

The Truman Papers: The Truth About Korea

By Ian Greenhalgh – VeteransToday

Why our own military leaders used the 38th parallel. Find out why!

A few months ago I published an article that exposed the horrific and largely unknown truth about how and why the war in Korea came about.

As a follow-up to that article and to continue to explain the background to the current Korean crisis, I am publishing this 16 page document from the Truman Library which lays out in detail the political machinations within the US that lead up to the start of the Korean War in 1950. This document does not touch on the cruel and murderous nature of the regime imposed in the South and adheres to the official narrative of a free and democratic state standing up to the aggression of a Communist state, a narrative that my previous article showed was not entirely true. However, this document does contain much valuable background information and provides a fascinating insight into the US political scene of the late 1940s and the politicking that surrounded US efforts to establish and secure a (supposedly) free and democratic South Korea.

The document gives detailed figures for the arms supplied to South Korea and the sums of money spent in supplying that nation with the necessary military resources to defend itself; however, I strongly suspect there is an untold further dimension to the arming of the two Koreas as Col. Fletcher Prouty, when in Japan in 1945, witnessed the shipping of the vast stockpile of arms and materiel that had been built up for the Invasion of Japan (which never happened) to what he was told were two destinations: Korea and Vietnam, which Prouty frames as being preparatory to the subsequent wars in those nations. Clearly, the real background to those wars is far more complex than has been recorded in the official narratives.

The Truth About Korea

Why our own military leaders used the 38th parallel. American efforts to establish a single, unified Republic in Korea. The reasons for the decision of our Joint Chiefs of Staff to withdraw our troops.

Military and economic aid given by the United States. Republican opposition to Administration plans to strengthen the Republic of South Korea against Communism.

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
Senator Clinton P. Anderson, Chairman
Leslie L. Biffle, Secretary

Foreword

The unprovoked aggression by the Soviet dominated government of North Korea against the Republic of Korea has created widespread interest in recent relations of the United States with Korea. There have been full accounts of U.S.-Korean relations published recently by the Department of State and Congressional committees. In order, however, that the most significant facts may be readily available, they are set out in this pamphlet. President Truman, the Democratic Party and the Democratic leadership and membership in the Senate and House of Representatives believe firmly that foreign affairs should be conducted on a bipartisan or non-partisan basis. That is undoubtedly the belief of a farsighted but comparatively small group in the Republican party and in the Republican membership in the Senate and House. Full tribute is paid here and now to the wisdom and patriotism of these men and women.

There can be no question, however, that the leadership of the Republican party and its leadership and the majority of its membership in the Senate and House, motivated by isolationism and pure partisanship, have endeavored in many cases to obstruct the adoption of foreign policy measures vital to the welfare of the country which have been advanced by the Administration and in fact supported on a bipartisan basis by farsighted Republicans.

These Republican leaders in the party and the Congress are now engaged in a frenzied effort to hide their guilt for obstructing the efforts of the Administration to strengthen the Republic of Korea and the free world. They are brazenly propagating false and distorted accounts of certain aspects of U.S.-Korean relations. These matters are dealt with particularly to make certain the truth is known.

The Significance of Korea

Korea is a mountainous peninsula slightly larger than New England, New Jersey and Maryland combined. It has a total population of

about 30 million. The Republic of Korea south of the 38th parallel embraces about half of the land area and 20 million of the people. Korea had been annexed by Japan in 1910 and remained a Japanese colony until liberated at the end of world war II.

The significance of Korea cannot be measured in terms of its relatively small area and population. In the great world struggle in which the United States and other free nations are resisting the determined efforts of the soviet imperialism to dominate the world, the success of American efforts to help the people of Korea build a free nation is of immeasurable importance. As President Truman said in proposing the "little ECA" for Korea to the Congress on June 7, 1949:

"Korea has become a testing ground in which the validity and practical value of the ideals and principles of democracy which the Republic is putting into practice are being matched against the practices of communism which have been imposed on the people of North Korea. The survival and progress of the Republic toward a self-supporting, stable economy will have an immense and far-reaching influence on the people of Asia. Moreover, the Korean Republic, by demonstrating the success and tenacity of democracy in resisting communism, will stand as a beacon of the people of northern Asia in resisting the control of communist forces which have overrun them.

"If we are faithful to our ideals and mindful of our interests in establishing peaceful and prosperous conditions in the world, we will not fail to provide the aid which is so essential to Korea at this critical time."

Background of Policy

The question of policy toward Korea was first discussed by the Allies during the war at the Cairo Conference of December 1943- At that time the United States, the United Kingdom and China were looking for means to create dissension within the Japanese Empire and help split it up. They also had in mind the long-range purposes of the war against Japan.

They recognized the enslavement of the people of Korea and stated their determination that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent." Later on at Potsdam they agreed that the terms of the Cairo declaration should be carried out. When Soviet Russia

declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, it also joined in the Potsdam declaration and thus committed itself to the freedom and independence of Korea.

The 38th Parallel

Among the many oft-repeated false statements of partisan propagandists are those that the United States gave Korea north of the 38th parallel to Russia at Yalta, and that the Administration was at fault in not occupying all of Korea. As usual, the facts are quite different. There are three which are most important:

(1) Neither the division of Korea along the 38th parallel nor the joint occupation of Korea was decided upon or in fact considered in any way at the Yalta or Potsdam Conferences. It was not the subject of any agreement, secret or otherwise.

(2) The drawing of the line was entirely a military decision recommended by Secretary Stimson upon the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The sole purpose of the line was to define the areas in which United States forces and Soviet forces would accept the surrender of Japanese troops in Korea at the end of the war against Japan. When the question was being considered on August 11-15, 1945, Soviet forces already were well into Manchuria. Other Soviet forces were on the border 'between Korea and the Soviet Maritime Provinces. Some had already entered Korea. The great Soviet base of Vladivostok is only some eighty miles from the northeast border of Korea. On the other hand, the nearest American forces were on Okinawa, some 603 miles south of Korea, and were needed to occupy Japan while most of the forces available for movement into Korea were as far distant as the Philippines, some 1500 to 2000 miles away'.

