur masterminded a brilliant surprise move that changed the course of the war. He launched the Inchon Landing on the west coast of Korea on September 15, 1950. This daring landing at Inchon was the first blow in a successful counter-offensive. The North Koreans were stunned. Their supply lines were severed.

Before long the Allies began fighting their way out of the Pusan perimeter, and headed north toward Seoul, driving hard.

Shortly afterwards the Allies, under command of MacArthur, had recaptured the South Korean capital of Seoul, and were poised to strike into North Korea.

MacArthur's UN forces attacked northward and had captured the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, by October 19th.

By November 24th, the Allied army had crushed most North Korean resistance and was moving northwestward toward the Yalu River — the border between Communist China and North Korea. Another Allied force advanced into northeastern Korea. Communist North Korea was as good as defeated! The war looked as if it was just about over.

On the brink of total victory, high government officials in Washington weakened in resolve. They let their vision be clouded by fear and vacillation. They forgot President Truman's high-minded words in October 1945 that the U.S. "shall not give our approval to any compromise with evil."

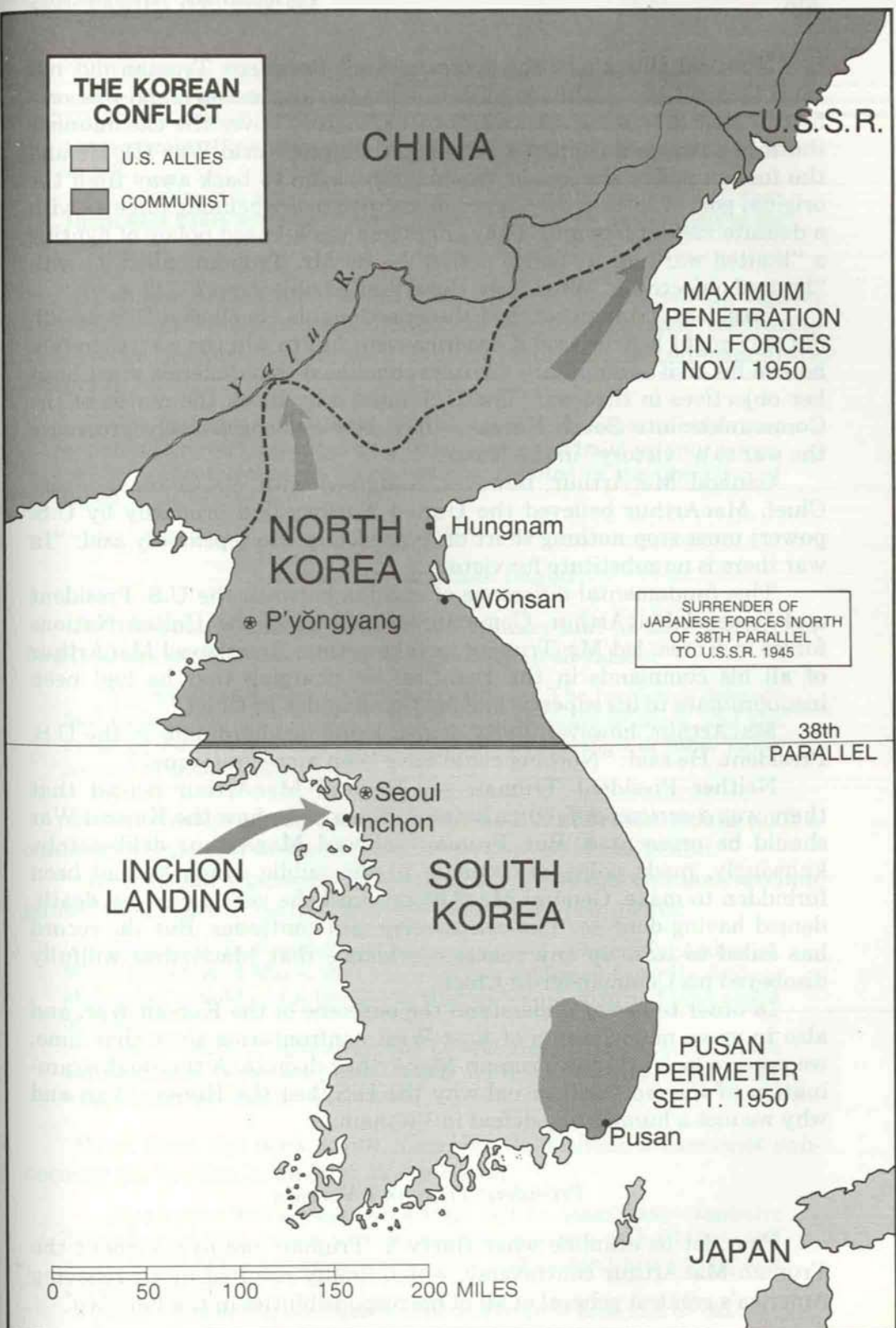
China, learning of the Allied *indecision* at the highest levels of command, concluded that she could safely send her Communist forces streaming across the Yalu River into North Korea to assist the beleaguered North Korean army. The Chinese learned that their factories, supply depots, ports, and railroads would *not* be attacked by American aircraft. Spies had learned that American policy was to limit the war, and under no circumstances would American forces attack China. Also, they knew Truman had ruled out *any* use of nuclear weapons.

