



United States-United Nations Relations in the Korean War: *Focusing on the Conflict over Aid Operations and War Expenses*

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Abstract

The United Nations collective security was organized and deployed as a coalition force within a unified command system under the overall command of the United States under UN mandate. The US assumed most of the military and economic burdens of UN intervention in Korea, and sought comparable authority and leadership in return. However, this caused conflicts over Korean aid operations and the logistical support of participating UN member states. Such conflicts, however, did not necessarily debilitate the US. With its overwhelming productivity and military strength, the US led the United Nations Command and provided the logistical reservoirs for participating UN states. In addition, participating UN member states that experienced the magnitude of America's logistical support systems, military supplies, services, and equipment, became potential clients of the American military-industrial complex, just as countries that received American military aid. In a sense, the Korean War experience consolidated the contradictions of a Cold War peace that saw increasing reliance on the powerful economic and military prowess of the United States rather than on collective military action by an international organization. Consequently, the United States neglected the prospect for peace attainable through civil activities by the UN and UN organizations on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia.

Keywords: Korean War, aid operations, UNKRA, UNCACK, UNC, CINCUNC, logistical support, war expenses

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Introduction

The Korean War was the first case of military engagement by the United Nations (UN). Exemplified by the Allied powers during World War II and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, collective military action between two or more allied nation-states was common prior to the Korean War. The Korean War, however, was the first time that the United Nations as an international organization, not a military alliance, had to carry out large-scale military action.¹ Therefore, the Korean War functioned as a testing ground for the UN on two accounts. First, it would determine whether the UN, unlike the League of Nations, could be trusted as an instrument of substantial *peace-keeping*. Second, it would determine whether *peace* could be maintained through military action by the military and civil affairs forces of the UN and its agencies.

For this reason, the United States, in leading the activities of the UN military forces and agencies, often faced challenges in establishing legal or historical precedents. Similar challenges also arose around civil affairs initiatives that would lead to the sending of immense sums of relief supplies as well as post-war rehabilitation projects and the repayment for war expenses accruing from UN military action. This issue created significant problems in international relations as well as affecting Korea-US relations, American aid to Korea, and the Korean economy and society.

Few studies of the Korean War have dealt with this issue thoroughly. For example, *United Nations and the Korean War* (Yuen-gwa hanguk jeonjaeng), a compilation of papers from the KACUNS (Korean Academic Council on the United Nations System) conference in 2003, deals with the background and process of UN intervention, its impact on the UN system,

1. The United Nations peace-keeping operation began on May 29, 1948, when the United Nations Truce Promotion Organization (UNTSO) was established to monitor a cease-fire after the Palestinian War (or First Arab-Israeli War). On January 24, 1949, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was established and authorized to monitor bilateral relations that reached a state of truce after the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistani War in October 1947 (United Nations Peacekeeping website, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/>).

and the relationship between international economic organizations and the United States (Kang 2004). However, this work leaves questions concerning the conflict between the UN and the United States and the effects of UN intervention on Korea-US relations and Korean society relatively unanswered. *Hanguk hyeondaesa-ui jaejomyeong* (Re-thinking Modern Korean History), published by The Korean War Society, also deals with the role of the UN in the Korean War, however, it is entrenched in a traditionalist perspective, simply affirming the role of the UN in that War (Hanguk jeonjaeng hakhoe 2007). Studies that examine conflicts between the US and UN agencies, or participating UN states, also belong to the context of international politics or diplomatic history, usually focusing on the conflict between the United States and Great Britain (G. Kim 2000; Barnes 2014). Studies on the US and UN civil affairs organizations in the Korean War also point out the limitations of American and UN humanitarian aid, but do not connect with the analysis of the US-UN economic conflict (H. Kim 2010a; Lim 2019).

It is in studies on the occupational rule and administrative rights of the UN forces north of the 38th parallel that the research horizon has expanded. These studies highlight competing views between the US and the UN regarding the occupying government and the impact such contrasting visions had on South Korea-US relations (La 2000; Han 2010; Yang 2014). In particular, a study that examines US war expenditure problems around the advances to UN forces issue and South Korea-US relations, as well as a recent study on US military aid to South Korea, have deepened our understanding of the historical context and meaning of the US-UN conflict (H. Lee 2005; D. Lee 2019).

Building upon the above historiography, this paper looks at conflicts between the United States, UN agencies, and participating UN member states during the Korean War, focusing on aid operations and war expenditures. By doing so, this paper examines how these conflicts affected South Korea-US relations, US aid procurement to Korea, and, in turn, the Korean economy and society.

Outbreak of the Korean War and American-led UN Intervention

On June 25, 1950, the UN Security Council was convened immediately upon the outbreak of the Korean War. The Security Council, “noting with grave concern the armed attack on the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea,” in its Resolution No. 82 of June 25, 1950, determined that the North Korean actions constituted “a breach of peace.” Furthermore, the Resolution called for “the immediate cessation of hostilities” and called upon “the authorities in North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel.” Following this, the UN Security Council passed Resolution No. 83, “having noted the appeal from the Republic of Korea to the United Nations for immediate and effective steps to secure peace and security” and recommended “that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area” (H. Park 2004, 34–35).²

On July 7, in its Resolution No. 84, the UN Security Council recommended the provision of military forces and other assistance through “a unified command under the United States of America,” requested “the United States to designate the commander of such forces,” and authorized “the unified command to use the United Nations flag [...] with the flags of the various nations participating” (H. Park 2004, 33–34).³

The UN Charter requires not only member states but also non-members abide by the principles in the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore, preventive or compulsory measures could be taken against threats or acts of sabotage against peace in any non-member state of the UN. Immediately after the outbreak of the Korean War, and amid a boycott by Soviet representatives, the UN Security Council passed a resolution recommending member states provide aid

2. For the original texts of the UN Security Council Resolutions No. 82 and 83, refer to [https://undocs.org/S/RES/82\(1950\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/82(1950)).