It was recognized by the military and foreign policy authorities that the line should be drawn as far north as it was practicable for our troops to reach. The military authorities with the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended the 38th parallel because it included the Korean capital of Seoul with its port and communication area, and because under the circumstances at the time the United States could not send to Korea the forces necessary to receive the Japanese surrender further north.

Secretary Stimson submitted this recommendation to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and it was included in General Order No. IV

This was issued by General MacArthur as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to the Japanese Government for all of the Japanese armed forces.

(3) Far from permitting the Soviet Union to take over a part of Korea from which it could have been excluded, the establishment of the 38th parallel line actually held for the free people of Korea the southern half of the country, which otherwise would easily have been overrun by the Red Army.

United States Efforts to Unite Korea

It should, of course, be thoroughly understood that the division of Korea and the movement of United States forces into Korea was never intended to be for a long-term occupation. This was a development which resulted from the persistent refusal of the USSR to agree to the establishment of a united and independent Korea upon terms which would do justice to the aspirations of the Korean people for freedom and national independence.

At the Cairo Conference, in December 1943, the United States, Great Britain and China had declared that, after Japan had been defeated, all Korea would become a single Republic. This was reaffirmed at the Potsdam Conference, in July 1945. The Soviets joined in that pledge. From the first days after the acceptance of Japanese surrender, the United States endeavored to obtain agreement of fulfillment by the USSR of its pledge. The Soviets on their part refused to deal with any non-Communist Korean groups and rejected every reasonable proposal advanced. At the same time, they engaged in an ever-increasing campaign of anti-American propaganda and vilification and commenced to create Communist controlled military forces in North Korea. In view of this stalemate, it was concluded that the justified desire of the Korean people for independence and unity entitled them to have the aid of the world community in getting it. Therefore, the United States took the Korean problem to the United Nations in November of 1947, asking that Korea be established as a unified nation through election of a provisional government which would draw up a constitution. The Korean issue was handled before the General Assembly by M. John Foster Dulles, a member of the U. S. Delegation. The proposal was

approved by a vote of 43-0, with Russia and her satellites abstaining.

The election was observed by a United Nations Commission but was confined to south Korea because the puppet communist officials of North Korea refused to let the United Nations Commission travel north of the 38th parallel. More than 95% of the eligible voters of South Korea participated in the election in spite of communist terrorism that left nearly 100 Koreans dead during the election.

The National Assembly of the democratic Republic of Korea adopted its constitution on July 12, 1948. The constitution promised the Korean people "security, liberty, and happiness" and provided for democratic government. This constitution only affected the two-thirds of the population living south of the 33th parallel. One hundred seats in the legislature of the Republic were left vacant for representatives of the people in Northern Korea. The Republic of Korea was inaugurated August 15, 1948.

Meanwhile, the Soviet controlled North Korean regime announced that a constitution for the "Korean Democratic People's Republic" had been adopted and that elections would be held in August of 1948 to elect representatives. The Communist North Korean government pretended to hold a "nation-wide" election with "secret" ballots being cast in South Korea.

The General Assembly in September 1948 recognized the Republic of Korea as the only democratically established government in Korea. The United States and all the major free nations have recognized the Republic. The United States sponsored the admission of the Republic to the United Nations but Soviet Russia vetoed its entrance. (USSR and Ukrainian delegates cast the only opposing votes.)

[Withdrawal of United States Forces](#)

Partisan practitioners of hindsight are now claiming that the withdrawal of United States forces from Korea was an unsound step not advised by American military authorities and should not have been taken. They add that if American forces had been left; the north Korean attack would not have come.

The facts are: The withdrawal was primarily for military reasons and upon the recommendation of military authorities. It was requested by the United Nations. It was made upon the recommendation of and in full consultation with responsible Republican officials. It was made only after General MacArthur had stated that Korean security forces were prepared to take over.

In the first place, the withdrawal of American forces was primarily for military reasons and upon the recommendation of the Defense establishment. American military manpower was severely limited by the rapid demobilization demanded by the people at the end of the war, by the cut in funds available for military purposes made necessary by the Republican-sponsored Knutson tax bill and by the limitations on manpower for American armed forces.

It was therefore necessary for United States military authorities to spread our available manpower thin throughout the many areas of United States world-wide responsibility where potential danger might become real trouble.

Prior to the time the United States took the Korean case to the UN in the fall of 1947, the responsible authorities in the United States Government considered specifically whether the United States had any strategic reason for retaining forces there.

In light of the Facts stated above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, and the Secretary of Defense informed, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, that the United States had little strategic interest in maintaining the existing troops in Korea. At that time the Joint Chiefs of Staff were General Eisenhower, Admiral Nimitz and General Spaatz of the Air Force. The Secretary of Defense was Mr. Forrestal. They felt that existing shortages of military manpower in many areas of American responsibility throughout the world, made it essential that all available manpower be utilized in accordance with the relative military priorities of such areas.

Because of these military considerations the resolution on Korea submitted to the UN by the United States in October 1947 contained a provision calling for the withdrawal of all occupying forces.

Following the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to permit the UN to hold elections in North Korea, the National Security Council in April 1948 again considered the question of troop withdrawal. with the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Bradley, Admiral Denfeld and

General Spaatz) and the Department of Defense, of which Mr. Forrestal was still Secretary, the National Security Council concluded, with the approval of the President, that the United States should prepare to withdraw its forces following the formation of a separate government in South Korea and by the end of 1948, if possible. Meanwhile a gradual reduction of forces was to be carried out.

This reduction proceeded cautiously and was stopped in the fall of 1946 because the General Assembly had not completed its action on Korea and because conditions in Korea did not justify going on with the withdrawal at that time.

In March 1949 the National Security Council completed its review of Korean policy. At that time the total strength of United States trained South Korean forces was 114,000 divided as follows: 65,000 Army; 16,000 Police; 14,000 Coast Guard. 50,000 of the Army were fully equipped with United States infantry-type materiel. About one-half of the police and Coast Guard were equipped with United States side arms and carbines, while the remainder had Japanese equipment.

Responsible American military representatives in the field, including General MacArthur, had reported that the state of combat readiness of the U.S.-trained South Korean forces was such as to justify the withdrawal of United States occupation forces.