The Truman-MacArthur Dispute

President Truman had begun his presidency with a *firm resolve* to stand up to Communism — not intending to let them push America around. His "get tough" policy was soon dampened down to an uneasy accommodation with the Communists.

THE KOREAN CONFLICT

- U.S. ALLIES
- COMMUNIST



How did this affect the Korean War? President Truman did not want General MacArthur to push the war too aggressively, and was very fearful that if he sought to win a total “victory” over the Communists (both Koreans and Chinese), this might trigger World War III. He and the foreign policy shapers in Washington began to back away from the original goal of hitting the Communists with overwhelming force — with a definite view of *winning*. They adopted a weak-kneed policy of fighting a “limited war” (or a “police action” — as Mr. Truman called it) with “limited objectives.” What were those limited objectives?

President Truman reached the questionable conclusion that an all-out war might be triggered if America went out to win the war, therefore he and his civil and military advisors concluded that America must limit her objectives in that war. The U.S. must only block the moves of the Communists into South Korea — but dare not aggressively prosecute the war to a “victory” in the North.

General MacArthur, however, disagreed with his Commander-in-Chief. MacArthur believed the United Nations (led primarily by U.S. power) must stop nothing short of *total victory*. He repeatedly said: “In war there is no substitute for victory.”

This fundamental difference of opinion between the U.S. President and General MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations forces in Korea, led Mr. Truman to take action. He relieved MacArthur of all his commands in the Far East — charging that he had been insubordinate to his superior and his Commander-in-Chief.

MacArthur, however, hotly denied being insubordinate to the U.S. President. He said: “Nothing could have been more grotesque!”

Neither President Truman nor General MacArthur denied that there was *a serious difference* between them as to how the Korean War should be prosecuted. But Truman believed MacArthur deliberately, knowingly, made policy statements to the public which he had been forbidden to make. General MacArthur, until the very day of his death, denied having done so. The controversy still continues. But the record has failed to turn up any concrete evidence that MacArthur willfully disobeyed his Commander-in-Chief.

In order to better understand the outcome of the Korean War, and also to grasp major events of East-West confrontation since that time, we need to look into the Truman-MacArthur dispute. A thorough examination of the facts will reveal why the U.S. lost the Korean War, and why we met a humiliating defeat in Vietnam.

President Truman's Version

First, let us examine what Harry S. Truman had to say about the Truman-MacArthur controversy, which finally resulted in his relieving America's greatest general of all of his responsibilities in the Far East.

I fired him (MacArthur) because he wouldn't respect the authority of the President. I didn't fire him because he was a dumb son of a (expletive deleted), although he was, but that's not against the law for generals. If it was, half to three-quarters of them would be in jail. . . .

I've given it a lot of thought, and I have finally concluded . . . that there were times when he . . . well, I'm afraid when he wasn't right in his head.

After MacArthur made a brilliant, surprise landing on the Inchon Peninsula, and made a swift march to the 38th parallel (capturing 130,000 North Koreans) President Truman sent him this commendatory telegram:

Few operations in military history can match either the delaying action where you traded space for time in which to build up your forces, or the brilliant maneuver which has now resulted in the liberation of Seoul. . . . *Well and nobly done.*

Conference at Wake Island

At this point, Truman came to the opinion that he and MacArthur ought to get together and to discuss the Korean situation:

I decided it was about time that we do so. The (expletive deleted) fool hadn't been back in the U.S. for fourteen years or more, and the messages I'd sent him through other people he somehow or other never seemed to understand. . . .

It was finally agreed that Truman and MacArthur would hold a conference (just two weeks before the election) at Wake Island.

Mr. Truman's personal physician, Dr. Wallace Graham, accompanied the President on that trip. He made these comments:

I was with the President, when he was going to meet MacArthur on Wake Island. And MacArthur was always a showman type. He deliberately tried to hold up his landing so that we would go in and land ahead of them.

Harry caught it right away, and he told MacArthur, "You go ahead and land first. We've got plenty of gas. We'll wait for you." And that's what happened. That's what we did.

Here, from the book *Plain Speaking*, is Truman's comment concerning the landing incident at Wake Island:

MacArthur was always playacting, and he wasn't any (expletive deleted) good at it. I knew what he was trying to pull with all that stuff about whose plane was going to land first, and I wasn't going to let him get away with it.

So . . . I made it quite clear that he was to go in first, and he did.

Then Truman added:

... After we landed, there was a welcoming party there on the ground, but I looked out the window, and MacArthur wasn't there.

Even after we stopped the engines and they opened up the door of the plane, the (expletive deleted) still didn't show up.

So I just sat there. I just waited. I'd have waited until hell froze over if I'd had to. I wasn't going to have one of my generals embarrass the President of the United States.

Finally, the son of a (expletive deleted) walked out of one of the buildings near the runway there. He was wearing those (expletive deleted) sunglasses of his and a shirt that was unbuttoned and a cap that had a lot of hardware. I never did understand... an old man like that and a five-star general to boot, why he went around dressed up like a nineteen-year-old second lieutenant. ...

The President was evidently quite concerned about the possibility of the Chinese Communists entering the war. He, therefore, enquired of MacArthur:

I asked MacArthur point blank if the Chinese would come in, and he said under no circumstances would they come in. He says, "Mr. President, the war will be over by Thanksgiving and I'll have the American troops back in Tokyo by Christmas," he went on like that.