3. For the original text of UN Security Council Resolution No. 84, refer to [https://undocs.org/S/RES/84\(1950\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/84(1950)).

to South Korea to fight back the armed attacks from North Korea and to restore international peace (Choi 2004, 316–317).

In fact, by early 1951, 16 countries had participated in the UN military action on the Korean Peninsula, including the United States, Australia, Canada, Turkey, Colombia, and Thailand, most of whom sent one battalion of troops, the minimum number required by the UN. The US military, however, deployed the largest portion of the combined UN-South Korean forces, accounting for 50 percent of land forces, 86 percent of naval, and 94 percent of air forces. The forces of other countries not including the US or South Korea comprised 10 percent of land, 7 percent of naval, and 1 percent of air forces, with the remainder supplied by South Korea. In short, most of the military forces and expenses were covered by the United States.

Following China's intervention on the peninsula in the fall of 1950, the United States appealed to European and other countries to participate in the war in the light of such commitments as NATO, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Appeals to Asian, African, and Latin American countries resulted in the participation of only four countries—Colombia, Ethiopia, the Philippines, and Thailand—in the UN war effort. Despite their political support, most Third World countries revealed no real intentions or lacked the capabilities to participate in the war (H. Park 2004, 34–35).

However, the question of whether the UN Security Council resolution of June 27, 1950, which recommended member states send troops to South Korea under a unified command, and the July 7 resolution, which allowed troops under unified command to use the UN flag, were debatable under international law. Not only did the US exercise full operational command of the UN forces, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East (CINCFE) was under the orders of the American president even as he acted as Commander-in-Chief of the UN Command (CINCUNC). Therefore, it was possible to view the troops in the Korean War as a US-led coalition force with its legitimacy secured by UN resolutions (Choi 2004, 318).

In fact, the UN's collective security activities in the Korean War were organized and deployed as a multinational force under the unified command system led by the US commander and which was mandated by the UN. By approving the establishment of the UN Command, the

appointment of an American commander and the use of a UN flag, the UN resolution formulated the chain of command from the UNC commander to the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General. However, the resolution also placed implementation of the military operation under the American command system with a chain of command running from the US military commander in Korea to the Army Chief of Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense to the US president. The United Nations Command had to submit an official military operations report to the UN Security Council every two weeks. However, the CINCFE and CINCUNC, Douglas MacArthur, submitted his report to the US government first, and only after these were reviewed in the US, were they reported to the UN Security Council and Secretary General (H. Park 2004, 36).

Two factors contributed to the implementation of a voluntary and temporary coalition force in the Korean War. The first factor was the lack of a permanent command-order system in the UN. In his 1954 memoir, then UN Secretary General Trigve Lie claims that he proposed the formation of a Committee on Coordination of Assistance for Korea consisting of seven countries—Australia, France, India, New Zealand, Norway, Great Britain, and the United States. This committee would add member states to provide support and was designed to have the participation of South Korean representatives, with the UN Secretary General acting as a rapporteur, representatives from Britain, France, and Norway voted in favor; however, the American delegation immediately rejected the idea (Lie 1954, 333–334).

The second factor was that the issue of military operations command and control were not specifically mentioned in the UN resolutions. The United States intended the UN resolution to fully respect its independent operational command authority. Eventually, circumstances shifted in favor of the United States, which sought for equaling political influence by volunteering to carry most of the burden of military expenses, in leading the UN intervention in the Korean War (H. Park 2004, 36).

As such, the United States sought to hold on to the substantive authority commensurate with its military and economic burdens and for the “recovery of international peace and security” by the UN. However, with the actual development of the war, the United States was vulnerable to its own

inconsistent position. Such contradictions became more apparent when the American forces crossed the 38th parallel after deciding to move northward, which was a direct challenge to the UN collective security goal to *restore the status-quo* and eventually led to the Chinese communist intervention.

Conflict between UNKRA and UNCACK

The United States had plotted for the occupational rule of North Korea before the decision of the UN forces to break across the 38th parallel. The July 30, 1950 report by the Office of Policy Planning of the United States State Department had set the course of action: “The US president should declare the goal of establishing an independent Korean government for unification, support it with a resolution of the House and Senate, and then draw a resolution through UN discussions.”⁴ After occupying North Korea, the United States had been devising a “new UN organization” to embody and justify American strategic goals on the Korean Peninsula. Since then, the United States State Department took steps to approve the UN forces’ advance northward and to prepare a resolution that would establish a new UN organization. On October 2, 1950, John K. Emmerson, director of policy planning at the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs of the State Department, authored guidelines titled, “The Occupation of North Korea.” The guidelines stipulated that South Korea would be unable to exercise its sovereignty over North Korea before the general elections, and in the transitional phase, the North would be an “occupied state” under the control of the CINCUNC (H. Kim 2010a, 41–43).