Under these circumstances and in view of the recommendation the General Assembly had made in December 1948 that all forces should leave Korea, and in view of the fact that the Republic was now an independent nation, it was agreed that preparations should be undertaken to complete withdrawal not later than June 30, 1949. This was done and the withdrawal was completed by that date.

In the second place, the withdrawal of American forces was in accordance with the policy of the United Nations. As pointed out above, after American military authorities had recommended the withdrawal of our forces as a matter of our own interest, the United States had included a provision calling for withdrawal in the resolution on Korea proposed to the General Assembly in October 1947. The General Assembly resolution was adopted on November 14, 1947 had called. For the withdrawal of both United States and U.S.S.R. forces as soon as practicable after the establishment of the Korean Government. This provision was warmly supported by other UN members and adopted 43-0, with the Soviet bloc not voting.

The member of the U.S. Delegation to the UN who handled this resolution before the General Assembly was Mr. Dulles. In presenting the U.S. position he emphasized on several occasions the desire of the U.S. to withdraw from Korea all its occupation forces and that the U.S.S.R. should withdraw its forces. He declared that the U.S. had no intention of seeking bases in Korea.

After the UN-sponsored elections in Korea in 1948, Mr. Dulles again handled the resolution on Korea in the General Assembly which also called for the withdrawal of forces. This resolution was adopted December 12, 1948. As far as could be known, Soviet forces were, in fact, withdrawn from North Korea in December 1948. It was important that the United States faithfully follow these resolutions. In addition, it has been the policy of the United States to refrain from military interference in the affairs of free nations. After Korea became an independent nation, it was important that she be freed of foreign occupying forces. It should be recalled that after the United Nations had established the Republic as an independent country, Soviet propaganda proclaimed that the Republic was being held under military control by the United States. This propaganda would have had serious political effects throughout the Far East if United States forces had continued to remain in the Republic.

United States Assistance to Korea

Perhaps the most outstanding of the many examples of partisan hindsight is the charge that the Administration did not give adequate assistance to Korea. This charge is shouted most loudly and with least grace by the very Republican leaders who opposed the economic and military aid programs .

A tabulation of the total aid sent to the Republic of Korea by the United States is at Appendix I.

The ability of a country to defend itself against internal insurrection and foreign aggression depends upon both its economic and military strength. Tanks and guns are necessary to repel invasion, but these implements of war become ineffective when those who man them are hungry and are embittered against the country they are called upon to defend. Empty stomachs and resentful minds are breeding places for Communism. The social welfare of a nation is as important as its armaments. Senator Vandenberg pointed this out when in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the Mutual Defense Assistance Program in 1949 he stated that there

would be no use in voting for military aid to Korea if economic aid were not also voted. This was of course true, yet the way this principle was followed by the Republicans in the Congress can be seen from their actions on two major measures for economic aid to Korea proposed by the Administration.

Economic Aid to Korea

(1) A proposal was made by Under Secretary Acheson in the spring of 1947 that there be started at once a three-year grant-in-aid program to the Republic of Korea. This program was calculated to make the Republic substantially self-supporting by June 30, 1950. If this program had been carried out as planned, the Republic of Korea would have had by now the economic strength to support a defense force which might have deterred North Korean aggression or if it had come, would have been far more potent in limiting its effectiveness. Yet when this farsighted proposal was presented to the leaders in both the Senate and the House of the Republican 50th Congress, they neither recognized vital importance of the plan nor gave it consideration.

(2) President Truman submitted, in June 1949, a plan for a "little ECA" for Korea. In submitting the measure to the 1st Congress, the President made it clear that to stave off danger from the Communists north of the 38th parallel, the inhabitants of the Republic of South Korea would have to enjoy the material benefits of democratic institutions—a self-supporting economy and a decent standard of living. The President pointed out that while the aid then given to Korea was essentially for basic relief without which the Republic's economy would collapse, bare relief alone could not make South Korea self-supporting. Consequently, the objective of the aid should be recovery, and not merely relief. The President called upon Congress to authorize for Korea an ECA program such as had been provided for countries of Western Europe.

Despite the opposition of the Republican-Isolationist bloc to the "little ECA for Korea" which was recommended by President Truman, the Senate passed a bill (S. 2319) authorizing \$150 million aid for Korea. The vote, on October 12, 1949, was 48-13. Among those opposing this measure were Republican stalwarts such as Capehart, Jenner, Kem, Langer, Young, and Martini; Senator Cain, not voting, was announced against the bill.

The companion House Bill (H.R. 5330) reached the floor of the House on January 19, 1950.

THE HOUSE REJECTED THE LITTLE ECA BILL FOR KOREA BY A VOTE OF 191-192. (January 19, 1950)

Let's see who killed economic aid to Korea and what it meant

The Republicans in Congress must shoulder the blame for the drastic reversal of Korean economic progress and armed aggression against the only remaining democratic spot on the map of northern Asia. Here is how the parties voted on this measure in the House:

	Yeas	Nays
Democrats	170	61
Republicans	21	130
Marcantonio	–	1
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	191	192

This was the most bitter blow to the aspirations of the people Korea since the Japanese conquest some 45 years earlier.

It was a breach of democratic faith and an open invitation to the communist aggression which followed six months later,

It gave Soviet strategists ground for believing the Republican Party would not support Administration efforts to shore up and bulwark Korea and other Far Eastern countries against communist infiltration and aggression.

It served notice on the democratic elements of Korea that they could not depend on the assistance of the world's strongest democratic nation.

This was a terrible blow to the morale of the Korean government. Newspaper and radio comment mirrored the hopelessness of their situation as the only democratic government in a continent of communism with the pipeline to other democratic nations now severed. Government officials had to issue pleas to the people to remain calm; to hope that the horrible blunder would be rectified.

It provided the communist puppet regime with renewed vigor in its battle to wrest control of all of Korea. This defeat gave the

communist radio at Pyongyang more grist for its propaganda mill than it had received for four years. The communist radio could and did now quote United States Congressmen to the effect that any aid to the democratic government of South Korea was “pouring money down a rat hole.” The communists logically concluded that if the United States was so unwilling to grant aid to democratic Korea with money, it certainly never would provide aid with men. Many observers believe that it was as a result of this vote that the communist regime of North Korea decided that they could invade and conquer the democratic Republic of south Korea without fear of interference from other democratic nations. The invasion was launched within six months of the vote.