Later, MacArthur issued a statement of his own in which he spoke of the possibility of Red China's "imminent military collapse..." This and other statements, after being told not to make them by the President, annoyed Truman and others in Washington.

Truman Fires MacArthur

Mr. Truman was about ready to take action:

I wanted, if possible, an even... better example of his insubordination, and I wanted it to be one that... everybody would recognize for exactly what it was, and I knew that, MacArthur being the kind of man he was, I wouldn't have long to wait, and I didn't. He wrote that letter to Joe Martin. And you've read it. He repeated that he wanted to use Chiang Kai-shek's troops and repeated that... all that stuff about there being "no substitute for victory."

President Harry S. Truman continued:

We had a series... several meetings with what they called the war cabinet.... I called everybody together, and I said, 'I'm going to fire the son of a (expletive deleted) right now.' And they all agreed. All except General Marshall. He said he was afraid... it might cause a lot of trouble with Congress as far as the defense budget was concerned. And there were some other arguments, but not too many. The only question was how to do it with the least fuss.

According to Truman, he then gave General Marshall all of the

MacArthur-Truman correspondence, after which time George C. Marshall concurred:

I spent most of the night on that file, Mr. President, and you should have fired the son of a (expletive deleted) two years ago.

Truman continues:

And so we went right ahead, and we did it. There were a good many details to be worked out. I asked General Bradley to be sure we had the full agreement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which he got; they were all unanimous in saying he should be fired. And he had to arrange to turn the command over to General Ridgway.

When Truman was later informed that MacArthur might hear of his decision to fire him and resign, Truman gave emphatic instructions: "And I told Bradley, I says, 'The son of a (expletive deleted) isn't going to resign on me, *I want him fired.*' "

That is Harry S. Truman's account of what happened between him and MacArthur at the Wake Conference, and in the aftermath of that conference leading up to his dismissing General MacArthur.

But MacArthur's version of what took place is quite different.

The MacArthur Version

General MacArthur has given a very full account of the events which led up to his being relieved of his duties in his autobiography, *Reminiscences*. Few in America have ever fully understood the actual facts of the Truman-MacArthur dispute. And it is not possible to understand how America lost the war in Korea, and how she has hesitantly hovered in the twilight area of fear and indecision ever since the policy of no-victory in Korea — until one sees the actual record of America's change of policy during the Korean War.

In his *Reminiscences*, MacArthur tells of his "frustration in Korea" at learning that America had switched from a policy of "victory" to that of accepting a *stalemate*. MacArthur asked: "What is U.S. policy in Asia?" Then he said he had to answer that question as follows: "The U.S. has no definite policy in Asia."

The distinguished general tells how the United Nations forces under his command finally succeeded in driving the North Korean Communist forces back north of the 38th parallel.

After MacArthur's UN troops retook Seoul, he and the assembled UN troops and dignitaries entered the South Korean capital building: "...I asked that all present rise and join me in reciting the Lord's Prayer."

Then MacArthur turned to Syngman Rhee and said:

Mr. President, my officers and I will now resume our military

duties and leave you and your government to the discharge of the civil responsibility....

The South Korean President, according to General MacArthur, then rose and clasped his hand as he said: "We admire you. We love you as the savior of our race." As he said this, tears streamed down his cheeks.

High Tributes to MacArthur

General MacArthur received many commendatory tributes from notable men from all over the world as a result of the brilliant Korean victories.

President Truman wired MacArthur:

I know that I speak for the entire American people when I send you my warmest congratulations in the victory which has been achieved under your leadership in Korea....

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are proud of the great successes you have achieved. We realize that they would have been impossible without brilliant and audacious leadership and without the full coordination and the fighting spirit of all forces and all arms....

The British Chiefs of Staff in London:

We send you our warmest congratulations on your *brilliant victory*. We have admired not only the skill with which you have conducted an extremely difficult rear guard action against great odds over many anxious weeks, but equally the bravery and tenacity with which the forces under your command have responded to your inspiring and indefatigable leadership. We believe that the brilliant conception and masterly execution of the *Inchon counter-stroke* which you planned and launched whilst holding the enemy at bay in the south *will rank amongst the finest strategic achievements in military history*.

Secretary of the Army Pace:

While the record of our Army throughout our national history is one of unfailing response to true leadership regardless of odds and obstacles, I doubt that the response of our forces in the crucible of Korea to your inspired, courageous leadership has ever been surpassed. *May God grant to you the full fruits of victory* which unfailing courage and determination so richly merit.

Prime Minister Yoshida of Japan:

The bold stroke in your strategy has changed overnight the whole picture of the Korean situation. To you, the indomitable and inspiring Commander-in-Chief, the world owes an infinite debt of gratitude.

General Eisenhower (then President of Columbia University):

I can not stay the impulse to express the conviction that you have again given us *a brilliant example of professional leadership*. Your fortitude in patiently gathering up the necessary reserves to make a significant counter-stroke at a time when everyone of those soldiers must have been desperately wanted on the front lines, and your boldness in striking deep into the enemy's vitals with your counter-offensive were particularly shining examples of the kind of thing I mean.

U.S. Admiral Halsey:

"Characteristic and magnificent. *The Inchon landing* is the most masterly and audacious strategic stroke in all history."