Also, at the General Assembly in Paris of October 7, 1950, the UN adopted Resolution No. 376 regarding the unification problem of Korea,

4. “Mi gungmubu jeongchaek gihoeksil, bukhangun gyeoktween-wa tongil hanguk jeongbu surip-e daehan haengdong bangchaek surip” (US State Department, Policy Planning Office Establishes Action Plans for Repelling North Korean Forces and Establishing a Unified South Korean Government), National Institute of Korean History (Guksa pyeonchan wiwonhoe), *Jaryo daehan minguksa* (Sources on the History of the Republic of Korea), vol. 18, http://db.history.go.kr/id/dh_018_1950_07_30_0020.

declaring that “all constituent acts be taken, including the holding of elections, for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government in the sovereign State of Korea.”⁵ The General Assembly recommendation to “ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea” was an understatement; it in fact confirmed the military occupation of the North Korean region by the United States military. In turn, UNCURK (United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation for Korea) was established as a new UN body to effectuate the occupation of North Korea. Representatives from seven countries (Australia, Chile, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Turkey) constituted UNCURK, which was a highly political entity that succeeded UNTCOK (United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea) and UNCOK (United Nations Commission on Korea). UNCURK was given more authority than these previous entities over the “Korean issue” to actualize American occupational policy and political planning in the interests of the UN (H. Kim 2010a, 45–49).⁶

At the 5th meeting of the General Assembly, UNKRA (United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency) was established according to Resolution

5. United Nations, “Resolution 376, The problem of the independence of Korea,” [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376\(V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376(V)).

6. For the original text of the 5th General Assembly Resolution No. 376 that resolved to found UNCURK, refer to: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376\(V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376(V)). Meanwhile, the US and UN decisions on the North Korean occupation drew a backlash from Seoul. The South Korean government expressed regret over the UN resolution, while Syngman Rhee made his opposition clear through a press conference and a personal letter to MacArthur. US Secretary of State Dean Acheson had US Ambassador to South Korea John Muccio deliver the American position that it would be difficult to support Rhee’s government if Rhee continued to oppose the UN decision, and Rhee promised to refrain from commenting further on North Korean rule. Contrary to such promises, however, Rhee announced in a national statement that he would actively use the Northwest Youth Corps in appointing officials and implementing government initiatives and policies in North Korea. In a telephone interview with *U.S. News and World Report*, Rhee also stated that he had control over the entire Korean Peninsula (Sang-ho Lee 2012, 245–246). This promulgated a conflict between the South Korean government and the United Nations Command over the issue of transferring administrative authority to the “recovery district” after the armistice was agreed upon. For further details, refer to Han (2008).

No. 410 of December 1, 1950 to contribute to the restoration of Korea's war-damaged economic foundations to its pre-war conditions.⁷ UNKRA, like UNCURK, aimed to establish a unified and independent democratic government in South Korea. If UNCURK was a new highly political UN body to carry out the occupation of North Korea, UNKRA was to carry out the relief and reconstruction of South Korea as an economic organization.

When UNCURK was created by UN General Assembly Resolution No. 376 (October 17, 1950), the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was asked to "develop relief and reconstruction plans after the end of hostilities."⁸ This led to the establishment of UNKRA, which was placed in charge of relief and reconstruction projects in South Korea. The UN Security Council's Resolution No. 85, dated July 31, 1950, created the Civil Relief in Korea (CRIK) and with that ECOSOC began to consider Korean relief and reconstruction aid. With the creation of UNCRUK, Resolution 376 required ECOSOC to examine long-term measures to promote economic and social progress along with the relief and reconstruction of post-war Korea (Lyons 1961, 24-27).

The scope of operations of UNKRA, not unlike UNCURK, was not limited to the southern half of the peninsula, but encompassed the entire Korean Peninsula because the premise of UNKRA activities hinged on military occupation and ending hostilities in the region north of the 38th parallel. However, by the time UN General Assembly Resolution No. 401 was issued on December 1, 1950, circumstances had changed significantly since the founding of UNCURK on October 17. A November 29 article of the *New York Times* reported how Douglas MacArthur, CINCUNC, had released a special statement on November 28 that UN forces faced a whole new war against large Chinese forces. From early November, MacArthur's reports had described how a considerable number of Chinese troops had crossed the Yalu River, and the US was already aware that the Korean War

7. For the original text of the 5th General Assembly Resolution No. 410 which resolved to found UNKRA, refer to: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/410\(V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/410(V)).

8. United Nations, "Resolution 376, The problem of the independence of Korea," [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376\(V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376(V)).

had been transformed into a new kind of war even before the founding of UNKRA on December 1. UNKRA had forecasted Korea's relief and reconstruction and long-term economic and social development after the end of hostilities. However, its activities were uncertain even before its inception.

Still, the United States could not stop the founding of UNKRA. The United States needed to maintain the confidence and support of South Korea and other participating countries that expected aid from the US and UN. Americans were also faced with the realistic need to provide economic aid through multilateral cooperation. It was also true that, by the end of January 1951, the US had assumed a heavy expenditure load, as it had with CRIK aid, committing to US\$162.5 million, or more than 80 percent of the roughly US\$200 million UNKRA funding pledged by a total of 13 countries.⁹ Therefore, the objective for the American pursuit of multilateral cooperation, particularly through UN organizations like UNCURK or UNKRA, was not to ease its financial burden. Rather, the objective was easing the political burden by solving the challenges that would arise if the American military occupied the area north of the 38th parallel and implemented another military government there.