The Republicans are now trying to excuse killing the “little ECA” for Korea by claiming they did it ‘because (1) US troops had been withdrawn from Korea, because (2) military aid was not being provided for Korea, and because (3) the bill did not provide aid for China.

The lameness of these excuses is shown, however, by the real facts: (1) as detailed above, the withdrawal of US troops was made for solid military reasons, it was done at the request of the UN, and it was done with the approval of Republican officials; (2) military aid for Korea had already been included in the Mutual Defense Assistance Act passed in October 1949—despite Republican opposition; (3) when the “little ECA” for Korea was again brought up ‘by the Administration in February 1950 it included aid for China and still it was fought by the great majority of the Republicans.

Here ‘s what happened ;

After the “little ECA” for Korea was killed in the House by Republican opposition in January 19, 1950, the House Foreign Affairs Committee took up in late January 1950 the companion bill (S. 2319) which had been passed by the Senate October 12, 1949. Back in December the Administration had already decided that the Act to provide economic aid to China, which would expire February 15, 1950, should be continued. It was preparing to introduce legislation to do this when the House killed the Korean Aid bill January 19, 1950. Therefore, in order to save the faces of Republicans who were ashamed of their vote and were already making up excuses for it, the House Foreign Affairs Committee amended S. 2319 to provide not only for aid for Korea, but also to

continue aid to China, as the Administration had already planned to do so.

In view of the excuses being made by the Republicans now, one might think that all of them—or at the very least a majority of them—would have voted for the combined Korea-China. aid bill.

But what happened? when S. 2319 reached the floor of the House, the Republicans again attacked aid to Korea. A motion was made by a Republican (A. L. Miller, Nebr.) to cut the Korean aid fund by two-thirds—a cut which would have totally destroyed the program and convinced the people of Korea and the people of Asia that the US could not be depended on to help Asiatic peoples.

Congressman Marcantonio voted for this cut.

The Republicans in the House voted 99-36 for this cut.

The Democrats voted 203-37 against the cut and saved Korean aid. The total vote was 239-137 against (February 9, 1950).

When the bill came to final passage, the vote was on both aid to Korea and continuation of aid to Chins.

Marcantonio voted against the bill.

Despite their protestations of interest in the Far East and excuses for not voting for the first bill for aid to Korea, the Republicans in the House voted 91-42 against aid to Korea and against continued aid to China.

The Democrats voted 198-42 for the bill, uniting possible aid to Korea and continued economic aid to China. The total vote was 240-134 (February 9, 1950) .

Although the Korean bill was thus finally passed, the damage had been done. The Republicans in the House had delayed the vote on the Korean Aid Bill for four months; had temporarily killed the bill in the House; and had raised serious doubts about the chances of continued aid, and had contributed to the communist belief that we would not support South Korea against armed attack.

The impression was left with the Korean people, both democratic elements and communist puppets, that further American aid was tied by a very thin thread. Korean newspapers pointed out that 134 isolationist votes, a very large minority, had opposed final passage.

The isolationist bloc of the House must shoulder the responsibility for the communist attack on South Korea. The Communist puppets in North Korea took the strong opposition to financial aid as proof that they need not fear that the US would come to the aid of the Republic in case of attack.

The false economy preached by the Republicans is costing us far more than the amount originally proposed for the "little ECA for Korea." not only in dollars BUT IN THE LIVES OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS. The citizens of America. should mark well and remember that the Republican Party leadership was responsible for this opposition to aid for the Republic of Korea.

United States Policy for Military Aid to Korea

One of the most empty claims now being made is that the United States policy in aiding Korea should have been to supply the arms and equipment necessary to enable the Republic's defense forces to resist and defeat any attack made on them—in short that the United States through military aid should have guaranteed the defense of the Republic. A number of Republican leaders are now feigning surprise that the United States policy was limited to arming the defense forces of the Republic to maintain internal order and to deter aggression.

The extreme policy now proposed by these Republican critics, that the United States should have attempted to train and arm forces of the Republic of Korea so that by its own efforts it could have resisted any kind of attack from the north, would have been unwise for two reasons:

(1) The Republic of South Korea itself could not have supported such forces or their necessary equipment, and the full cost would have fallen on the United States.

(2) It would have been an intolerable burden upon the United States (involving taxes which the Republicans would have been the first to oppose) had we adopted the policy of arming every nation. In advance to overcome Communist aggression which might or might

not develop. Korea was but a single “danger spot” among many; it was equally probable that the Communists might foment attacks in Western Europe, in Greece, Turkey, Iran, or in the Philippines. The only practical policy, therefore, was to give aid which would tend to discourage Communist aggression or to resist invasion until more ample armaments could be supplied.

Military Aid to Korea

Certain Republicans, seeking to gain political capital from the initial tragic collapse of South Korean forces before the surprise onslaught of North Korea, are charging that the United States did not give military assistance to the Republic.

This is, of course, untrue. Of the \$495.7 million United States aid to Korea since the war, military property transferred to Korea had a total procurement cost of \$141,000,000. Of this \$56,000,000 was specifically for military purposes. This included such items as 49,000 M-1 carbines, 42,000 Garand rifles, 43,000 rockets, 4500 machine guns and submachine guns, 170,000 grenades and large numbers of howitzers, mortars, rocket launchers, etc. It also included 20 small airplanes and 25 mine sweepers suitable for coast guard, plus other vessels. They also received 15,000 rifles and other equipment for 15,000 infantry-men. The remaining \$55 million worth of equipment was such materiel as trucks, tractors, trailers and implements which could be used either for civilian or military purposes.

All of this equipment was sufficient for outfitting an army of 65,000 men. In addition the United States equipped a coast guard of 11,000 and 15,000 police—a total security force of 114,000 men.

Debunking Republican Propaganda

Most often repeated by Republican proa-geniists is the fantastic charge that “only \$200 worth of wire was sent to Korea out of a hundred million dollars appropriated under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program of 1949”. As might be expected, this malicious innuendo comes most frequently from the lips of those who most violently opposed this program to arm free nations.

This charge is both an outright lie and a distortion of the facts.