"The Greatest General"

From *U.S. General Spaatz:*

My highest admiration, as an old-time soldier myself, of the way our inadequate military forces have been applied in an impossible situation and achieved victory. One of the most, if not the most, significant military operations in history — the change from what appeared to us in the U.S. a helpless situation into victory. *We all pay tribute to the greatest general of all times.*

Sir Winston S. Churchill:

I never was apprehensive of a Dunkirk in Korea. In trading space for time in the counter-attack MacArthur did a perfect job.

Secretary of Defense Marshall and former Secretary of Defense Johnson both paid tribute to MacArthur's brilliant campaign victory. James F. Byrnes and John Foster Dulles also praised the UN victory under MacArthur.

General MacArthur then mentions that it was about this time that he "began to have misgivings as to the concepts by higher authority regarding the future of Korea." He says:

The rule of the day was timidity and appeasement which would not end the war, but increase the military efforts against us. I discussed my fears with General Walker, who agreed completely.

The Wake Conference

MacArthur's version of what happened at the Wake Conference agrees only partly with President Truman's account. The following comments by General MacArthur are from his autobiography *Reminiscences*:

I had been warned about Mr. Truman's quick and violent temper and prejudices, but he radiated nothing but courtesy and good humor during our meeting. He has an engaging personality, a quick and witty tongue, and I liked him from the start. . . .

The General then added:

Near the end of the conference, the possibility of Chinese intervention was brought up almost casually. It was the general consensus of all present that Red China had no intention of intervening. This opinion had previously been advanced by the Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department. General Bradley went so far as to bring up the question of transferring troops in the Far East to Europe, and said he would like to have two divisions from Korea home by Christmas for this purpose.

The Red China Menace

General MacArthur continued:

My views were asked as to the chance of Red China's intervention. I replied that the answer could only be speculative; that neither the State Department through its diplomatic listening posts abroad, nor the C.I.A. to whom a field commander must look for guidance as to a foreign nation's intention to move from peace to war, reported any evidence of intent by the Peiping government to intervene with major forces; that my own local intelligence, which I regarded as unsurpassed anywhere, reported heavy concentrations near the Yalu border in Manchuria whose movements were indeterminate; that my own military estimate was that with our largely unopposed air forces, with their potential capable of destroying, at will, bases of attack and lines of supply north as well as south of the Yalu, no Chinese military commander would hazard the commitment of large forces upon the devastated Korean peninsula. The risk of their utter destruction through lack of supply would be too great.

There was no disagreement from anyone. This episode was later completely misrepresented to the public through an alleged but spurious report in an effort to pervert the position taken by me. It was an ingeniously fostered implication that I flatly and unequivocally predicted that under no circumstances would the Chinese Communists enter the Korean War. This is prevarication.

Thus, General Douglas MacArthur strongly denied having said that the Chinese would not attack under any circumstances the UN forces in Korea. If MacArthur and his forces were given a free hand to punish the Chinese Communists in their sanctuaries north of the Yalu River, then MacArthur believed it unlikely that there would be a massive Chinese attack. But MacArthur was hand-tied so far as bombing Chinese military bases, ports, etc., north of the Yalu River.

Then General MacArthur mentions how surprised he was when Mr.

Truman (while at the Wake Conference) stepped up to the microphones, and read to those present a citation by which the President awarded MacArthur the Distinguished Service Medal. This was his fifth D.S.O. medal.

MacArthur revealed that he was not cheered by what he saw at the Wake Conference:

The conference at Wake Island made me realize that a curious, and sinister, change was taking place in Washington. The defiant, rallying figure that had been Franklin Roosevelt was gone. Instead, there was a tendency toward temporizing rather than fighting it through. The original courageous decision of Harry Truman to boldly meet and defeat Communism in Asia was apparently being chipped away by the constant pounding whispers of timidity and cynicism. The President seemed to be swayed by the blandishments of some of the more selfish politicians of the United Nations. He seemed to be in the anomalous position of openly expressing fears of over-calculated risks that he had fearlessly taken only a few months before.

It appears, from MacArthur's assessment of the thinking in Washington, that by this time timidity and accommodation with the Communists was the reigning sentiment. In his *Reminiscences*, MacArthur then explained the dilemma in which he found himself:

This put me as field commander in an especially *difficult situation*. Up to now I had been engaged in warfare as it had been conducted through the ages — to fight to win. But I could see now that the Korean War was developing into something quite different. . . .

The Defeated North Koreans

On November 6th, 1950 General MacArthur issued a special communiqué in which he outlined the situation in Korea:

The Korean War was brought to a practical end with the closing of the trap on enemy elements north of Pyongyang and seizure of the east coastal area, resulting in raising the number of enemy prisoners-of-war in our hands to well over 135,000 which, with other losses mounting to over 200,000, brought enemy casualties to above 335,000, representing a fair estimate of North Korean total military strength.

The *defeat* of the North Koreans and the destruction of their armies was thereby *decisive*. In the face of this victory for United Nations arms, the Communists, without any notice of belligerency, moved elements of Chinese Communist forces across the Yalu River into North Korea and massed a great concentration of possible reinforcing divisions, with adequate supply, behind the privileged sanctuary of the adjacent Manchurian border. The present situation therefore is this: While the North Korean forces with which we were initially engaged have been destroyed or rendered impotent for military action, a new and fresh army faces us, backed up by a possibility of large reserves

and adequate supplies within easy reach of the enemy but beyond the limits of our present sphere of military action. . . .