UNKRA was finally born after many twists and turns. UNKRA agreed to hold at least four meetings a year with an advisory committee consisting of representatives from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, India, and Uruguay. The first meeting took place in New York in May 1951, when the American, J. Donald Kingsley, former chairman of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), became the first chairman of UNKRA and Sir Arthur Rucker, former deputy executive secretary of the IRO, assumed the deputy chairmanship. With the establishment of UNKRA, it was expected that the agency would soon replace the emergency relief work carried out by the United Nations Civil Assistance Command in Korea (UNCACK) under the

9. Canada followed the United States with US\$7.5 million, followed by Australia (US\$4.29 million), Britain (US\$2.8 million), Sweden (US\$1 million), Norway (US\$800,000), Netherlands (US\$260,000), Indonesia (US\$100,000), Venezuela (US\$70,000), Egypt (US\$28,000), Syria (US\$12,000), and Saudi Arabia (US\$10,000). Guatemala provided thousands of tons of wood (Lyons 1961, 28–33).

United Nations Command (Bank of Korea Research Department 1952, 66).¹⁰

When UNKRA officially launched its operations in February 1951, the war was ongoing, with UN forces occupying all available ports and transportation facilities. This constricted UNKRA from utilizing necessary facilities for relief and reconstruction (H. Lee 2009, 121). The resulting conflict between the UN Command and UNKRA had been reported from quite early on. The UN Command demanded the UN General Assembly for jurisdiction over all relief and aid to South Korea during the fighting period. Joseph Carwell, a State Department representative, urged Sir Arthur Rucker, head of UNKRA in Seoul, to sign a bilateral agreement with South Korea. However, Rucker refused to consult with UNCURK. The conflict was eventually resolved only after General John B. Coulter, who had served as deputy commander of the United States Forces in Korea before the outbreak of the war, was newly appointed as UNKRA chairman (McDonald 2001, 382).

Aid to Korea during the Korean War was under the dual structure of UNKRA, which was founded with the prospect of reconstructing Korea, and UNCACK, which was already carrying out wartime emergency relief aid operations. This meant that the UN and the US, like a two-horse carriage, both carried out aid to Korea. The figure below illustrates the operational structure of Korean aid by the United Nations and the United States during the Korean War.

Against this backdrop, the United States military was dissatisfied with UNKRA's involvement in Korean aid. At a US Budget Office meeting of February 1, 1951, representatives from that office, the State Department, Department of the Army, Department of Defense, and Economic Cooperation Agency (ECA), met to discuss the financial aid budget for fiscal years 1951 and 1952. At the meeting, Col. Gosorn, head of the US Department of the Army's Supply Division (G-4), which was in charge of distributing military supplies, in an unofficial statement expressed the

10. UNCACK, which was set up under the Eighth US Army on October 30, 1950, changed its official name on December 8, 1950. UNCACK acted as a US military organization under the Eighth Army, although at least nominally, it was under the United Nations (H. Kim 2010a, 55-56).

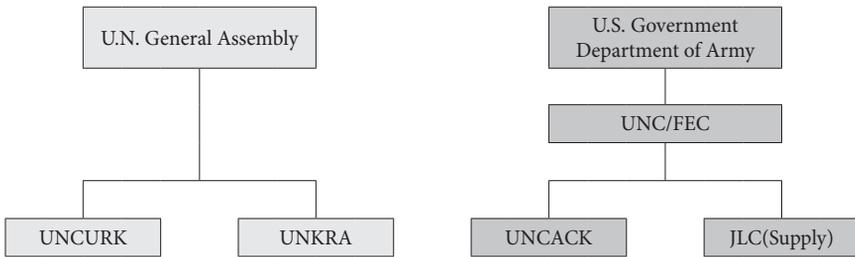


Figure 1. The Korean aid system under United Nations and the United States commands during the Korean War (September 1951)

Source: “Civil Relief and Economic Aid-Korea 1950.7.7–1951.9.30,” National Archives and Records Administration, RG 550, Records of the US Army, Pacific, 1945–1984, Entry A1-1, Organizational History, Box 74 (reproduced from H. Kim [2010b, 293]).

Note: JLC is an acronym for Japan Logistic Command, the logistics command in Japan under the US Far East Command.

Army’s position that it would be difficult for UNKRA to operate as an independent organization during the Korean War. He stated that MacArthur also gave the impression that he opposed UNKRA’s independent activities in the course of fighting.

At this same meeting, George W. Lawson, Jr., of the US Budget Office, also pointed out the importance for the Army to lead an agreement on the relationship between the Eighth US Army and UNKRA. Major General George H. Decker explained that he wanted the agency responsible for the Korean aid to inherit the Army’s activities as soon as possible upon the termination of combat operations. He also disclosed MacArthur’s position that UNKRA could not launch its activities as long as military operations continued in the Korean Peninsula.¹¹

In fact, after the creation of UNKRA, the United States had already decided on January 7, 1951 to withdraw the ECA from South Korea. The United States was concerned with possible functional redundancy and

11. “Proposed Program and Obligated Funds–Fiscal Year 1950,” NARA, RG 469, Records of US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1942–1963, Entry UD 81A, Budget Records Relating to Korea, 1948–1951, Box 1.

dissolved the ECA in Seoul in April 1951, despite opposition from the US ambassador to Korea. Some functions of the ECA were transferred to UNKRA, while others were transferred to UNCACK (McDonald 2001, 381; H. Lee 2009, 121–124). However, the ambiguous relationship and overlapping roles in Korean aid supply between UNCACK and UNKRA were likely to lead to conflict. Since its inception, UNKRA was at odds with the UN Command and UNCACK over relief activities, aid shipments, and unified support channels.