The \$100 million referred to was composed of (a) \$27,640,000 authorized under Section 301 for Iran, the Philippines, and Korea and (b) \$75 million authorized for the "general area of China", which had to cover all of Southeast Asia, including Burma, Indochina, Siam, and Indonesia, whose needs were fully great enough to absorb it. The sum available for Korea could be only \$10.2 million out of the \$27,640,000. This was to provide maintenance and spare parts for the American equipment in the hands of the Korean military forces and for the Korean coast guard. At the time of the attack \$253,000 worth of arms for coast guard vessels and small aircraft sold to Korea under the authority of the MDA Act had been delivered. In addition, \$53,000 worth of signal equipment was in process of being shipped from San Francisco. This does not include the \$298,000 worth of spare parts which were on the way to San Francisco for shipment to Korea. The greater portion of the assistance needed however, was equipment, spare parts and replacements which had to be rehabilitated or manufactured. This material was part of general orders for similar material under the entire MDAP, and orders for almost all of the entire \$10 million had been placed.

The gross distortion by the Republicans is the inexcusable implication that immediately upon the appropriation of funds the material scheduled for Korea could be taken off the shelves and sent. The Republicans who indulge in this deliberate attempt to mislead our citizens are aware that it was first necessary to carry out the mandate of Congress to negotiate bilateral agreements with each MDAP country. It was also necessary to place orders for the manufacture or rehabilitation of material for Korea as for other countries. This takes time.

[Republican Opposition to Military Aid to Korea](#)

The fact that attacks now being made by the Republicans are wholly for partisan purposes and based entirely on hindsight is shown by the voting record of the Republicans on the Military Aid Program planned for Korea by the Administration and presented as part of the Mutual Defense Assistance bill in 1949.

The Mutual Defense Assistance Program was supported by veterans organizations: American Legion, American Veterans Committee (AVC), AMVETS, Catholic War Veterans and Jewish

War Veterans, labor (CIO and AFL) and other groups which believed in supporting democratic countries abroad by deed as well as word.

The program was bitterly attacked and opposed by the Communist Party Of the U. S.

In the House, the main roll call vote on the bill, including the provision for military aid to Korea, was on final passage of the bill. The vote was 238 for passage and 122 against.

187 Democrats voted for the bill and only 27 against it.

On the other hand, only 51 Republicans voted for the bill and 94 voted against it (August 18, 1949).

In the final vote in the Senate, the bill passed 55-24. Of these, 35 Democrats voted for the bill and 9 against it, while only 20 Republicans voted for the bill and 15 against it.

When the report of the House-Senate Conference on the bill, which had restored most of the funds, came back to the House a motion to recommit it—in effect to kill or reduce it—was made and was defeated 113-214. Of these, 89 Republicans voted to recommit and only 45 opposed.

On the final House vote on the Conference Report, it passed 224-109. Of these 173 Democrats voted for the measure and 24 against, while only 51 Republicans voted for it and 84 voted against.

The passage of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act, including military aid to Korea, in essentially the form requested by President Truman, was due to the members of Congress who believed in practising as well as preaching international cooperation and mutual assistance.

The Democratic Party can be proud of its record on these votes.

The Republican Party cannot.

[Why American Forces Are Now in Korea](#)

The United States withdrew its forces from Korea in June 1949 at the request of the United Nations. It did so after a prior decision was made, on the advice of United States military authorities, that United

States strategic interests did not require the further retention of United States forces in Korea. It did so because the Republic of Korea had become an independent nation from which foreign troops should appropriately be withdrawn.

American fighting forces returned to Korea in June 1950 under radically different circumstances. The reasons why they returned were clearly stated by President Truman in his message to the Congress on July 19, 1950:

“This outright breach of the peace, in violation of the United Nations Charter, created a real and present danger to the security of every nation. This attack was, in addition, a demonstration of contempt for the United Nations, since it was an attempt to settle, by military aggression, a question which the United Nations had been working to settle by peaceful means.

The attack on the Republic of Korea, therefore, was a clear challenge to the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and to the specific actions taken by the United Nations in Korea. If this challenge had not been met squarely, the effectiveness of the United Nations would have been all but ended, and the hope of mankind that the United Nations would develop into an institution of world order would have been shattered.”

In this attack the international Communist movement, for the first time, adopted open warfare to achieve its purposes. Inaction or hesitation on the part of the United States or the United Nations to use every means at their disposal to put down such aggression would have invited further aggression all over the world.

Therefore, prompt action was imperative. The United Nations strongly supported by the United States, moved vigorously and unhesitatingly to check and throw back the aggression. By this action the world community seized the initiative from the aggressor. American troops returned to Korea under the authority of the United Nations, Support of the common defense of free peoples, and the freedom and security of the United States itself’.

[A Farsighted, Vigorous, Effective Foreign Policy](#)

The swift, courageous action of President Truman and of the United Nations following the attack on the Republic of Korea has

demonstrated the vigor, foresight and effectiveness of the positive U. S. policy in support of the free Korean people and of free people everywhere when menaced by aggression.

The attack came before daybreak Sunday, June 25, 1950 (Korean time). The report of the U. S. Ambassador John J. Muccio reached the State Department Saturday night, June 24, at 9:25 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time. The Deputy Representative to the UN, Ernest A. Gross, got UN Secretary General Lie out of bed at 3 a.m, Sunday, to inform him of the attack and request an immediate meeting of the Security Council.

The Security Council met at 2 pm. on Sunday, June 25. By that time the U. S. Government had prepared a draft resolution which was introduced and adopted. By this resolution the Security Council determined that a breach of the peace had been committed; it called for the cessation of hostilities and for the withdrawal of North Korean forces. This resolution also called upon "all Members to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities."

Sunday evening the President ordered additional military materiel sent to the Republic of Korea.

On Monday the Korean National Assembly asked the United States and the United Nations for further aid.

On Tuesday, June 27, at noon, the President announced that he had ordered U.S. air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support in accordance with the Security Council's resolution of June 25.

When the Security Council met again Tuesday, June 27, Ambassador Warren A. Austin, the U.S. Representative, introduced a resolution which recommended that the "Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area." This was adopted.

