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STUDY PROJECT

TASK FORCE SMITH--A LEADERSHIP FAILURE?

BY

COLONEL WILLIAM J. DAVIES
United States Army National Guard

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ABSTRACT

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On July 5, 1950, an American regimental combat team led by Lieutenant Colonel Charles "Brad" Smith engaged North Korean soldiers in combat. This force was referred to as "Task Force Smith." Post World War II leadership in the military and civilian sectors failed the soldiers of Task Force Smith and all servicemen who fought in the Korean War. Thousands of lives were unnecessarily lost due to the failure of senior military leaders to demand high training and readiness standards and senior military and political leadership to see the nature of future warfare and prepare for it. In the face of budgetary constraints and resultant reduction of the force structure, our military and civilian leadership today must study and absorb the lessons learned from the Task Force Smith experience to insure this failure does not reoccur. This study is an examination of Task Force Smith and of the failure of senior leadership of the post World War II era to assume the mandated responsibility to maintain a strong defense. Failure of our military and political leadership to recognize the need for and needs of land power forces today could be even more costly than that experienced in Korea between 1950 and 1953.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the immediate post World War II era in the Army between 1945 and 1950, because the similarities to the military drawdown of that era and the "new world order" of the 1990's are strikingly similar. The Truman Administration was compelled to "bring the boys home" and redirect the defense budget to solve domestic problems on the "home front".

The great military leaders who fought in World War II were now the senior leaders at the Pentagon and Defense Department. They were successful in total war in Europe and Asia, but in many respects failed to assess the capabilities of our potential enemies and the new nature of warfare; limited war, so unlike the global wars of World War I and II. That leadership failed to effectively serve the interests of national security between 1945 and 1950 at all levels is in some ways self evident in retrospect. But why and how did this occur? This is the insight history can provide. Hopefully the answers gained in retrospect will preclude a similar fate for soldiers tossed into war in the future.

Traditionally, the major reasons advanced for the Army's unpreparedness are political in nature. According to this school of thought, domestic political pressures upon the

government caused the security of the nation to take a back seat to domestic economic imperatives and the national desire to return to peace after the nearly five years of world war. But this is an inadequate explanation - American casualties of the Korean War were 54,246 killed (33,629 killed in combat) and 103,284 wounded. A professional officers corps cannot accept such a cavalier explanation. A more appropriate interpretation of Army unpreparedness is our senior military leaders failed to visualize the nature of the next war, focus on readiness and convince the democratic institutions of government of the need for a well equipped, trained and ready Army.

This paper briefly examines the key economic, domestic and political issues that confronted leadership between 1945 and the beginning of the Korean War but focuses on how Army readiness failed. It is intended that the issues surfaced in this paper will serve as a warning to our senior military leaders of political and readiness pitfalls of the current post-war era and provide insights which may preclude unnecessary loss of soldiers lives in future conflicts.

A Battle Lost

A NATION THAT DOES NOT PREPARE FOR ALL FORMS OF WAR SHOULD RENOUNCE THE USE OF WAR IN NATIONAL POLICY. A PEOPLE THAT DOES NOT PREPARE TO FIGHT SHOULD THEN BE MORALLY PREPARED FOR SURRENDER. TO FAIL TO PREPARE SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS FOR LIMITED, BLOODY GROUND ACTION AND THEN ENGAGE IN IT, IS FOLLY VERGING ON THE CRIMINAL.[1]

- T.R. Fehrenbach

On the evening of June 30th, 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Brad Smith assembled his task force, packed up equipment and prepared to move out. Task Force Smith departed Camp Wood Japan, at 3:00 A.M. the next morning in a rainstorm for Itazuke Airfield - an Air Force base some seventy five miles away. The convoy arrived at 8:05 A.M., five hours later. Smith was met at the airfield by Major General William Dean, Commander of the 24th Infantry Division. Brad Smith later commented the order given him by General Dean was "the most general, widespread, far-flung order that a battalion commander ever had."[2] Dean issued the following order to Smith at Itazuke Airfield:

> When you get to Pusan, head for Taejon. We want to stop the North Koreans as far from Pusan as we can. Block the main road as far north as possible. Contact General Church. If you can't locate him, go to Taejon and beyond if you can. Sorry I can't give you more information. That's all I've got. Good luck to you, and God bless you and your men.[3]

General Dean could not even tell Smith where Brigadier General John Church could be located. Brad Smith later said that he was convinced that Dean did not know if they could even land in Pusan because the enemy might already be there waiting for them.[4] Some have criticized General Dean for not challenging the Eighth Army Commander, General Johnnie Walker, for sending 24th Division soldiers into combat.[5]

Task Force Smith departed Japan on six C-54 transport aircraft headed for Pusan, Korea. Because of the restricted cargo capacity of the C-54's, critical weapons, equipment and vehicles were sent via ship with the remainder of the battalion. D Company, the heavy weapons company, traveled by ship because of the heavy load of equipment it carried. It would not rejoin the battalion until after the initial battle was over. In Japan, Smith had no knowledge of additional support, if any, that he would have with which to fight the North Koreans with.[6]

Arriving at Pusan on July 1st, Task Force Smith proceeded to Taejon by train on an all night ride. About 7 A.M. the next morning, Smith located General Church's command post and requested his orders. Church "...pointed to a place on the map and said 'we have a little action up here. All we need is some men up there who won't run when they see tanks. We're going to move you up to support the ROK's'."[7] Smith sought and received permission to conduct a forward reconnaissance to select a position where he could stand and fight the North Koreans. He headed north, up the main Pusan-Seoul highway, toward Suwon with

his driver and a few staff officers. He stopped on five different occasions - reconning possible fighting positions and recording them in case of later need. As he proceeded North toward Osan and Suwon, he passed increasing numbers of ROK soldiers - headed the opposite direction - south! The afternoon of July 3d, he finally reached the location where he would set up his initial position. Located on a ridgeline about three miles north of Osan (See maps on pages 70 and 71), the position had a panoramic view overlooking the countryside clear to Suwon nearly seven miles in the distance. It also provided an excellent view of the main highway and a railroad close by.