Eventually, UNKRA and the State Department resolved the issue in coordinating UNKRA's role. Kingsley, the head of UNKRA, and John D. Hickerson, Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, drew up measures of agreement and shared the contents with the United Nations Command in Tokyo on December 21, 1951.¹² The UNKRA-UNC agreements went into effect on January 1, 1952, according to which relief and reconstruction projects were to take place in cooperation under mutual agreements between UNKRA and the UNC while hostilities persisted. The agreement, however, allowed the UNC to take the principal responsibility for South Korean relief and economic aid for the 180 days following the end of the hostilities, in effect approving the leadership of the UNC and UNCACK.¹³

As a result, UNKRA was able to establish reconstruction plans only in the first phase of military operations in South Korea, while taking responsibility for all relief and reconstruction projects in the country from the second phase onward, that is, 180 days after the end of combat activities. Until the end of the war, a joint UN-UNKRA committee would be established with offices in Seoul, Tokyo and Washington to assist UNCACK activities and to request and receive aid from the governments of corresponding countries. However, as UN operations continued through 1952, UNKRA projects were put on hold. Experts from each country

12. "The Secretary of State to the Agent General of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (Kingsley)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, Korea and China, Volume XII, Part 1, Document 428; Ministry of National Defense TI&E Department 1954, 109–110.

13. "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Young) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952–1954, Korea, Volume XV, Part 1, Document 323, footnote 3.

dispatched by UNKRA to various government departments and public agencies were only able to serve as advisers in the field and assist the UN forces and UNCACK in emergency relief efforts.¹⁴

Despite the setbacks, Kingsley sought to carry out UNKRA-led projects. In talks with Mark W. Clark of CINCUNC in late September 1952, Kingsley reached an agreement in October 1952 to carry out a US\$70 million project within the current fiscal year. The plan was reported to the UN Advisory Committee on November 10. According to the report, the project would spend the largest amount of US\$14 million on imports of daily necessities such as food and fertilizer, US\$11.5 million on machinery imports for industrial reconstruction, US\$8 million on education, US\$7.1 million on power fields, such as power substations and power transmission lines and reconstruction of power sources, US\$7 million on transportation and communications, such as port power generation, railways and tie repairs, and US\$6.9 million for agricultural research, irrigation expansion projects, and major agricultural development costs.¹⁵

Taking the wartime situation into account, the UNKRA plan totaled only US\$70 million through fiscal year 1953. However, Kingsley had to overcome another political hurdle in the Rhee administration. After meeting with Syngman Rhee, Kingsley felt that Rhee wanted complete control over the reconstruction of Korea, and said he doubted whether Rhee wanted UNKRA's activities in Korea itself. The State Department also agreed that Seoul must fully support UNKRA's activities, as Rhee's uncooperative attitude unnerved and disappointed Britain and Canada, countries that formed the core of UNKRA.¹⁶

According to a statement by Kingsley of January 25, 1953 made to the *Seoul sinmun*, UNKRA employees were deployed to UNCACK under a large-scale emergency relief plan, engaging in various fields, including health, the economy, agriculture, commerce, exploration of underground

14. Gukbangbu (1953, C459); Gukbangbu (1954, C109-110); Yang (2013, 66-68).

15. Gukbangbu (1954, C110).

16. "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Young) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison)," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Korea, Volume XV, Part 1, Document 323*.

resources, finance, public affairs, and education, and were prepared for the prospect of UNKRA being at the helm of Korean reconstruction (*Seoul sinmun*, January 25, 1953). It was not until May 1952 that UNKRA aid material began to arrive, while full-fledged activities commenced after the armistice. The Korean Coordinating Committee, composed of representatives from the UNC, UNKRA, and the ROK government, was formed to discuss aid plans. UNCACK was reorganized as the Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC) on July 1, 1953, as UNKRA aid entered a new phase of operations. From that point, UNKRA controlled long-term reconstruction plans, while KCAC oversaw relief and short-term restoration projects.¹⁷

Because the United States military exercised realistic jurisdiction over activities in Korea and the ROK government proved to be non-cooperative, UNKRA encountered difficulties in managing its activities in Korea. However, the authority of UNKRA, created and protected by UN General Assembly resolution and international consensus, exceeded the authority of UNCACK, which was under the command of the Eighth US Army. If the war ended with UN forces occupying North Korea after crossing over the 38th parallel, as was anticipated when UNCURK and UNKRA were established, the prospect of unification under UNCURK-supervised political management and elections in the region north of the 38th parallel, and UNKRA-sponsored economic reconstruction of the Korean Peninsula, would become a reality. However, the ever-changing war situation and the de facto authority of the UNC under the command of the US military overwhelmed the nominally charged UN authority of UNKRA.¹⁸

17. Gukbangbu (1954, C109–110); Bank of Korea Research Department (1952, 66); Hong (1962, 39–40).

18. The US military as well as the State Department consistently expressed discontent over the ambiguous status of UNKRA. According to an internal memorandum circulated in the State Department in 1952, US Ambassador to Korea Muccio criticized UNKRA for “just bringing chicks, goats and pigs to South Korea,” while Kenneth T. Young, the draft writer of the memorandum and director of the State Department’s Northeast Asia Division, also pointed out that “the relationship between UNKRA and the organizations of the US Forces Korea is on the brink of a rift” (McDonald 2001, 383–385).