On June 30 the President announced that in keeping with the Security Council's resolution he had authorized the U.S. Air Force to conduct missions on specific military targets in Northern Korea "and had ordered 'a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast. "' He also

announced that General MacArthur had been “authorised to use certain supporting ground units.”

The prompt action of the United Nations in support of world peace is one of the great landmarks of history. For the first time would-be aggressors have been shown that aggression against one free nation will be answered by the force of all free nations.

This great forward step toward permanent peace did not come by accident. It came because the United States, three years ago, had placed the problem of Korean independence and security where it ought to be—in the world community. It came because the foreign policy of President Truman and the Democratic Administration is founded on the knowledge and belief that the freedom and independence of America are bound up with the freedom and independence of the people of every free nation in the world. It came because the United States immediately took the lead in the United Nations to preserve the freedom and independence of far-off Korea.

The United Nations acted with speed and decision. Fifty-three of the fifty-nine members of the UN have supported the UN action. Thirty have already pledged concrete aid. Naval forces from Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand have been and are now in action under the United Nations command. Fighting planes from Australia, Canada, and Great Britain are in Korean skies with ours. British forces are fighting alongside Korean forces and our own. More troops have been offered or are on the way from Turkey, Thailand and Canada.

As a result of the farsighted policy of the United States and of President Truman’s determined leadership in this grave crisis, the United Nations now stands as a stronger and more vigorous instrument of world peace than ever before.

Every Democratic candidate may place this story with confidence before the voters in the November elections.

Appendix A: The original document

Original located at the Truman Library:

https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentid=ki-18-4&pagenumber=1

- 3 -
United States Efforts to Bring Korea

It should, of course, be thoroughly understood that the division of Korea and the current of United States forces into Korea was never intended to be for a long-term occupation. This was a development which resulted from the practical refusal of the USSR to agree to the establishment of a united and independent Korea upon terms which would do justice to the aspirations of the Korean people for freedom and national independence.

At the Cairo Conference, in December 1943, the United States, Great Britain and China had declared that, after Japan had been defeated, all Korea would become a single Republic. This was reaffirmed at the Potsdam Conference, in July 1945. The parties joined in that declaration from the first days after the acceptance of Japanese surrender, the United States endeavored to obtain agreement of fulfillment by the USSR of its pledge. The Soviets at that time refused to deal with any non-Communist Korean groups and refused every reasonable proposal submitted. At the same time, they engaged in an ever-increasing campaign of anti-American propaganda and vilification and continued to create Communist controlled military forces in North Korea. In view of this statement, it was concluded that the justifiable desire of the Korean people for independence and unity entitled them to have the aid of the world community in getting it. Therefore, the United States took the Korean problem to the United Nations in November of 1947, asking that Korea be established as a united nation through election of a provisional government which would free it of occupation. The Korean issue was handled before the General Assembly by Mr. John Foster Dulles, a member of the U. S. Delegation. The proposal was approved by a vote of 49-0, with Russia and her satellite abstaining.

The election was observed by a United Nations Commission but was confined to North Korea because the Soviet Communist officials of North Korea refused to let the United Nations Commission travel south of the 38th parallel. More than 90% of the eligible voters of North Korea participated in the election in spite of Communist terrorism that kept nearly all Koreans from voting during the election.

The National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Korea adopted its constitution on July 12, 1948. The constitution provided the Korean people "equality, liberty, and happiness" and provided for democratic government. This constitution only affected the two-thirds of the population living south of the 38th parallel. The Russian veto in the legislature of the Republic was left without representation of the people in Northern Korea. The Republic of Korea was inaugurated August 15, 1948.

Initially, the Soviet controlled North Korean regime announced that a constitution for the "Korean Democratic People's Republic" had been adopted and that elections would be held in August of 1949 to elect representatives. The Communist North Korean government proceeded to hold a "pseudo-people's election" with "secret" ballots being cast in North Korea.

- 4 -
Following the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to permit the UN to hold elections in North Korea, the National Security Council in April 1950 again considered the question of being withdrawn. With the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Banfill, Admiral Banfill and General Spang) and the Department of Defense, of which Mr. Forrestal was still Secretary, the National Security Council concluded, with the approval of the President, that the United States should prepare to withdraw the forces following the cessation of a separate government in North Korea and by the end of 1950, if possible, accomplish a general reduction of forces to be decided later.

This reduction proceeded satisfactorily and was stopped in the Fall of 1948 because the National Security Council had not completed its review on Korea and because conditions in Korea did not justify going on with the withdrawal at that time.

In March 1949 the National Security Council completed its review of Korean policy. At that time the total strength of United States Troops in North Korea was 214,000 divided as follows: 10,000 Army; 14,000 Marines; 4,000 Coast Guard; 30,000 of the Army were fully equipped with United States Infantry-type material. About one-half of the police and Coast Guard were equipped with United States rifle guns and machine guns, while the remainder had Japanese equipment.

Representative American military representatives in the Field, including General MacArthur, had reported that the state of combat readiness of the U.S.-trained North Korean forces was such as to justify the withdrawal of United States occupation forces.

Under these circumstances and in view of the recommendation of the General Assembly had made in December 1947 that all forces should leave Korea, and in view of the fact that the Republic was an independent nation, it was agreed that preparations should be undertaken to complete withdrawal not later than June 30, 1950. This was done and the withdrawal was completed by that date.

In the second phase, the withdrawal of American forces was in accordance with the policy of the United Nations. As pointed out above, all American military representatives had recommended the withdrawal of our forces as a matter of our own interest, the United States had initiated a program calling for withdrawal in the resolution in March prepared by the National Security Council in October 1947. The General Assembly resolution was adopted on December 18, 1947 and called for the withdrawal of both United States and U.S.S.R. forces as soon as practicable after the establishment of a Korean Government. This resolution was warmly supported by other UN members and adopted 49-0, with the Soviet Union not voting.

The member of the U. S. Delegation to the UN who broached this resolution before the General Assembly was Mr. Dulles. In presenting the U.S. position he emphasized on several occasions the desire of the U.S. to withdraw from Korea all its occupation forces and that the U.S.S.R. should withdraw its forces. He declared that the U.S. had no intention of sending troops to Korea.