Reporting back to Church, Smith gathered his force that evening in Taejon and headed up the main highway to Pyongtaek where he was joined by Battery A of the 52d Field Artillery Battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel Miller O. Perry. The battery consisted of six 105mm howitzers, 73 vehicles and 108 men.[8] About 3:00 A.M. on the 5th of July, Smith's small task force moved into position at the pre-selected site north of Osan where the men began to dig in on the ridgeline. Battery A occupied a position approximately one mile behind the ridgline where the fighting positions were being dug. One of the battery's six howitzers was emplaced along the highway - halfway between the battery and Smith's position to serve as an antitank gun. Taking stock of his fighting resources for the upcoming attack Smith found the following:

- Two understrength infantry companies [B and C]
- A few headquarters personnel
- Commo and heavy-weapons troops
- two 75mm recoilless rifles [from 21st Rgt's 3d Bn Recoilless Rifle Platoon - "M" Co]
- two 4.2 inch mortars [from 21st Rgt's Hvy Mortar Co]
- six 2.36 inch rocket launchers [teams] [4 teams from Btry A]
- four 60mm mortars
- six light howitzers (105mm)
- four .50 caliber machine guns [from Btry A][9]

Miller Perry sent volunteers from Battery A with four teams with .50 caliber machine guns and four teams with 2.36 rocket launchers to augment Smith's forward positions.[10] The artillery battalion possessed eighteen rounds of "HEAT" (High Explosive Antitank) ammunition before departing Japan. However, Battery A was allocated only six rounds of HEAT along with 1,200 rounds of 105mm ammunition. HEAT rounds were "extremely scarce in the Far East because the Department of the Army had given priority to Europe for the few it had."[11] Significantly there were no antitank or antipersonnel mines available to Task Force Smith in Korea. Antitank mines placed in the road would have had significant success in delaying or stopping the tanks and personnel. Additionally, each soldier carried 120 rounds of ammunition for his rifle and two days supply of C-rations.

On the morning of July 5, 1950, Task Force Smith consisted

of 540 soldiers: Smith's original contingent of 406 (17 officers and 389 enlisted men) augmented by 134 officers and enlisted soldiers of Battery A, 52d Field Artillery Battalion. At about 7:00 A.M. tanks were observed in the distance - moving along the highway towards Task Force Smith's position. At 8:16 A.M., the battery began directing fire upon the columns of North Korean soldiers and their tanks. The enemy infantry began to scatter and take cover, but the Soviet built T-34 medium tanks continued driving forward. The artillery 105mm high explosive rounds scored direct hits on the T-34's with no effect. Even HEAT rounds bounced off the T-34's, a second class tank. Firing 85mm cannons and machine guns, the T-34's continued to close with the American soldiers. The Task Force's 75mm recoilless rifles were fired at distances of no more than 700 yards scoring direct hits, but without effect.[12] First Lieutenant Ollie Conners, Platoon Leader in B Company, took a 2.36 rocket launcher and crawled into a ditch within fifteen yards of tanks moving along the road. In all, Conners fired 22 rounds at the rear of a tank - supposedly where the armor was the thinnest; the rounds either deflected or didn't work at all. Of the thirty three T-34 tanks only four were put out of action.

One event in the battle was recounted as follows:

> Sergeant First Class Loran Chambers, a veteran of World War II already had five Purple Hearts. When he called over the telephone for some 60mm mortar support, the answer was: 'Won't reach that far.'
>
> > 'How about some 81!' he yelled.
> > 'We don't have any.'
> > 'Hell, for Christ's sake, throw in some 4.2's!'
> > 'We're out of that too.'
> > 'How about the artillery?'
> > 'No communications.'
> > 'How about the Air Force?'
> > 'We don't know where they are.'
> > 'Then damn it, call the Navy!'
> > 'They can't reach this far.'
>
> Chambers shouted an obscenity. 'Send me a camera. I want to take a picture of this.' A few minutes later a mortar fragment gave Chambers his sixth Purple Heart.[13]

The ability to communicate between the infantry positions and the artillery proved critical. Commo wire connecting these positions was laid on top of the road surface rather than burying it in. Tanks moving across the highway severed the wire and the communications were out by approximately 8:30 A.M. Training, equipment, and doctrine had failed the valiant soldiers of Task Force Smith.

The battle lasted nearly seven hours until ammunition was about gone and the North Koreans were flanking and over-running the defensive positions. At approximately 2:00 P.M. Smith directed his men to withdraw toward Ansong. Brigadier General Brad Smith later gave the following account of the North Korean force he was up against:

> It is estimated by the time we fired the first shot at the oncoming infantry that there were two regiments of the 4th Division [NKPA] in our view. I did not know what their composition was; I knew there was a hell of a lot of people coming at us and I didn't know what was left at Suwon. It turns out that it was what was left of the 4th Division and all of the 5th Division coming right behind them. So, I had eventually to face 20,000 instead of maybe four or five thousand.[14]

Smith's force carried out as many wounded as could be carried. However, other wounded and dead, together with equipment, were left behind. In a matter of a few hours, Task Force Smith had been over run. Thus ended the first involvement of American soldiers in the Korean War. "Smith and Perry had lost about 185 men killed, wounded, captured or missing."[15] The North Koreans continued south toward Osan and Taejon. In light of his command's capabilities, the quality of the equipment, the training of the soldiers, the intelligence given, the orders received, Task Force Smith fought bravely and its accomplishments should not be degraded. Task Force Smith failed and the reasons for failure point to unpreparedness for war. We need the insights from Task Force at this time in our history. Why did Task Force Smith fail? Why was the world's greatest army unprepared for a third world conflict? The answers lie far above Smith's level.

CHAPTER II

THE EIGHTH ARMY AND MACARTHUR

MacArthur's strategy during the early days and months of the war was intended to prevent the enemy from capturing Pusan which was the most critical port in Korea - with a capacity many times greater than Inchon. The more the enemy could be slowed down, the more time would be available to move troops and supplies into Pusan. He later explained that Brad Smith's force was to "serve as an arrogant display of strength"[16] to the enemy. It was more an arrogant ignorance of the readiness of the forces under his command.

MacArthur's headquarters had instructed the Eighth Army Commander, Lieutenant General Johnnie Walker, to provide a delaying force of

> ...two rifle companies under a battalion commander reinforced by two platoons of 4.2 inch mortars and one platoon of 75mm recoilless rifles to go by air to Pusan and report to General Church for orders....the mission of the advance elements was phrased as follows: 'Advance at once upon landing with delaying force, in accordance with the situation to the north by all possible means, contact enemy now advancing south from Seoul towards Suwon and delay his advance!'[17]

As we have seen, the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division led by Lieutenant Colonel Charles "Brad" Smith

was tasked for the mission. How well prepared were they for this task? Smith was a West Pointer who had served under the command of then "Lightening Joe" Collins in the 25th Division at Guadacanal (who at this time was the Army Chief of Staff) as a battalion commander and Division G-3. Collins later said Lieutenant Colonel Smith "...had come to my attention then as a bright young officer who showed great promise. Now matured and with combat experience back of him, he was well qualified to lead the first American army troops to fight in the Korean War."[18]

LTC Smith reported to his new duty station at Camp Wood Kyushu, Japan, in the summer of 1949. A year later, on June 30, 1950, after spending long hours on alert duty as a result of the North Korean invasion which had taken place five days earlier, he had gone to bed early. At approximately 10:30 P.M., the phone rang and his wife Bettie answered. Colonel Richard W. Stephens, Commander 21st Infantry Regiment, was on the phone and he wanted to talk to Brad Smith. Bettie quickly awakened her husband and he listened to Colonel Stephens issue orders as follows: "The lid has blown off. Get on your clothes and report to the CP."[19] At the command post, he learned that he would command a task force, gathered together at Camp Wood, to counter the invasion by the North Korean Army. At this time, his force consisted of a part of his battalion headquarters company and a mixture of troops from his communication section, and a platoon formed with a mix of 75mm recoilless rifles and 4.2 inch mortars; a total of 406 officers and men.[20]

Only a third of his officers had been in combat during World War II. One half of his NCO's were veterans, but not all of them had actually been in combat. Most of the enlisted men were twenty years old or under. Brad Smith was himself thirty-four.[21] What would have been the outcome of this encounter with the North Koreans if more officers and men had been combat veterans? What would have been the outcome if there had been no combat veterans in Task Force Smith? These are questions that cannot be answered, but some surprising insights are available on the readiness of these men. General Collins later said that Task Force Smith "was scarcely a formidable body for checking even the leading elements of the North Korean divisions driving south from Seoul toward Taejon...."[22] General Collins may never have realized the extent of this understatement.