As much as the military and economic burden it carried, the United States needed practical jurisdiction over Korean relief and reconstruction operations. However, for the time being, it was UNCK exercising its authority; yet, this did not resolve all the problems. The conflict between the United States and the participating UN member states over war expenses and repayment plans was as delicate a matter as the conflict with UNKRA.

Discord between the US and UN Countries Over War Expenses

The Korean War led to the starkest increase in US defense spending since the end of World War II. Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the US defense budget for FY 1951 was US\$13 billion. On July 19, 1950, President Truman requested the US Congress for an additional US\$10 billion. As a result, US military spending more than quadrupled, totaling US\$58 billion in FY 1951. In addition, military spending in FY 1952 reached US\$70 billion, which included foreign military aid and defense support aid. Military spending in FY 1953 fell to slightly over US\$50 billion. However, US military annual spending continued to top US\$42 billion after that year (Cardwell 2011, 211–212).

In fact, by the end of 1951, the US military accounted for 50 percent of land forces, 86 percent of naval, and 94 percent of air forces deployed in the Korean War. However, the details on how much the US spent on the war cannot be definitively confirmed. The increased US defense spending was used not only in South Korea but in Western Europe, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and elsewhere. In addition to the military supplies used by the US military, a significant share of the expenses was for military supplies for South Korean and UN forces.

In this regard, Mr. Parelman and Robert C. Yost of the State Department, in a memorandum dated July 23, 1954, estimated the size of American expenditures in Korea in a meeting with the Department of Defense's financial expert, Max Lehrer, a member of the Economic and International Security Estimates Division of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. As a financial expert for the Pentagon and a member of the Van Fleet mission, Max Lehrer visited South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines from early

May to early July 1954. He also partook in the Van Fleet mission report which proposed the appropriate size of future US military aid to East Asia. Therefore, Parelman and Yost had to attentively adhere to Lehrer's opinion.

According to Lehrer, the expenditures by the Department of Defense in the June 1950-September 1953 Korean War was, staggeringly, "at least US\$10 billion." But Lehrer himself thought this figure likely an understatement, with the actual cost being billions higher. The Pentagon was unable to provide exact figures for the MDAP-type aid, or military end-item aid provided to the Korean military; however, the cost of the allocated goods was estimated at approximately US\$2.9 billion, considering the relative sizes of South Korean and US forces. The US Department of Defense also had doubts about the accuracy of such a figure because it included the value of wartime losses.¹⁹

American logistical support for the 16 countries that sent UN combat troops to the Korean War under the UN banner, as well as the five other countries that sent medical units, was also done through Pentagon war funds. From the early days of the war, the logistical support had been based on the principal of self-support, or individual countries carrying their own burden. However, most of the combat troops, except for the British Commonwealth Division (consisting of Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, and British troops), were forced to rely on logistical support from the American supply lines. As mentioned earlier, it was difficult for most of the participating countries to have their own military support system because they only sent a single battalion, the smallest size required by the United Nations, and due to the urgent progress of the war situation, these were deployed to the front lines before the respective countries could formulate their own logistical support systems.²⁰

19. "General - Program Status Reports-MDAP 1950-1951-1952-2," NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, 1763-2002, Entry A1 1199, Records Relating to Economic Aid, 1948-1959, Box 2.

20. Among the 16 UN member states, US ground troops entered initial combat on July 5, 1950, followed by Great Britain (September, 4), the Philippines (October 1), Australia (October 5), Turkey (November 12), South Africa (November 19), Thailand (November 22), the Netherlands (December 11), and France (December 13). Most of these countries joined the

For this reason, Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson allowed American supplies and services to be provided to the extent the CINCUNC decided necessary. His statements were listed in a memorandum dated September 1, 1950, titled, "Utilization of Offers of Foreign Assistance in Korea," which was soon approved by President Truman. Such a statement was not based on any legislative authority, however, it was a realistic step towards deploying as many UN countries as possible to the Korean front. Accordingly, the CINCUNC allocated overall control of logistical support for the UN Army, Navy, and Air Force to the US Eighth Army, Naval Forces Far East, and Far East Air Forces, respectively.

This memorandum also allowed UN forces to use American military facilities, PXs and officers' clubs, R&R (rest and rehabilitation) facilities in South Korea and Japan, and American MPC (military payment certificates). Under the direction of the CINCUNC, the US military was tasked with the management of POWs captured by UN forces and the costs of management and care for such prisoners.²¹

In hindsight, such steps were not advisable. As evident in the case of the Lend-Lease Act during World War II, providing American military supplies, services, and equipment without any requirements was a departure from the general principles of the United States. Moreover, the United States sought to avoid setting a disadvantageous precedent in Korea for any future UN collective military actions. Hence, in Secretary Johnson's memorandum

actual fighting within a week or two of their arrival in South Korea (D. Park 2014, 280–281). This was also one of the reasons the Commonwealth Division, which was already using British-made military equipment—with the exception of Canada—needed its own logistical support system.

21. "Shultz Report, 1955.1.26," NARA, RG 319, Records of the Army Staff, 1903–2009, Entry A1 65, Records Relating to Korea, Japan, and the Ryukyu Islands, 1952–1959, Box 17 (also available as National Institute of Korean History, AUS009_36_00C0077); hereafter, "Shultz Report, 1955.1.26." Lt. Gen. Edward K. Shultz was in charge of Foreign Financial Affairs in the US Department of the Army. Meanwhile, it is estimated that the cost of maintaining POWs under the custody of the US amounted to .32 cents per day per POW, and US\$92.55 for initial clothing and equipment, plus US\$11.88 per year for continued maintenance. For the US, the estimated cost for maintaining POWs captured by all UN Forces amounted to US\$67,000,000, exclusive of the cost of constructing POW camps and the maintenance of such camps.

of September 1, 1950, the provision of military assistance “on a basis of immediate reimbursement in US dollar terms” led the United States government and the other participating governments to negotiate the terms of settlement. The principle was applied to the 19 countries excluding the United States itself and India which provided only the Ambulance Unit for political reasons.