- 5 -
The General Assembly in September 1948 re-elected the Republic of Korea as the only internationally established government in Korea. The United States and all the other free nations have recognized the Republic. The United States sponsored the admission of the Republic to the United Nations but Soviet Russia vetoed its entrance. (USSR and Communist satellites cast the only opposing votes.)

Withdrawal of United States Forces

National participants of insight are now claiming that the withdrawal of United States forces from Korea was an essential step not advised by American military authorities and should not have been taken. They say that if American forces had been left, the North Korean attack would not have occurred.

The facts are: The withdrawal was primarily for military reasons and upon the recommendation of military authorities. It was requested by the United Nations. It was made upon the recommendation of and in full consultation with responsible Republic officials. In the only military General Headquarters report issued since Korean security forces were organized in this area.

In the first place, the withdrawal of American forces was primarily for military reasons and upon the recommendation of the Defense establishment. American military resources were severely limited by the rapid demobilization demanded by the people at the end of the war, by the cut in funds available for military purposes made necessary by the Republic-sponsored United Nations and by the limitations on resources for American armed forces.

It was therefore necessary for United States military authorities to spread our available resources thin throughout the many areas of United States world-wide responsibility where potential danger signs became real threats.

Prior to the time the United States took the Korean case to the UN in the Fall of 1948, the Republic's authorities in the United States Government continuously emphasized that the United States had no strategic interest in retaining forces there.

In light of the facts stated above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, and the Secretary of Defense informed the State-Defense Coordinating Committee, that the United States had little strategic interest in maintaining the existing troops in Korea. At that time the Joint Chiefs of Staff were General Banfill, Admiral Banfill and General Spang of the Air Force. The Secretary of Defense was Mr. Forrestal. They felt that existing shortages of military support in many areas of American responsibility throughout the world, made it essential that all available resources be utilized in accordance with the relative military priorities of such areas.

Because of these military considerations the resolution on Korea submitted to the UN by the United States in October 1947 contained a provision calling for the withdrawal of all occupying forces.

- 6 -
After the UN-sponsored elections in Korea in 1948, Mr. Dulles would have had the National Security Council in the General Assembly which also called for the withdrawal of forces. This resolution was adopted December 18, 1948. At that time no such thing as a "secret ballot" was in fact, withdrawn from North Korea in December 1948. It was important that the United States faithfully follow these resolutions. In addition, it has been the policy of the United States to refuse any military interference in the affairs of free nations. After Korea became an independent nation, it was important that she be freed of foreign occupying forces. It should be recalled that after the United Nations had established the Republic as an independent country, Soviet propaganda proclaimed that the Republic was being held under military control by the United States. This propaganda would have had serious political effects throughout the Far East if United States forces had continued to remain in the Republic.

United States Assistance to Korea

Perhaps the most interesting of the many examples of partisan biaslight in the charge that the administration did not give adequate assistance to Korea. This charge is directed most loudly and with least grace by the very Republicans leaders who opposed the economic and military aid program.

A tabulation of the total aid sent to the Republic of Korea by the United States is at Appendix 2.

The ability of a country to defend itself against internal insurrection and foreign aggression depends upon both its economic and military strength. Korea had gone too long without aid to be able to defend itself against the enemy they are called upon to defend. Many Americans and newsmen are finding places for discussion. The entire welfare of a nation is as important as its armaments. General MacArthur pointed this out when in the United States he pointed his finger on the United States Defense Reorganization Program in 1949 he stated that there would be no use in voting for military aid to Korea if economic aid were not also voted. This was of course true, yet the way this principle was followed by the Republicans in the Congress can be seen from their attitude in the major answers for economic aid to Korea prepared by the Administration.

Answers to Mr. Dulles

[1] A proposal was made by Under Secretary Acheson in the Spring of 1948 that there be created an "aid" program to the Republic of Korea. This program was calculated to take the Republic out of its economic straits. It was approved by the President on June 24, 1948. If this program had been carried out as planned, the Republic of Korea would have had by now the economic strength to support a defense force which might have deterred North Korean aggression as, if it had come, would have been the more potent in breaking its effectiveness. Yet when this far-sighted proposal was presented to the leaders in both the Senate and the House of the Republican Party Congress, they neither recognized the vital importance of the plan nor gave it consideration.

(2) President Truman vetoed, in June 1950, a plan for a "Little Red" Air Force. In concluding the message to the UN Congress, the President said it clear that to show off Super Force the Communist North of the UN members, the Headquarters of the Republic of South Korea would have to enjoy the benefits of American institutions—a self-supporting economy and a government organized in 1948. The President pointed out that while the aid thus given to Korea was essentially for Super Force which the Republic's economy could not support, the President's objective of the aid should be recovery, and not merely relief. The President called upon Congress to authorize for Korea an Air Force such as had been provided for members of Western Europe.

Despite the opposition of the Republic-Independent bloc to the "Little Red Air Force" which was sponsored by President Truman, the Senate passed a bill (S. 954) authorizing \$50 million aid for Korea. The vote, on October 12, 1950, was 46-15. Among those opposing this measure were Republican Senators such as O'Dwyer, Javaher, Tom, Lister, Long, and Senator Senator Olin, not voting, who announced against the bill.

The Senate House bill (H.R. 950) reached the floor of the House on January 19, 1951.

THE HOUSE PASSED THE LITTLE RED AIR FORCE BILL BY A VOTE OF 371-102 (January 19, 1951)

Let's see who killed the Little Red Air Force and when it happened.

The Republicans in Congress must shoulder the blame for the drastic reversal of Korean economic progress and great aggression against the only remaining democracy east of the Rio Grande. Here is how the parties voted on this measure in the House:

	YEA	NA
Democrats	170	61
Republicans	21	137
Abstentions	21	10
	371	102

This was the last bitter blow to the Republicans of the people since the Truman support was by party earlier.

It was a breach of democratic faith and an open invitation to the communist aggression which followed six months later.

It was a great strategic ground for believing the Republics were would not support American efforts to show up and help out Korea and other Far Eastern countries against communist infiltration and aggression.

In case of the measure being made by the Republicans are, one might think that all of them or at the very least a majority of them would have voted for the measure. Here's what happened.