Japan was occupied by U.S. Forces under the Far East Command, commanded by General Douglas MacArthur (CINCFE). MacArthur also was the Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) and Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (CINCUNC). As the CINCFE, he had control of the Eighth Army, comprised of the 24th, 25th and 7th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division. The Eighth Army was commanded by Lieutenant General Walton Harris "Johnnie" Walker who commanded the XX Corps under George S. Patton in World War II. The primary mission given to the Eighth Army was "occupation duty" - to watch over the defeated nation of Japan. MacArthur had been the senior military and political leader in Japan since the end of World War II. Walker became the

Eighth Army Commander in 1948.

The Army of 1950 was the post World War II Army which was "shaped less by military doctrine looking to a future...than by the last war of whose massive armies it was the remnant."[23] In Japan, American leaders and soldiers had fallen into the calm and peacefulness of the post war period. Occupation forces in Japan lacked the knowledge of basic combat skills. There was little emphasis on training beyond the squad and platoon level. Live fire weapons training and exercises were the rare exception, rather than the rule.

> Many of the men were more familiar with beer halls and brothels of the Japanese cities than with the basics of soldiering as one critic later complained, it was a 'cream puff' army...if these guys had spent more time on the firing range and less time in the PX snack bar...they might be alive today.[24]

The prevailing attitude of the peacetime occupation and lack of emphasis on training and readiness by military leadership was evident. This leadership failure would later prove to be a notable cost to American lives.

Training

WAR SEVERELY TESTS THE PHYSICAL ENDURANCE AND MORAL STAMINA OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER. TO PERFORM HIS DUTIES EFFICIENTLY HE MUST NOT ONLY BE WELL EQUIPPED AND TECHNICALLY TRAINED BUT HE ALSO MUST BE PHYSICALLY QUALIFIED TO ENDURE THE HARDSHIPS OF THE FIELD SERVICE AND BE CONSTANTLY FORTIFIED BY DISCIPLINE BASED ON HIGH STANDARDS OF MILITARY CONDUCT.[25]

- FM 100-5, AUGUST 15, 1949

The Army in 1949 and 1950 was untrained and unprepared to meet the severity of combat. Irrespective of doctrine existing at the time, such as the Operations manual, FM 100-5, one of the most striking criticisms that can be made of the senior Army leadership between 1945 and 1950 was their failure to insist upon quality training, doctrine, and standards. It is significant to note that FM 100-5 that came out in August 1949, superseded the version of June 15, 1944. For nearly five years (1944-1949), the U.S. Army had been operating on World War II doctrine even though significant changes took place in the force structure as a result of budget cuts and downsizing.

The deactivation of one battalion in each of the three divisional regiments and removal of one of the three firing batteries in each of the four artillery battalions had serious repercussions for doctrine. The modification of the divisional regiments and artillery battalions for budget reasons, conflicted

with the Army's training and doctrine under the triangular system of maneuver units.[26] No doctrine replaced the three-battalion regiments and therefore the deactivation significantly compromised the readiness and combat effectiveness of the divisions. First into combat in 1950, the 24th Division was the first of many to pay the price for the lack of complete fighting units. Three days after Task Force Smith had fought the North Koreans north of Osan, Major General William F. Dean, Commander of the 24th Division, conceded that the divisions must be brought up to their full triangular organization. His letter of July eighth to MacArthur expressed his concerns on this subject as follows:

> The two battalion regimental organization with which we are operating does not lend itself to effective combat. The same is true, though possibly to a lesser degree of our two battery artillery battalions. Recommend that infantry battalions be sent us to bring all regiments of the 24th Division up to regular triangular organization.[27]

None of the four divisions of the Eighth Army had the capability to project more than 62 percent of its normal combat power.[28] The doctrine publications were based on an assumption that units would be able to deploy their full wartime strength and compliment of units.[29] A regimental commander would normally be able to deploy his three battalions with two forward and one held in reserve. In this case, "no matter which course was adopted, the regiments tactical integrity was gravely impaired."[30] The commanders and officers in Korea were not trained in or experienced with such a modified tactical system. This concept

had not been taught in the Army schools, perhaps because it was believed that the spaces would be filled prior to combat.[31] Such was not the case in June 1950. Thus the basic tenet of train how you will fight was violated.

Reports on combat efficiency of the four division's of the Eighth Army were sent to the Department of the Army in May 1950 showing estimates ranging from 84 percent to 65 percent of full combat efficiency.[32] These four divisions "mirrored the Army's state of unreadiness in all respects."[33] Lack of training of the American soldier in the continental United States, as well as overseas, was known to the leadership at the most senior levels. Yet, sufficient and appropriate corrective action was not taken, nor were the actions that were taken followed up adequately.

In 1945, Basic Training had been cut from seventeen weeks to eight weeks as a cost saving measure. But this proved to be a tremendous burden upon the gaining units to provide the additional training needed. Later, in March 1949, the training cycle was increased to fourteen weeks, but it did not include specialty or branch training.[34] This attempt to economize and cut the "fat" had a far reaching and devastating effect upon readiness of the Army.

MacArthur in response to rising readiness concerns issued a new training directive to the Eighth Army on June 10, 1949. The Eighth Army, relieved of many of its administrative occupation duties, was provided time for training in combat skills. This was a dramatic change to the relaxed life style prevalent in

Japan at the time. The poor condition of training was evident when the Eighth Army headquarters conducted a CPX (Command Post Exercise) to comply with the increased level of training directed by MacArthur. The results were not satisfactory:

> The Assistant G-3, Mike Michaellis, remembered with amusement: 'General Walker called an "alert" and moved the headquarters to the field. It was a top secret CPX which envisioned a Russian invasion off Hokkaido. Until then combat preparations had been almost negligible. The CPX was a disaster. It took almost three days for them to get the tents set up. The people had no place to sleep. There was no lighting, no communications. They couldn't get the meals together. It was god awful. But by June 1950 [the Korean War started in June 1950!] we'd done this so many times that the headquarters was adequately trained to go into the field.'[35]

People at the lower echelon of the chain of command were well aware of the problems with training, as in the case of Major Michaellis. It is evident that even rudimentary training was lacking and major efforts were required if soldiers were to be successful in combat!