The US Army initiated negotiations on the timetable and method of reimbursement in light of the fact that the ground troops from the participating UN nations had constituted the recipients of most of the logistical support. The United States recognized the president’s discretionary rights under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act (MDAA) of October 6, 1949, which had enacted US foreign military aid, as providing the legal basis for logistical support and reimbursement. However, many countries contributing to the UN forces did not sign the MDAA-based military aid agreements. In turn, the Secretary of the Army expressed concern that the governments of the participating countries may refuse to agree to the principle of reimbursement.²²

The negotiations with the US Army began in March 1951. The Department of the Air Force decided to lead negotiations with the Union of South Africa since South Africa had dispatched an air force unit only. In the case of Turkey, negotiations were suspended following the advice of the Chief of JUSMAG (Joint US Military Advisory Group). The dire political and financial situation in Turkey led to the postponement of the reimbursement issue with that country.

In the case of Colombia and Ethiopia, US Army representatives sought to initiate negotiations in July 1951, but negotiations were suspended due to opposition from the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs of the State Department and the Deputy Director of Planning and Operations of the Department of the Army. The concern was that the demand for

22. Public Law 329, enacted on October 6, 1949, is composed of ① North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries (Title I “North Atlantic Trade Countries”), ② Greece and Turkey (Title II “Greece and Turkey”), ③ Iran, South Korea, the Philippines, and China (Title III “Other Assistance”), ④ General provisions. For the original text of this law, refer to: <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/81st-congress/session-1/c81s1ch626.pdf>.

reimbursement would not only precipitate the withdrawal of forces by these governments, but could also deter any offers of forces from other UN member states, especially from South America.

Among the remaining countries, Sweden, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece agreed to the terms. Belgium and Italy indicated a willingness to sign the agreement, while Canada, although reluctant to formalize an agreement, reimbursed most of the costs of the US logistical support used to supply its forces.

In October 1951, the US Army suspended further negotiating efforts after Colombia and Ethiopia repeatedly refused to sign the agreement. Finally, in February 1952, the US Army, Navy and Air Force recommended that the State Department take charge of the issue as it had become a political one, though they were willing to continue to oversee negotiations with Belgium and Italy, countries that were willing to settle the agreement.²³

Eventually, the Department of the Army began negotiations with 13 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and Great Britain, and succeeded in receiving some reimbursement even during the war. However, most of the participating countries did not begin reimbursement until the conclusion of hostilities, even if they had signed the agreement. The issue lingered until after the signing of the armistice agreement.

The table below lists the amount of US Army logistical support, repayments, and balances of participating UN member states as of June 30, 1953.

As of June 30, 1953, which was just around the time of the armistice agreement, only 15 percent of the approximately US\$280 million in logistical support had been repaid. Canada repaid 92 percent of its total military aid, Sweden 69 percent, the Netherlands 37 percent, Norway 26 percent and Ethiopia 0.4 percent. However, the remaining countries had yet to begin actual repayments, even if they had signed a reimbursement agreement with the United States.²⁴

23. "Shultz Report, 1955.1.26."

24. "Status of Logistical Support Furnished by US Army to UN Member Nations Participating

Table 1. Status of Logistical Support Furnished by the US Army to UN Member States Participating in Korea Operations as of June 30, 1953

Country	Date logistical support commenced	DA logistical support as of June 30, 1953 (estimated US\$)	Payments received through June 30, 1953 (US\$)	Balance due (estimated) as of June 30, 1953 (US\$)
Australia	1950.11.2.	3,500,000	0	3,500,000
Belgium	1951.1.31.	6,000,000	0	6,000,000
Canada	1950.10.4.	41,500,000	38,138,653.86	3,361,346.14
Colombia	1951.6.15.	8,000,000	0	8,000,000
Ethiopia	1951.5.6.	10,500,000	41,781.40	
France	1950.11.30.	9,300,000	0	9,300,000
Greece	1950.12.9.	11,000,000	0	11,000,000
India	1950.11.20.	1,500,000	0	1,500,000
Italy	1951.11.16.	120,000	0	120,000
Netherlands	1950.11.5.	8,600,000	3,157,632.23	5,442,367.77
New Zealand	1950.12.31.	2,275,000	0	2,275,000
Norway	1951.6.22.	750,000	192,965.26	557,034.74
Philippines	1950.9.19.	47,200,000	0	47,200,000
Sweden	1950.8.27.	1,400,000	965,432.36	434,567.64
Thailand	1950.11.5.	14,500,000	0	14,500,000
Turkey	1950.10.17.	62,250,000	0	62,250,000
United Kingdom	1950.10.5.	50,500,000	0	50,500,000
Totals		278,895,000	42,496,465.11	236,398,534.89

Source: "Status of Logistical Support Furnished by US Army to UN Member Nations Participating in the Korea Operation as of 30 June 1953," NARA, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, 1903–2009, Entry A1 207, General Records, 1959 (General Correspondence of the Programs And Budget Division, 1959), Box 440 (available at National Institute of Korean History, AUS009_27_00C0030).

in the Korea Operation as of 30 June 1953," NARA, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, 1903–2009, Entry A1 207, General Records, 1959 (General Correspondence of the Programs And Budget Division, 1959), Box 440 (available at National Institute of Korean History, AUS009_27_00C0030).