Then General MacArthur says that,

Despite the welter of *restrictions* placed upon me by Washington, I felt there remained one weapon I could use against massive Chinese intervention. I ordered General Stratemeyer to employ ninety B-29s on the following morning to *destroy the Yalu bridges* and cut this easy line of communication between Manchuria and North Korea, over which large armies of Chinese Reds could swarm. . . .

Those orders were never carried out! But why? MacArthur says:

An immediate dispatch came from Secretary Marshall countermanding my order and directing me "to postpone all bombing of targets within five miles of the Manchurian border." It seemed incredible that *protection* should be extended to the enemy, not only of the *bridges* which were the only means they had for moving their men and supplies across that wide natural river barrier into North Korea, but also for a 5 mile deep area on this side of the Yalu in which to establish a bridge-head. It would be impossible to exaggerate my astonishment, and I at once protested.

Policy of Appeasement

General Douglas MacArthur was by now quite concerned:

I could not have agreed more that the situation in Korea was fraught with disaster. *The danger was that by meeting naked force with appeasement* we would not only perpetrate military disaster in Korea, but would enable *Communism to make its bid for most of Asia*. This was a far larger, more complex, long-range problem than Washington seemed to comprehend.

MacArthur could see that the UN forces in Korea were in great danger unless something drastic was done. He says: "... This would mean the ultimate annihilation of our entire command. I estimated *our forces* would have to be at least *tripled* to cope with such a situation, but no promise of reinforcements by Washington was forthcoming. . . .

General MacArthur believed Washington's decision not to bomb the Yalu bridges was *sheer folly*:

Meanwhile, behind the curtain of *fright* and *frustration* thrown up along the Yalu by Washington, the Chinese Communists, over a period of twenty days, were stealthily surging over the Yalu bridges into position for an attack. Under cover of darkness, and the deadly pattern of anti-aircraft defense permitted by the UN restrictions, they poured more than 200,000 fresh troops into North Korea between November 6th and November 26th. *The order not to bomb the Yalu bridges was the most indefensible and ill-conceived decision ever forced on a field commander in our nation's history.*

Why did the Chinese Communists, who well knew America could have obliterated their forces by using her air power, pour their troops across the Yalu River into North Korea?

General MacArthur in his *Reminiscences* gives the answer:

That there was some *leak in intelligence* was evident to everyone. Walker continually complained to me that his operations were known to the enemy in advance through sources in Washington. I will always believe that *if* the U.S. had issued a *warning* to the effect that any entry of the Chinese Communists in force into Korea would be considered an act of international war against the U.S., that *the Korean War would have terminated* with our advance north. *I feel that the Reds would have stayed on their side of the Yalu.* Instead, information must have been relayed to them, assuring that the Yalu bridges would continue to enjoy sanctuary and that their bases would be left intact. They knew they could swarm down across the Yalu River without having to worry about bombers hitting their Manchurian supply lines.

General Lin Piao later published an official leaflet in China, in which he admitted the following: "*I would never have made the attack and risked my men and military reputation if I had not been assured that Washington would restrain General MacArthur from taking adequate retaliatory measures against my lines of supply and communication.*"

U.N. Sensitivities

What had caused an aggressive President Truman to begin espousing a weak-kneed approach toward the Communists? Why did he give up the "win-at-all-costs" approach for his "limited objectives"?

It is now clear that he had a great deal of pressure put on him from various members in the United Nations. Many were concerned that World War III might be triggered by an aggressive policy against Communist China. MacArthur didn't share that view, and it now appears he was right.

On November 29, MacArthur wired Washington urgently recommending that Chiang Kai-Shek's Formosa troops be used to help reinforce the UN forces in Korea.

MacArthur Says:

My recommendation, Washington replied, was under consideration, but a firm answer would be delayed because it involved "world-wide consequences." We shall have to consider the possibility that it would *disrupt the united position* of the nations associated with us in the United Nations, and leave the United States isolated. . . . Our position of leadership in the Far East is being most seriously compromised in the

United Nations. The utmost care will be necessary to avoid the disruption of the essential Allied line-up in that organization.

American officialdom in Washington was too concerned with *world opinion!* They appear to have been more concerned with what other nations were thinking, than with doing the right thing.

Truman Capitulates

Notice what happened: "United Nations member governments," said MacArthur, "refused to consent to the use of the eager, fresh troops offered by Chiang Kai-Shek, nor were sizeable reinforcements forthcoming from any other source. In a press conference, President Truman threatened once that he might make *atomic weapons* available to the UN command in this uneven battle, *but within forty-eight hours Prime Minister Attlee hurried to Washington, and nothing more was heard of it. . . .*"

These penetrating comments from the Supreme Commander reveals what was really taking place in Korea. MacArthur says:

This message (from the Joint Chief of Staff to consider "a withdrawal to Japan") seemed to indicate *a loss of the "will to win" in Korea. President Truman's resolute determination to free and unite that threatened land had now deteriorated almost into defeatism.* Washington planning was not directed toward methods of counterattack, but rather toward the *best way to run. . . .* The thought of defeat in Korea had never been entertained by me. It was my belief that, if allowed to use my full military might, without artificial restrictions, I could not only save Korea, but also inflict such a destructive blow upon Red China's capacity to wage aggressive war that it would remove her as a further threat to peace in Asia for generations to come.