To meet MacArthur's training directive, Walker intensified the Eighth Army training program. Training plans emphasized the field environment using a graduated schedule to meet certain level training standards by given time-frames: "Completion of company-level training by December 1949, battalion level by May 1950, regimental-level by July 1950, and divisional level by December 1950."[36] Even if accomplished perfectly, the Army could not have fielded an integrated combat ready force by June, 1950. In fact, when the war started, regimental, division, and Army levels of training had not been carried out.

Most units were on record for having completed battalion level training on paper; some were noted as failing their tests.[37] However, there are indications that validation of battalion level training was questionable at best. If such battalion tests were administered, some of the key commanders were not aware of it. For example, in a recent interview with Brigadier General (retired) Charles Brad Smith, he was not aware that such formalized testing had been implemented. Smith did not believe that any live fire training had been conducted during the year he was commanding his battalion in Japan.[38] He recalled an Army Training Test (ATT) being administered by the Eighth Army, but that was only in the form of a staff and commander Command Post Exercise (CPX).[39] In regard to a requirement to conduct training at company, battalion, regimental and division level, Brad Smith said "if that included live firing and maneuvers, that's hogwash."[40] He recalled that one CPX and a few amphibious exercises had been conducted during his tenure in Japan, but it was not clear to him that this training was associated with a requirement to achieve battalion, regimental or division level training.[41] Smith reflected that training "was almost non existent. We had PT. We probably did physical training as well as we did anything. It was PT in place - it wasn't a three mile run followed by a half dozen pushups...nothing like that."[42]

The Department of the Army staff conducted a training inspection visit to the Far East Command during September and October 1949. Prior to that visit, there had been no training

inspection visits of overseas commands since the end of World War II! The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Omar Bradley, in a memorandum to Joe Collins confirmed this at the time. Major General Clint Andrus, Director of Organization and Training for the Department of the Army, in a memorandum to Colonel Philip Dwyer of that office to arrange for a training inspection of overseas commands references this exchange. He states:

> General Bradley in a memorandum to General Collins dated 16 February 1949, stated that there has been no plan, since termination of hostilities [end of World War II], which the Department of the Army inspects training of overseas units. The changing conditions, in addition to the reorganization of occupation troops in combat type units, warrants a deeper interest by the Department of the Army [in determining the] training status of these units.[43]

General Bradley himself had not visited the Far East Command while he was the Army Chief of Staff! It would be easy to draw the conclusion that the senior leadership had been unconcerned or at best complacent about the status of training and readiness overseas. But a better question is what did the senior leadership know about the readiness of the force?

Soon after assuming the job as Army Chief of Staff (October 1, 1949), General Collins visited the Far East Command to ascertain combat readiness. While in Japan, he wrote a memorandum "Report of Visit to Hawaii and Far East Command" (October 20, 1949) to the Secretary of the Army:

> As a result of the reductions in strength of personnel...and because our troops were primarily engaged in occupation missions until recently, the troops of the Eighth Army are now in fighting condition....given another six months the divisions I inspected should be in excellent shape.[44]

He later commented in his book, War In Peacetime:

> In my subsequent inspection visits to the troops it was evident that the recent emphasis on training, inaugurated by General Walton H. Walker, the commander of the Eighth Army in Japan, had reached only the battalion level and had not overcome the inevitable slackness that results from occupation duty. On my return to Washington I reported to Secretary of the Army Frank Pace that given time, deficiencies in combat readiness could be corrected. Now it appeared there would not be time.[45]

The disparity in these reports is striking. Collins had his six months. His earlier report lacked depth and knowledge about the realities of readiness. He did not address the shortage of critical equipment, weapons and munitions. He apparently was not aware of the poor condition of the aged and worn out weapons and equipment on hand. Most assuredly, his assessment of the Eighth Army as being in "fighting condition" was unrealistic and misleading to say the least.

The Department of the Army's first training inspection of the Far East Command (FEC) was conducted by Colonel F.M. Harris and his party in the fall of 1949. The inspection was documented in a **SECRET** "Report of Training Inspection of the United States Army, FEC."[46] The inspection covered the Far East Command with the exception of the Philippines and Korea. The report showed significant shortcomings that would question the Far East Command's readiness, but at the same time it also revealed DA's

failure to oversee the commands under it. Overall, conclusions in the report stated training in the Far East Command was "considered satisfactory to the Department of the Army [and]...the individual soldier in the Far East Command is considered to meet Department of the Army training standards."[47] The paradox of this report was seen nine months later, when U.S. soldiers went into combat against the North Koreans. They were not ready for combat at the time of the inspection and they did not get themselves ready by June, 1950! The report also contradicted itself. On one hand, it said training in the Far East Command was "satisfactory". On the other hand, the report cited serious shortcomings, that in retrospect, should have seriously challenged the Eighth Army's readiness for combat.

Eighth Army divisional units and commands were inspected during the period of September 24 through October 29, 1949. The divisional commands of the Eighth Army were the 24th, 25th, and 7th Infantry Divisions and also the 1st Cavalry Division (Infantry). Shortcomings of the Far East Command noted in the inspection report revealed many deficiencies that should have been noted by the senior Army leadership. Eighth Army units reflected a disparity in MOS overages and shortages that could not be matched with the strength reports. There were also critical shortages of ammunition and equipment. The report clearly identified concerns about the lack of adequate training areas and training aids. Although the emphasis was on combat training, there were far too many combat personnel being used for

administrative and other "overhead" duties.[48] Misleading summary findings of the report stated that the

> Department of the Army directives concerning training are being carried out [and] the attitude of all headquarters toward training is excellent. The feeling that training is the primary mission of all combat units exists in all echelons. Every effort is being made to meet established training objectives.[49]

At best, units had good intentions, but there was little analysis that clearly quantified a state of readiness for combat. It is apparent from the report that not all was well in training and readiness. A key statement in the report should have sent a chilling signal of warning back to Washington: **"That a standard criterion for determining combat effectiveness be developed and made applicable to all commands."**[50] There was apparently no standard to quantify what "combat readiness" meant!

It is also evident that there was no clearly defined procedure to receive feedback on the conduct of training throughout the Department of the Army. The report recommended "that a periodic report on training matters be submitted by the Far East Command to the Department of the Army...."[51] Apparently, there was no procedure in the Army to determine if its subordinate commands were complying with established training doctrine in the Far East and perhaps Europe. As a result of this visit, it was recommended that annual training inspections be conducted of overseas commands.[52] To be certain that training was accomplished and evaluated, the report also recommended that DA be represented when major field training exercises were conducted.[53] What had the Army used to monitor and gauge the

combat effectiveness of its overseas commands? Apparently, there was no formalized Army policy for evaluating and documenting the readiness of units in the Far East Command and Eighth Army before the DA visit in September 1949.