On March 19, 1951, the House passed the floor of the House, the Republics again attacked aid to Korea. A motion was made by a Republican (Mr. Lister, Ohio) to cut the House bill from \$50 million to \$25 million which would have totally destroyed the program and deprived the people of Korea and the people of Asia that the UN could not be depended on to help Asiatic Republics.

Congressional Democrats voted for this cut.

The Republicans in the House voted 21-137 for this cut.

The Democrats voted 279-77 against the cut and saved Korean aid. The total vote was 279-107 against (February 9, 1951).

When the bill came to final passage, the vote was on both aid to Korea and continuation of aid to China.

Democrats voted against the bill.

Despite their protestations of interest in the Far East and concern for aid to Korea, the House bill for aid to Korea, the Republics in the House voted 21-137 against aid to Korea and against continued aid to China.

The Democrats voted 279-77 for the bill, saving possible aid to Korea and continued economic aid to China. The total vote was 279-107 (February 9, 1951).

Although the House bill was finally passed, the Senate had been told. The Republics in the Senate had delayed the vote on the House bill for four months, had repeatedly killed the bill in the Senate, and had raised serious doubts about the chances of continued aid, and had contributed to the communist belief that we would not support South Korea against communist attack.

The Republicans who left with the House people, both Democratic elements and Communist puppets, that Far-Eastern aid was tied to a very thin thread. Chinese newspapers pointed out that UN international voice, a very thin sliver, had broken final passage.

The international bloc of the House must shoulder the responsibility for the economic attack on South Korea. The communist puppets in South Korea took the entire opposition to Congress as proof that they had not for four years the UN would see to the aid of the Republic in case of attack.

The other reason probed by the Republicans is wanting to see the vote that the Senate originally proposed for the "Little Red Air Force" was only in violation of the UN Charter. The violence of America should see well and remember that the Republics carry leadership was responsible for the opposition to aid for the Republic of Korea.

It seemed certain to the democratic elements of Korea that they could not depend on the assistance of the world's strongest democratic nation.

This was a terrible blow to the people of the Korean government, newspaper and radio comment showed the helplessness of their situation as the only democratic government in a continent of communism with the pipeline to other democratic nations now severed. Government officials had to issue plans to the people to reach aid, to hope that the Soviet Union would be restricted.

It provided the communist puppet regime with renewed vigor in the battle to wrest control of all of Korea. This defeat gave the communist media an enormous new grain for its propaganda mill that it had received for four years. The communist radio could not give the United States Congressmen to the effect that we are all for the democratic government of South Korea and "having money down a rat hole." The communist logically concluded that if the United States was unwilling to grant aid to Democratic Korea with money, it certainly never would provide aid with men. They re-emerged believe that it was as a result of this vote that the communist regime of North Korea decided that they could invade and conquer the democratic Republic of South Korea without fear of interference from other democratic nations. The invasion was launched within six months of the vote.

The Republics are now trying to ensure killing the "Little Red" Air Force by vetoing the bill because (1) UN troops had been withdrawn from Korea, because (2) military aid was not being provided for Korea, and because (3) the bill did not provide aid for China.

The likelihood of these actions is shown, however, by the real facts: (1) As detailed above, the withdrawal of UN troops was only for a limited period, it was done at the request of the UN, and it was done with the approval of Republican officials; (2) military aid for Korea had already been included in the Mutual Defense Assistance Act passed in December 1950—despite Republican opposition; (3) even the "Little Red" Air Force was again brought up by the administration in February 1951 in the House and passed by the great majority of the House.

Here's what happened:

After the "Little Red" Air Force was killed in the House by Republican opposition in January 19, 1951, the House Foreign Affairs Committee took up in late January 1951 the amendment bill (H. R. 950) which had been passed by the House October 17, 1950. Such is the character of the Administration had already decided that the act to provide economic aid to "China" which would expire February 12, 1951, should be continued. It was proposed to introduce legislation to do this that the House killed the Foreign Aid bill January 19, 1951. Therefore, in order to save the House of Representatives and were assured of their vote and were already voting up support for it, the House Foreign Affairs Committee amended it, 210-0 to provide not only for aid for Korea, but also to continue aid to China, as the Administration had already planned to do.

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HOUSE HOUSES FIGHT FOR CHINA AND TO CHINA

One of the most sorry states now being made is that the United States policy is aiding Korea which has been simple the same and equipment necessary to enable the Republic's defense forces to resist and defeat the enemy who is trying to take over the United States through military aggression. The House of Representatives is the only body of the Republic which has the power to amend the Mutual Defense Assistance Act and to alter the defense forces of the Republic to maintain internal order and to alter aggression.

The extreme policy now proposed by these Republican critics, that the United States should have attempted to train and see forces of the Republic of Korea so that by the use of force it could have retained the help of Korea from the north, would have been made for two reasons:

(1) The Republic of South Korea itself could not have supported such forces or their necessary equipment, and the bill cut would have fallen on the United States.

(2) It would have been an infernal burden upon the United States (involving more than the Republics would have been the first to support) and we adopted the policy of sending every dollar in advance to someone. Communist aggression which might or might not develop. There was not a single "Red" spot" even when it was equally possible that the Democrats would force a vote in the House, in the Senate, in the UN, or in the Washington. The only political policy, therefore, was to give aid which would lead to a knowledge Communist aggression or to reject invasion until some single arrangement could be supplied.

SENATE AID TO CHINA

Certain Republican, seeking to gain political capital from the initial leader collapse of South Korean forces before the surprise onslaught of North Korea, are charging that the United States did not give military assistance to the Republic.

This is, of course, untrue. Of the \$50.7 million United States aid to Korea since the war, military property transferred to Korea had a total value of \$10,700,000, of which \$10,000,000 was available only for military purposes. This included over 30,000 M1 rifles, 42,000 M1 carbines, 4,000 M1 pistols, 450 M1 machine guns and submachine guns, 170,000 grenades and large numbers of mortars, bazookas, rocket launchers, etc. It also included 80 small airplanes and 25 other aircraft. It also included 13,000 rifles and other equipment for 15,000 troops. The remaining \$10 million worth of equipment was not material as trucks, trailers and airplanes which could be used either for civilians or military purposes.

All of this equipment was sufficient for maintaining an army of 40,000 men. In addition the United States equipped a coast guard of 4,000 and 40,000 police—a total security force of 110,000 men.