In July 1953, the NSC (National Security Council) formulated a new policy which in effect placed the Secretary of State in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and Treasury to determine whether reimbursement should be pursued from governments whose forces had obtained logistical support from US military services in order to secure additional military assistance for Korea. As the Secretary of State was given discretionary power, with the armistice agreement of July 27, 1953, the issue of reimbursing logistical support had shifted from being a military issue to a political and diplomatic one.

The United States estimated the additional costs of packaging and transportation at around 16 percent of the actual value of the military supplies and equipment. Given these accounting standards, the total amount of logistical support provided by the US Army through November 30, 1954, amounted to about US\$340 million, while the total amount of logistical support provided by the US Navy and Air Force came to about US\$26 million. By November 30, 1954, however, the actual amount of repayment the US Army had received stagnated at approximately US\$51 million, a mere US\$8.5 million increase from June 30, 1953.²⁵

As such, more than a year after the signing of the armistice, the prospect of the participating UN member nations reimbursing the costs of logistical support by the United States during the Korean War remained as dubious as ever. The longer the reimbursement period stretched, the dimmer prospects grew for settling for the issue. However, Lt. Gen. Edward K. Shultz, who was chief of the Foreign Financial Affairs Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Army, predicted that if the UN forces were to intervene militarily in another area such as Korea, that for practical reasons the US military would be asked once again to provide logistical support for other participating states. This marked the commencement of the global Cold War era, in which *realpolitik* would overwhelm justifications and principles, as the US military, not the

25. By November 1954, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and South Africa had completed their repayments to the US Army's logistical support, according to Schulz's report. However, the Union of South Africa only deployed an air force unit, so this is likely an error. By this time, the US Navy and Air Force had also received about US\$19 million in repayments, as detailed in the report. By November 30, 1954, repayments totaled US\$50,726,676, of which Canada had repaid US\$42,205,241 ("Shultz Report, 1955.1.26").

UN, had taken control of Korean aid operations.

Conclusion

When the Korean War broke out, the United Nations intervened to repel North Korea's armed attack and restore international peace. The United Nations collective security was organized and deployed as a coalition force within the unified command system under the command of the United States and mandated by the United Nations. The United States proposed to carry most of the military and economic burdens of the UN intervention, and sought for commensurate authority and leadership in return.

The United States sought full control in the justification for the restoration of peace by the UN and the authority deriving from its assumed military and economic burdens. However, this initiative caused US-UN conflicts over Korean aid operations and regarding American logistical support for participating UN member states.

UNKRA was created as a UN agency to carry out relief and reconstruction operations in Korea and expected to expand its activities to the entire peninsula once hostilities had ended. However, UNKRA faced challenges in overlapping functions with UNCACK, which had conducted emergency relief work since before the founding of UNKRA, while the United States military expressed dissatisfaction with UNKRA's involvement in Korean aid. Continued hostilities following the intervention of Chinese forces in late 1950 effectively handed US forces the *de facto* initiative over Korean aid.

The issue over the provision of American logistical support for United Nations forces provided another source of conflict between the United States and the participating UN states. Logistical support for the collective military action of UN forces was originally a matter for the countries involved, but considering the size and urgency of the troops in other countries, requesting American-led logistical support became inevitable. However, the UN participant states' actual capacities to pay for war expenses and their perceptions of their obligation to do so were quite different. Only 15 percent of the logistical support costs were repaid to the United States by the time

armistice agreement was signed. Most of repaid funds came from Canada, which had already begun its repayment for logistical support even as military operations were still active. The United States feared that such delay would create a precedent; however, of the total US\$340 million in logistical support provided by the US Army during the war, only 15 percent (about US\$51 million) had been repaid by November 30, 1954.

Such a reality did not necessarily debilitate the United States. Based on its overwhelming productivity and military strength, the United States led the United Nations Command, provided the logistical reservoirs for participating UN states, in essence reaffirming the end of an imperial power like Great Britain and the arrival of a new global power in the United States. Also, the UN participants that experienced the magnitude of American logistical support systems, military supplies, services, and equipment, had become potential clients of the American military-industrial complex as were countries that received American military aid.

Despite these *potential benefits*, the United States pursued strictly utilitarian policies in Korean affairs after its experience in the Korean War. UNKRA was supposed to lead Korean aid after the end of hostilities, yet, even after the armistice agreement, the United States commander, CINCUNC, continued to exercise jurisdiction over Korean aid. This was a result of bilateral agreements signed between Seoul and Washington, like the Korea-US Mutual Defense Treaty and the Korea-US Agreed Minutes. While UNKRA still managed some parts of Korean aid, its influence and activities were minuscule in effect, and it was eventually dismantled in 1958. In addition, the Korea-US Bilateral Treaty and the establishment of the Korea-US military alliance elicited the United States to explore the possibility of an East Asian *anti-communist front* connecting Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. In a sense, the Korean War experience consolidated the contradictions of a *Cold War* peace that saw increasing reliance on the powerful economic and military prowess of the United States rather than on collective military action by an international organization. Consequently, the United States neglected the prospect for *peace* attainable through civil activities by the UN and UN organizations on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia more broadly.

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