Historical analysis of the period has well documented the unsatisfactory training throughout the Army between 1945 to 1950.[54] MacArthur's new training program was underway, but far from reaching its objective at the time of the DA inspection in September of 1949.

The DA inspection of the Far East Command should have been a clear signal that the U.S. Army in the Far East Command was <u>not</u> ready for combat. Instead, it was misleading and it apparently had no bearing upon the decision of the Department of the Army and MacArthur to question the prudence of sending troops into combat. Overall, the report shows a satisfactory evaluation of the Far East Command in meeting what the inspection team perceived as the Department of the Army's training and readiness standards. If this report had been more candid and accurate, would the Army have taken a different approach in its training policy and would it have been more prudent when it was confronted with sending soldiers into combat eight months later? The report is representative of a system that was either unaware of what training was required and how to evaluate it or was implemented by people who were unwilling to report the short-comings. Either is an indictment of the senior leadership of the Army and the institutional climate they tolerated.

What is incomprehensible about the level of training and readiness is the general lack of concern about it. Surely the senior officers with their extensive warfighting experience must have known the ultimate risk of this unpreparedness. When told to commit Task Force Smith to Korea, Walker would likely have known about the poor training of the Eighth Army. Brad Smith later commented in an interview that he believed Walker was "intimately familiar with the terrible training facilities in Japan."[55] If Walker didn't know about the poor training and lack of readiness, he is equally at fault for not insuring that his staff and command inspections identified the state of combat readiness. Yet, he apparently raised no objections to MacArthur to the orders to send Task Force Smith into combat. The same question should be asked of Major General Dean, Commander of the 24th Division:

> Bill Dean well knew his division was in no way prepared for combat, but he raised no objections to Johnnie Walker. In view of the existing frenzy, had he done so it was likely he would have been relieved of command if not by Walker, then by GHQ. He subscribed to the prevailing American view that his division however ill equipped, had merely to make an appearance on the battlefield and the NKPA would melt into the hills.[56]

Neither of these justifications are acceptable on today's battlefield with its fast pace and limited opportunities for recovery. It represents a mind set that should be incomprehensible to a professional officer corps.

However, it should be emphasized that poor readiness was evident throughout the Army and not just with the Eighth Army in

Japan. For example, the Army Ground Forces (AGF) Headquarters prohibited the use of live ammunition in training exercises following the end of World War II. "Live fire demonstrations conducted at schools continued, but unit-level exercises with live ammunition were not conducted from 1945 until the beginning of the Korean War in 1950."[57] General Mark Wayne Clark as Chief of the Army Field Forces (AFF) Headquarters extended this policy in 1949 when he issued his Training Memorandum No. 1., which stated: "Training in infiltration courses is not authorized; Training in 'Combat in Cities and Villages' course and 'Close Combat Course' are not to be conducted with service ammunition (original emphasis)." [58] It is interesting to note that live ammunition was not used in these training exercises until July 17, 1950, nearly two weeks after U.S. troops went into combat in Korea.[59] In a similar fashion, use of tanks in Japan was restricted:

> For economy reasons and to avoid damage to the roads in Japan, the Eighth Army divisions were restricted to one company of old M-24 Chaffee light tanks, which were used primarily for ceremonial purposes. The few Shermans and Pershings or variants in Japan were stored in warehouses.[60]

The inaccessibility to critical weapons and equipment for training is a sad commentary of American military leadership. Training certainly took a back seat in occupied Japan. Brad Smith later commented that "you couldn't get any proper training. I don't think anybody felt there was any need for it."[61]

General Matthew Ridgway later expressed his concerns for training levels and his observations are an indictment of peace

time readiness and the Army's leadership failure. Upon assuming command of the Far East Command after MacArthur's relief by President Truman, General Ridgway aggressively worked to get his Eighth Army forces back into shape. The war had been going on for seven months, but there was still a lot of work to do. On February 4, 1951, Ridgway held a meeting with his corps commanders and covered several issues he observed while visiting their commands in the field. His comments on the need for training were noteworthy and typical of the failure of senior leadership to demand hard training to achieve combat readiness. On the subject of training he stated: "Cannot over-estimate importance. Present levels [on February 4, 1951] unsatisfactory. Front line Infantry now appears uninspiringly seasoned. Requires ceaseless attention."[62]

Training was impeded in the Army as a whole for several reasons. High personnel turnover, low test scores and standards for enlistment into the Army, a shortage of equipment and a lack of funds. These will be examined later, but one cannot escape the fundamental failure of leadership at all levels to be cognizant of and act on obvious training and readiness issues. This is indicative of an institutional environment which has lost its primary focus - a senior leadership task.

Equipment

Training and combat readiness in the Eighth Army was significantly impaired by the lack of equipment and the poor condition and age of the equipment it possessed. The post World War II Army acquired no replacement of unserviceable equipment. Army procurement in the post war period was generally limited to clothing, medical supplies and food stuffs.[63] The Eighth Army fought with equipment that had been left rusting on the Pacific islands and was retrieved and placed in a repair program to fill the shortfall of the Eighth Army and Far East Command. Ninety percent of the weapons and seventy-five percent of the vehicles in Japan had been recovered from the Pacific battlefields at the end of the war.[64] Vehicles, weapon systems, and other equipment recovered from the battlefields were repaired by Japanese laborers - with little attention to quality control. This equipment did not stand up to sustained combat conditions.

This program was necessary because Army leadership failed to implement an adequate acquisition program. No new tanks or vehicles had been received into the inventory since the end of World War II. Such items as 4.2 inch mortars, recoilless rifles and medium tanks were difficult to find. "The Eighth Army was authorized 226 recoilless rifles, but had only 21. Of 18,000 4x4 vehicles in the Eighth Army's stocks, 10,000 were unserviceable and out of 18,780 2 1/2-ton 6x6 trucks only 4,441 were in running

condition."[65] This worn out equipment simply could not be depended upon when needed "...an estimated 80 percent of the Army's 60 day reserve of armament equipment was unserviceable on 25 June [1950]."[66]

Equally ominous was the datedness of equipment. Much of the equipment the Army fought with in World War II had been inadequate even during World War II. Most notable, among these were the tanks and anti-tank weapons. Yet in 1950, five years after the close of the World War, American soldiers still used weapons proven to be ineffective. The ineffectiveness of Task Force Smith's weapons against North Korean tanks is not the result of a progressive North Korean research and development effort, but the failure of Army senior leadership to push an adequate U.S. program through the political process. One must ask - how can this occur?