MacArthur's Plan for Victory

On December 30th, MacArthur composed a reply to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in which he outlined a policy for *victory*:

. . . Should a policy determination be reached by our government or through it by the UN to recognize the state of war which has been forced upon us by the Chinese authorities and to take retaliatory measures within our capabilities, we could: (1) blockade the coast of China; (2) destroy through naval gunfire and air bombardment China's industrial capacity to wage war; (3) secure reinforcements from the Nationalist garrison on Formosa to strengthen our position in Korea if we decide to continue the fight for that peninsula; and (4) release existing restrictions upon *the Formosan garrison* for diversionary action, possibly leading to counter-invasion against vulnerable areas of the Chinese mainland.

Notice, however, that MacArthur was not suggesting that U.S. troops would invade the Chinese mainland. But he thought it good to let the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa loose on Communist China!

General MacArthur then added:

I believe that by the foregoing measures we would severely cripple and largely neutralize China's capability to wage aggressive war and thus *save Asia from the engulfment* otherwise facing it. . . . I am fully conscious of the fact that this course of action has been rejected in the past for fear of provoking China into a major effort, but we must now realistically recognize that China's commitment thereto has already been fully and unequivocally made and nothing we can do would further aggravate the situation as far as China is concerned.

MacArthur's disagreement with President Truman and with Washington brass was well known and tolerated. But he continued to irritate Washington with his suggestions for a more aggressive approach toward the Communists in China and Korea. He argued that the Russians were not in a position to do much, since they had only one link with Vladivostok. Their sole railway link could easily be severed, reasoned MacArthur. They were very weak in that area, and would not, therefore, risk their necks to save the Koreans or the Chinese.

Furthermore, reasoned MacArthur with devastating logic, the Russians were not in a position to challenge the U.S. They didn't have at the time sufficient numbers of atomic bombs to stand up to America. It would have been foolhardy to have confronted the U.S. and the Russians knew it.

No Substitute for Victory

The final straw that broke the camel's back (Harry Truman's back) was MacArthur's reply to a Congressman's enquiry concerning his views relative to the Far East.

Congressman Joe Martin (Minority Leader of the House of Representatives) wrote MacArthur on March 8th, requesting his views:

In the current discussions on foreign policy and overall strategy many of us have been distressed that although the European aspects have been heavily emphasized we have been without the views of yourself as Commander-in-Chief of the Far Eastern Command. . . .

Then the Congressman mentioned that he was enclosing

. . . a copy of an address I delivered in Brooklyn, N.Y., February 12, stressing this vital point and suggesting that the forces of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek on Formosa might be employed in the opening of a second Asiatic front to relieve the pressure on our forces in Korea. . . .

He further stated:

I would deem it a great help if I could have *your views* on this point, either on a confidential basis or otherwise. Your admirers are legion and the respect you command is enormous. May success be yours in the gigantic undertaking which you direct.

General MacArthur later explained that he felt it his *duty* (as befitting tradition in such matters) to answer Congressman Martin and furnish him with the information he had requested.

MacArthur's reply (the letter that caused him to be *fired* by Mr. Truman) is short and to the point:

My views and recommendations, with respect to the situation created by Red Chinese entry into war against us in Korea, have been submitted to Washington in most complete detail. Generally these views are well known and clearly understood, as they follow the conventional pattern of meeting force with maximum counter-force as we have never failed to do in the past. Your view with respect to the utilization of the Chinese forces on Formosa is in conflict with neither logic nor this tradition.

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

U.N. Impotence

General MacArthur then mentions that Congressman Martin, without consulting him, released his letter. "... There was an instant hue and cry that I wanted to spread the war. This put the cart before the horse — I only wanted to *end the war*, not to spread it. I had not started it, and many times had stated, 'Anyone in favor of sending *American* ground troops to fight on *Chinese* soil should have his head examined!' "

General Douglas MacArthur believed that much of the pressure which had been put on President Truman and other American leaders during this critical time was the direct result of UN pressure.

"... But the United Nations proved unequal to the task. After Red China entered the conflict, it yielded to *counsels of fear*, and abandoned pledge commitments to restore to the people of Korea a nation which was united and free," said the UN Supreme Commander.

MacArthur continued: "Such abandonment of principles by the UN in whose solemn declaration the peoples of Asia had placed such trust



General Douglas A. MacArthur served brilliantly in the Pacific theater both during and after World War II. He and Robert E. Lee were probably the two greatest American generals of all time. During the Korean War, MacArthur told President Truman and the world, "in war there can be no substitute for victory!" — ACME Photo

and faith, was *a catastrophic blow* to the hopes of the free world. Its disastrous consequences were reflected throughout Asia. Red China promptly was accepted as the military colossus of the East. Korea was left ravished and divided. Indo-China was partitioned by the sword. Tibet was taken almost on demand. Other Asian nations began to tremble toward neutralism. Sadly, we wasted the opportunity to retrieve the basic mistake of the 1946-1947 Marshall Mission in offering appeasement to the Red Chinese at the expense of Nationalist China, under the naïve concept that the Reds were only agrarian reformers”

MacArthur added:

. . . All this and more has followed from *the United Nations' fatal decision not to see it through in Korea*. The free world plunged from invincible position of moral strength into the confusion of uncertain bewilderment. We fostered a practice of *doubtful expediency* and the eventual misery of *timid appeasement*. The result was a tragic and precipitous loss in prestige.