CHAPTER III

THE NEW ORDER OF POLITICS

Korea was split along the 38th parallel between the Soviet Union and the allied forces following the Japanese surrender on August 10, 1945. As a provision of the Potsdam Conference less than a month earlier, several divisions of Soviet troops rushed into Korea to get their share of the spoils of war. Colonel Dean Rusk (later to be Secretary of State under President Kennedy in 1961) and Colonel C.H. Bonesteel, both on Marshall's staff, recommended that a line be drawn on the 38th parallel to separate the areas to be occupied by Soviet and U.S. forces. Japanese soldiers surrendered to the Russians north of the 38th parallel and to the Americans south of the 38th parallel. The Russians backed the communist totalitarian leadership of Kim Il Sung and the United States advocated a free democratic government, later to be headed by Syngman Rhee. Tensions in Korea continued to mount as North and South Korea argued for leadership of a unified Korea. Both sides were defiant and unwilling to compromise.

U.S. national policy toward Korea became known to the world for the first time on January 12, 1950, when Secretary of State Dean Acheson spoke before the National Press Club in Washington.

He "...declared Formosa outside 'our defense perimeter.' He also excluded South Korea from the American defense outposts."[67] The defense perimeter was drawn from the Aleutian Islands, to Japan, to the Ryukyus Islands - including Okinawa, and the Philippine Islands.[68] (see Map 5, page 72) Many historians believe this speech, along with the troop withdrawal in September 1949, was misinterpreted to mean that the United States had no interest in defending South Korea. Acheson's statement was seen as encouragement to North Korea, with the Soviet Union's and China's blessing, to invade South Korea. In his book War in Peacetime, General Joseph Lawton Collins said: "Why the Secretary of State felt impelled to make this disclaimer publicly, I have never understood. I imagine that, like a batter swinging at a bad ball, he later would have liked to have had that swing back again."[69] In his memoirs, Nikita S. Krushchev wrote: "Late in 1949...Kim Il Sung, the North Korean leader, visited Joseph Stalin seeking approval for an attack in South Korea. Stalin after Mao Zedong gave Kim the green light."[70] Acheson's speech certainly gave more assurance to the North Korean leadership's desire to invade South Korea.

Korea, June 25 1950

Sunday, June 25th, 1950, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th parallel to the south with tanks and thousands of troops (see Map 2, page 69. Opposing them were about 65,000 ROK soldiers who were partially trained in combat skills and who were armed only with small arms, mortars, howitzers and ineffective bazookas.

Before the invasion, the United States policy was firmly committed not to get involved in a war in Korea. The sudden change in policy was explained by General Collins:

> We could not believe that such a small puppet state as North Korea would blatantly defy the United States and United Nations. Our prestige in Asia and that of the United Nations was suddenly at stake, and we reacted accordingly. If South Korea were to fall to Communism, Indo-China and, probably, Indonesia would follow, and the whole balance of power in the Far East would be upset. Such a upset would be a direct threat, not only to Japan, but also to the United States and to the whole concept of international peace under the charter of the United Nations.[71]

Contrary to an existing plan to withdraw all U.S. personnel from Korea if invaded, the National Security Council and the President determined that the United States should repel the invaders because of the prestige at stake. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Omar Bradley, said the invasion was a

> ...major escalation in the cold war...a 'moral outrage' which the United States and the United Nations could not countenance. To knuckle under in this test, he said, would be tantamount to 'appeasement'. One act of appeasement could lead to further acts and hence almost inevitably to global war. 'We must draw the line somewhere,' Bradley concluded, and Korea 'offered as good an occasion for drawing the line as anywhere else.'[72]

But this insight on Bradley's part was sadly late, the line could neither be drawn nor defended. It would take three years of war and 54,246 American lives to draw the line. How could the obvious degradation of capabilities occur?

No Perceived Threat

After World War II, as now, the nation had difficulty in identifying a formidable force that threatened National Security. There was no clearly defined threat following the war and that made it difficult for the services to bid for funds to maintain a modern and strong military force. The Axis powers had been defeated, culminating with the Japanese surrender on August 10, 1945. Although the Soviets were of some concern, with the oncoming of the "atomic" age it was believed that they could not achieve nuclear parity with the United States until the early 1950's. Chief of Staff of the Army, Dwight D. Eisenhower, sent a **TOP SECRET** memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff related to this on January 9, 1946. Attached to that memorandum was a enclosure (dated December 17, 1945) from the G-2, titled "Estimate of the World Situation", stating that war was

improbable because

> ...it is most unlikely that the U.S. will use armed force to implement U.S. foreign policy....From the Soviet viewpoint, war is most undesirable during the period under consideration since the USSR is presently weaker than she will be at any subsequent period. It is to the Soviet interests to consolidate her present gains and eliminate internal weakness. She will therefore avoid war with the Anglo-Americans in the near future. At the same time, however, [the] Soviets will endeavor to extend their influence beyond areas presently occupied by means short of war.[73]

The United States strategy was to diffuse a potential Soviet threat with its monopoly on atomic weapons - believing it would win a full-scale war with air delivered atomic weapons.[74] The Soviet Union challenged this strategy when it detonated its first atomic bomb on September 3, 1949, but it did not have sufficient nuclear weapons to be an immediate threat to the security of the United States. Even though the Soviet atomic tests signified a loss of the U.S. monopoly on atomic weapons, the response was a rush to design the hydrogen bomb, not modernize land forces. The U.S. also felt it could contain the Soviet influence by achieving collective security both through the United Nations and later NATO.[75]

In part, senior military leaders saw no potential enemies to the United States that were sophisticated enough in modern combat power to warrant their concern. China was not considered a threat, since it had no modern military structure and weapon systems. This was the atomic age, no nation in its right mind would go to war against the United States, especially since it had already demonstrated it would use nuclear weapons. However,

events would soon reveal the irresponsibility and lack of vision of this thinking. Only senior military leaders have the task of determining the nature of warfare in their time and advocating adequate preparations.

> Korea shattered the American illusion that atomic weaponry had outmoded the foot soldier. Politically world opinion would not support the use of such hellish weapons. Tactically atomic bombs were worthless against infantry units scattered over scores of miles of rugged mountains.[76]

History illustrates time and again, that although it can't necessarily be seen, a threat is inevitably there. An unprepared nation will suffer the consequences when that threat exposes itself.

Political and Democratic System Takes Over

The period following World War II promised prosperity and peace for the American public. Although there were some economic and political issues during the era, American life was mostly uneventful. "With the Depression over, Americans cherished buying cars and going to ball games; they wished no further worries about weighty affairs of state."[77]

Comfortable with post World War II peace coupled with domestic economic uncertainties, the American people and politicians demanded minimal expenditures on military preparedness. Truman reacted to the American public when they "Cried to 'bring the boys home!' and shipped scores of hundreds

of baby shoes to congressmen to emphasize they wanted their husbands and fathers home immediately."[78] Representative John E. Rankin of Mississippi expressed the popular sentiment of the time, by saying:

> If the Congress does not get busy and expedite the release of these men from the armed forces - men who are needed at home, who have jobs to go back to, who have wives and children to look after or who have crops to gather, or young men who should finish their education you will soon be in the hottest water you have ever been in since you have been in congress - and you ought to be.[79]

And so, Truman heeded the outcry's of the public and politicians and brought ten and one half million servicemen home by the end of 1948. Military leaders were ineffective in convincing the President that a graduated drawdown was necessary in order to keep a qualified force of officers and enlisted soldiers as a nucleus for a modern well trained Army.

Ridgway in his book The Korean War spoke of the American people's mind set of the time:

> The concept of 'limited warfare' never entered councils. We had faith in the United Nations. And the atomic bomb created for us a kind of psychological Magninot line that helped us rationalize our national urge to get the boys home, the armies demobilized....[80]

As a result of this political pressure, Truman addressed domestic concerns using funds from the Department of Defense. Truman was eager to improve health, education and living conditions. As Roosevelt's successor, he sought to increase the size and coverage of social security. He addressed unemployment, old age, sickness and disability and recommended a system of national prepaid medical insurance under social security.[81] To

do anything less, would not pass the voting public's scrutiny.

Truman's Secretary of Defense, Louis B. Johnson, was formerly the Budget Director and determined to reduce military spending. Not only a mandate from Truman motivated Johnson, he had his own aspirations to become President of the United States. Secretary of the Army Frank Pace had also been Budget Director and he had similar motivations for reducing the Army budget. A formidable budget reducing civilian leadership confronted the military.

President Truman lacked respect for many military officers and "knew their prolific tendencies with dollars."[82] However, he gained respect for and sought the counsel of Marshall, Eisenhower, and Bradley who were perceived by him as visionary and not narrow minded about issues confronting the Presidency as well as the military: "When Truman became president and inherited some of these renowned figures as advisers, he looked up to them and thought them sincere. As time went on he valued their advice particularly because they were not political partisans."[83]

However, even with Truman's confidence, these senior military leaders failed to develop a combat ready military force. The inability of these leaders to see the need for and obtain congressional and presidential support for the defense department had dramatic repercussions for the Army. Lack of sufficient funds to support the Army's needs in CONUS, the Far East and elsewhere - to provide sufficient men, equipment and supplies - resulted in a "hollow" army that was ineffective and unable to

respond to a national crisis. "In sum, the shortages of men and supplies combined with inadequate training to affect adversely the combat readiness of the Far East Command just as they hindered the effectiveness of the U.S. Army elsewhere."[84] Collins in his book, War In Peacetime, describes this paradox:

> It would seem that proper planning and budgeting should have obviated these personnel and material shortages. However, military plans and budget limitations except in wartime have invariably been in conflict. The essence of military planning is to look ahead to the requirements of the next war; but this is antithetic to the common American hope that each war will be the last. While war is on, Congress and the people have supported unstintingly the demands of the military services but, once the war is over, political and economic pressures relegate military planning to the background.[85]

Despite the obvious truism of Collins' insight, this is precisely where the leadership earns their money for the job they hold. The post war military leaders failed to gain the support and confidence of Congress. This failure and the reasons for it had a dramatic effect upon the defense posture of the United States in 1950.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP

5 JUL...WE MET SOME VEHICLES AND AMERICAN Pws. WE ALSO SAW SOME AMERICAN DEAD. WE FOUND 4 OF OUR TANKS. NEAR OSAN THERE WAS A GREAT BATTLE.[86]

- DIARY OF A DEAD NORTH KOREAN SOLDIER

Elections took place in South Korea on May 10, 1948, and Syngnam Rhee was elected President of the new Republic of Korea (ROK). The U.S. Government had announced that troops would be withdrawn from South Korea after the elections. With this announcement, it was believed that North Korea might take the opportunity to invade the South--once U.S. troops were withdrawn. The Joint Chiefs of Staff State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee on United States Foreign policy in Korea made the following statement in a **TOP SECRET** document, dated 24 February 1948:

> Present information indicates that withdrawal of U.S. forces will probably result in Communist domination and it is extremely doubtful if it would be possible to build up the constabulary [South Korean Army] in time and with the facilities available which would be able to prevent Soviet encroachment. Therefore eventual domination of Korea by the USSR will have to be accepted as a probability if U.S. troops are withdrawn.[87]

On March 26th, 1948, the same committee wrote another **TOP SECRET** document as follows:

> From the military point of view, it is the opinion of the joint Chiefs of staff (see SANACC 176/38*) that the "US has little strategic interest in maintaining its present troops and bases in Korea." Moreover, in the event of hostilities in the Far East, these troops would constitute a military liability. US troops could not be maintained there without substantial reinforcement prior to the initiation of hostilities, but this would be militarily inadvisable since any land operations would in all probability, bypass the Korean Peninsula.[88]

It was clear that the Joint Chiefs of Staff saw no military or national interest in fighting a major conflict in Korea. This policy was also advocated by the President and State Department and, therefore, created a complacent mind set in regard to Korea. U.S. forces were to be withdrawn if hostilities began. This policy would be reversed in June 1950.

At 4 A.M. on the morning of June 25, 1950, the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) invaded the South. With eight full strength infantry divisions plus "two more infantry divisions activated at an estimated half strength, a separate infantry regiment, a motor cycle reconnaissance regiment, and an armored brigade."[89] General MacArthur was awakened and told of the invasion. He responded years later by saying ...

> How I asked myself, could the United States have allowed such a deplorable situation to develop? I thought back to those days only a short time before, when our country had been militarily more powerful than any nation on earth...but in the space of five years this power had been frittered away in a bankruptcy of positive and outrageous leadership toward any long-range objectives.[90]

MacArthur, obviously, did not accept any responsibility for the lack of training and preparedness of the U.S. forces that went into combat against the North Koreans.

The NKPA continued southward over the next several days and General MacArthur was convinced U.S. troops must fight a delaying action "to buy some time to bring more troops...."[91] He sent a **TOP SECRET** message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 30, 1950, as follows:

> If authorized, it is my intention to immediately move a US regimental combat team to [Korea] for the reinforcement of [the ROK and the] build-up to a two [U.S.] division strength from troops in Japan for an early counter offensive. Unless provision is made for the full utilization of the Army-Navy-Air Force team in this shattered area our mission will at best be needlessly costly in life, money and prestige. At worse, it might even be doomed to failure.[92]

The Army Chief of Staff, General Collins; quickly responded to MacArthur's request and called the Army Secretary, Frank Pace, requesting that he obtain approval of MacArthur's request from President Truman. Secretary Pace contacted President Truman at 4:57 A.M. on Friday June 30, 1950, and read MacArthur's cable to him.[93] Truman approved the request of MacArthur to send one regimental combat team to Korea, but delayed approving division sized forces until the matter could be looked into further. Collins then sent the approval back to MacArthur. It is

significant to note that MacArthur's request and subsequent approval to commit American combat forces in Korea was not discussed or coordinated with the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Bradley) by Collins until after MacArthur was notified of the President's approval to do so!