Fear of China and Russia

The West and America in particular *lost face* when they changed their long-standing military policy from “win” and “victory” to that of accommodation and stalemate.

MacArthur says he was chided for regarding the Korean conflict a war and not as a “police action.” He asked:

How could Red China have been more at war against us? Every ounce of her military and economic force was thrown into the Korean struggle. Lacking naval and air power, she was incapable of anything more. She was already strained to the breaking point, a 100 per cent war effort against us. How can one reasonably say it is not war when approximately 150,000 Americans and many times that of our ally, South Korea, were killed or maimed? The preponderance of these casualties were inflicted by Red China.

Russian Weakness

The General continued:

Attempts have been made to justify the extraordinary military policy which placed our arms in a *strait-jacket*, based on the possibility that if we followed our tradition and fought to win, it might precipitate *Soviet Russia's entry* into the war. But the entry of Soviet Russia, or Red China, was a risk inherent in the *original decision* to intervene in Korea. . . . Her position in Siberia was of necessity defensive and highly vulnerable because of her limited and tenuous supply line. This consisted of a single railroad system which could be cut by air interdiction

almost at will. There was little local supply in eastern Siberia, and its military needs depended entirely upon this sole transportation system. At no place in the world would she have been weaker for battle. At this time, while *we had the atomic bomb, she had not yet developed its manufacture*. There was never serious danger of active Soviet intervention. The Russian policy is not to sacrifice its own troops, but to use those of its friends. The enormous expansion of Soviet influence since the end of World War II has been brought about without the Russian soldier firing a shot in battle

MacArthur said:

Approximately three-fifths of our casualties took place during the indecisive aftermath which followed my recall. It reversed U.S. military doctrine of a century and a half, from the *attack* to the *defense*, although the history of warfare shows the latter never attained more than an *indecisive stalemate*. It accepted at tragic cost the policy of *indecision* that in war there can be a *substitute* for victory. . . . All of this destroyed Oriental faith in Western fortitude, in Western determination, and in Western interest in Asia. This largely cost the free world its psychological gains which were the result of our World War II victory in the Far East.

Was MacArthur Insubordinate?

Nothing incensed MacArthur more than the false allegation that he had been insubordinate. He utterly rejected this charge:

Several years after my abrupt relief just when *victory was within my grasp*, the charge was made that I had been insubordinate. Nothing could have been more grotesque. It was completely repudiated by all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, my immediate military seniors in the conduct of the Korean War, who specifically denied under oath before the Senate Committee investigating the reasons for my recall, that I had ever committed such a breach of regulations. The committee itself was unanimous in its agreement. It was stated that General Bradley had charged me with such an offense. But General Bradley, in answer to direct questions by Senators George, Byrd, and Morse, three times swore that there had been no such dereliction on my part. . . .

It is clear that the Senate Committee which investigated MacArthur's dismissal from his commands by Truman, failed to find any proof that General MacArthur had been insubordinate!

The chairman of the British Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, gave this testimony concerning MacArthur:

The decisions MacArthur finally arrived at as regards the war in Korea were, I think, based on a Pacific outlook and, as such, in my opinion were right. He has been accused of taking actions without previous political approval, but he had been unable to obtain the political policy and guidance he had sought. To my mind a general who

is not prepared to assume some responsibility on his own, when unable to obtain political direction, is of little value.

How did MacArthur feel? He publicly stated on many occasions that he held no rancor or malice toward anyone on account of his being relieved of his commands; but he believed the charge of insubordination was untrue and he felt that the very manner in which it was done was totally wrong.

He wrote:

The legal authority of a President to relieve a field commander, irrespective of the wisdom or stupidity of the action has never been questioned by anyone.... Since the beginning of time, commanders have been changed, some through whim, some through cause, but never in history was there a more drastic method employed than in my relief — without a hearing, without an opportunity for defense, with no consideration of the past. Up to the moment of my recall, I had been receiving laudatory commendations from the President, publicly and through his liaison officer at my headquarters. No slightest opportunity was given me to explain my position to answer allegations or objections, to present my future concepts and plans.

Furthermore, the very manner in which this was handled was most unfortunate. MacArthur adds:

The actual order I received was so drastic as to prevent the usual amenities incident to a transfer of command and practically placed me under duress. No office boy, no charwoman, no servant of any sort would have been dismissed with such callous disregard for the ordinary decencies.

I was first appraised of the action through a press dispatch over the public radio. It is claimed that Washington tried to inform me, before announcing my relief to the public, through the Secretary of the Army, Mr. Pace, then on a visit to Japan and Korea, but could not reach him. This is incredible. Secretary Pace had been with me in my office just before, and had reflected a most complimentary attitude in Washington. He was in Korea at the moment in immediate message contact with my headquarters, which had similar contact with Washington.

Was President Truman right in relieving General MacArthur of his Far Eastern duties?

Many, both in America, and throughout the world, believe that President Truman's decision to relieve MacArthur of his Far Eastern commands was the biggest mistake of his presidency.

Frustration in Korea

Allied hopes for a quick end to the war disappeared when China had sent Communist troops against the Allies on November 25 and 26, 1950, and forced the Allies to begin their retreat from North Korea. With-

drawal from the North Korean capital of Pyongyang occurred in December.

About this time, General Walker was killed in a jeep accident. Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway took command of the Eighth Army on December 27.

Communist forces began to attack the South Korean capital of Seoul on New Year's Eve, and occupied the city on January 4, 1951. After retreating about 25 miles south of Seoul, the Allies dug in and ended their retreat.

The Allies reoccupied Seoul on March 14 without having to fight for the city. By June 1951 their advance had moved a short distance into North Korea.

At this point the whole pattern of the war changed. Both sides dug in and began fighting along a battle line situated a few miles north of the 38th parallel.

Even though truce talks began in July, 1951, fighting continued for two more years. During this period, neither the North nor the South made important advances, but many bitter battles for strategic positions were fought. This period of the Korean War is sometimes called the "Battle for the Hills." Infamous battlefields included Pork Chop Hill, Bloody Ridge, Old Baldy, Heartbreak Ridge and Finger Ridge.

"Containment" Defined

America's Allies in Europe were strongly opposed to the risk of igniting World War III by expansion of the war in the Far East. And various UN members were opposed to an aggressive policy against the Communists in Korea.

If America concentrated too much of her military strength in the Far East, instead of in Europe, they felt this would make them more vulnerable to a Soviet attack.

It is clear that the U.S. government at this point clearly modified its previous objectives in Korea. The goal was no longer to drive the Communists out of Korea, and the establishment of a democratic government over all Korea. The Allies decided they would be willing just to retain control over South Korea. In other words, the doctrine of "containment" of the Communists was given a new definition in Washington.

The War Continues

The war in Korea continued indecisively. General Ridgway had flown to Tokyo to replace MacArthur, and Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet became commander of the Eighth Army.

Before long Russian MIG-14 jets were supplied to the North Koreans. Dogfights became common. The U.S. began using helicopters to carry wounded men from battle zones to hospitals, and for other military purposes — including the carrying of troops into combat.

During the Korean War, the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps lost more than 2,000 planes. Over 1,000 Communist planes were destroyed by the Allies. It is estimated that Navy and Marine fliers killed about 100,000 Communist troops, and the U.S. Air Force fliers killed approximately 184,800.

Truce Talks Begin

When Jacob Malik, the Soviet delegate to the U.N. proposed a cease-fire on June 23, 1951, hopes for peace in Korea soared. General Ridgway (after being instructed by Washington) suggested that a meeting take place between Allied and Communist military officers to discuss a Korean truce.

The actual truce talks began on July 10 at Kaesong but were moved to Panmunjom on October 25. There was great difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory solution to the Korean impasse.

The main issue preventing a settlement was that of voluntary repatriation of prisoners. The United Nations insisted that prisoners on both sides be permitted to choose whether or not they would return to their homelands. Since many Chinese prisoners of the Allies had actually fought against the Communists during the Chinese civil war, they violently protested against a forced return to live under Communism. Also, some North Korean captives refused to return home. By the latter part of April, 1952, the truce talks were deeply bogged down over the issue of voluntary repatriation.

Eisenhower Becomes President

A number of incidents happened about this time which influenced the outcome of the Korean War. Dwight D. Eisenhower became President (1953-61) of the United States in January, 1953. He had visited Korea shortly before being inaugurated as President.

Joseph Stalin, the Man of Steel, died on March 5, 1953. After his death, Soviet leaders began talking of the possibility of settling disputes peacefully.

Why did the Communists agree to a truce in Korea? Why didn't they fight until they had driven the UN forces out of that ravaged land?

The well-known commentator and historian, Alistair Cooke, made this significant comment regarding America's involvement in the Korean War:



President Truman gives General Dwight D. Eisenhower a hearty handshake in Dec. 1951 at the White House. A little over one year later, Eisenhower moved into the White House as America's 34th President. — AP Wire Photo

The Korean War was *the first United Nations war*. It was to be the last in which the Americans would carry the brunt of the fighting. After two years they had had enough of it, and a year later General — by now President — Eisenhower stopped it. This was almost certainly done by *a secret threat to use tactical atomic weapons*, a move not reported until thirteen years later. It began to dawn on the old practitioners of *real-politik* at the United Nations that it was not the Security Council that kept the peace but America's possession of the atomic bomb — and, now, of the hydrogen bomb. . . .

The Korean truce talks were resumed on April 26, 1953. By now, the Communists were ready to accept voluntary repatriation. They agreed to let the prisoners indicate their choice by talking with the Neutral Nations' Representation Commission (which included representatives of Czechoslovakia, India, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland).

The fighting in Korea ended on July 27, 1953. A truce was signed. This truce established a two-and-a-half-mile wide buffer zone along the final battle line which divided the two sides. North Korea actually lost about 1,500 square miles of territory to South Korea in the settlement. Both North and South Korea agreed not to increase their military strength. A Military Armistice Commission (with representatives from both sides) was set up to enforce the terms of the truce. According to the truce, prisoners were to be exchanged, and a political conference would later be held at which a final settlement could be worked out.

In 1954, representatives of all the countries which had fought in Korea, and Russian officials, met in Geneva, Switzerland to draw up a permanent peace plan. But the negotiators failed to find a solution to the Korean impasse. They were unable to draw up any permanent peace plan, and found it impossible to agree on a satisfactory way of unifying Korea. Neither could they agree on the important questions connected with the withdrawing of foreign troops from Korea.

As a result of this total impasse, Both Communist and United Nations troops remained dug in on both sides of the buffer zone. To this very day a permanent peace treaty has not been signed.