> Having thus committed American ground forces into the Korean War, Collins telephoned his JCS colleagues at about 5:30 A.M. to tell them what he had done. In fact, they all were shocked, not only because they were not consulted, but also because of the grave implication of the decision.[94]

The JCS collectively had formulated a policy to not defend Korea because it was considered a military liability. Therefore, it is remarkable that General Collins made a commitment of troops into combat without first consulting the Chairman and his fellow JCS members. Thus a course of action was adopted for which the senior military leadership understood the Army was unprepared to accomplish and the nation to support in the short term. It is unclear if the extent of unpreparedness was made clear to the President and civilian leadership.

Budget Cuts

Our senior leaders were ineffective in dealing with the Presidential and Congressional budget cuts. This is normally interpreted as one result of domestic problems driving the budget. But, how effective were the senior leaders in addressing defense needs? Can all of this be attributed to domestic politics?

The post World War II budget ceilings imposed on the Department of Defense were draconian. General Collins, who was Army Chief of Staff at the outbreak of the Korean War, reflected on the "skeptical attitude of Congress" that prevailed before the war.[95] A report of the House Appropriations Committee said:

> ...the committee's careful scrutiny of the estimates of manpower, equipment, and missions to be performed leads to the conclusion that the estimates of funds required are out of proportion to the actual needs on the basis of the Army's predictions of requirements. While the committee does not propose to reduce the size of the Army below numbers estimated by military authorities as requisite or the amounts of equipment and supplies necessary to maintain such an Army, it is well aware of the fact that it is the habit of the services to estimate their fund generously in order that they may be able to meet all contingencies. This is sound policy to follow during actual warfare and the Congress at that time approved it but there is no sound reason why the Army cannot be administered in peacetime with more regard for dollars that apparently is their custom or intent.[96]

This political logic was remarkably unchallenged by senior military leadership. The military leaders were not sufficiently committed to insist this reasoning did not apply to the post war

Army. This implies they failed to recognize the nature of the security threat or were unwilling to challenge political leadership.

In Fiscal Year 1945, the Defense Budget stood at $81.6 billion, but by FY 1947 it had decreased to $13.5 billion which equated to about five percent of the Gross National Product (GNP).[97] (By way of comparison, the military budget for 1992 is less than four percent of the GNP!) Upon reelection, President Truman's goal was set on obtaining a balanced federal budget and reducing the $250 billion national debt without incurring new taxes.[98] Responding to the budget, the Pentagon in turn maintained that the new budget must be kept at $15 billion in order to adequately support national defense needs. However, the President...

> arbitrarily cut the Pentagon budget by a third - to about $10 billion a year and turned a deaf ear to repeated pleas from the military chiefs for more. In fact, his announced goal was to cut the Pentagon budget even more drastically: to about $6 or $7 billion a year.[99]

Eisenhower displayed his frustrations about the reduced military budget in his diaries and complained that the budget certainly did not take into consideration the needs of defense:

> During 1946, 1947, and early 1948 I pleaded for a $15 billion budget. We never got it...[Later he jotted:] One of our greatest troubles is inability to plan for a given amount of money. Some new authority always intervenes to cut it down in spite of prior commitment by the president himself.[100]

The military leadership had failed to convince the President that these budget reductions would severely compromise the ability of

the armed forces to protect the national interests and defense needs of the United States.

Louis B. Johnson took office as the Secretary of Defense in March 1949. Committed to cut the "fat" out of the defense budget, in May, 1949, he announced Truman's fiscal year 1951 military budget to be capped at $12.3 billion. Bradley later wrote that "the news came as a profound shock". Eisenhower also complained: "...of course the results will not show up until we get in serious trouble. We are repeating our own history of decades - we just don't believe we ever will get into a real jam."[101] After the Korean War, General Matthew Ridgway said: "If ever we were unprepared for a war, we were on this occasion....Our armed forces had been economized almost into ineffectiveness."[102]

Because inflation in 1947-1948 had a critical impact upon the buying power of the services, Truman was forced to raise the military spending ceiling to $14 billion. But, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Omar Bradley supported the budget submitted by the President. He said: "considering the budget constraints and 'intelligence estimates' I am in complete agreement with that ceiling."[103] As Chairman of the JCS, Bradley reiterated his support for the President's budget when he spoke before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearings on March 13, 1950:

> I emphasized in my statement-maybe I did not emphasize it sufficiently-that the eventual strength of our country depends upon its industrial capacity. We must not destroy that by spending too much from year to year. So if we came here and recommended to you a $30,000,000,000' or $40,000,000,000 budget for defense, I think we would be doing a disservice and that maybe you would get a new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff if I were one that did that.[104]

History has shown that this recommendation was ill-advised to say the least. But it reveals that the senior military leadership's ignorance of the actual readiness of the Army or the unwillingness to confront it and the extent of the security threat.

One month after Bradley made his statement before the Senate Appropriations Committee, he received a letter from Mr. Vannevar Bush, which must have been alarming news in view of what he said before the committee. Mr. Bush's **TOP SECRET** letter of April 13, 1950, to Bradley gave him a clear warning as to the serious state of the defense posture of the United States. Commissioned by Secretary of Defense Gray, Mr. Bush worked with the Army to study defense problems in Europe. The revelations of his findings were alarming and it caused him to write his letter to Bradley. He remarked to Bradley that

> ...[these] are serious and disturbing conclusions....the problem of defense of the United States is in a serious condition, at which I am appalled. If this problem is attacked vigorously at this time, and properly coordinated...it can be put in satisfactory condition in a few years. If we drift as we are going, it will remain in unsatisfactory condition and might well lead to disaster....the result is that if war should break out tomorrow it would be a long desperate war, in which we could hope to prevail only after a period of years....[105]

Mr. Bush's concluding statement succinctly expressed the resolve necessary to repair the deplorable condition of U.S. defense:

> The primary desideration [spelling in document] is that we should think fearlessly, without prejudice or false service interests, that we should face tough facts, and that we should act. We have the organizational machinery for all this, if it will function with sufficient vigor, and if it is allowed to do so. We need to get up to date, and to tackle our really central military problems with all our energy. We have the opportunity, if we have the will.[106]

Bradley did not have two years to fix the problem outlined by Bush; the Korean War broke out two months and twelve days after Bush wrote his letter. Bradley later conceded in his book, A General's Life, that the President's military budget cutting

> ...was a mistake, perhaps the greatest of Truman's presidency...my belief that significantly higher defense spending would probably wreck the economy - was likewise a mistake, perhaps the greatest mistake I made in my post war years in Washington....I was a dedicated fiscal conservative. I sincerely believed in those economists who were advising Truman to sharply limit defense spending.[107]

Collins also admitted that he supported the FY 1951 budget: "I likewise, as Army Chief of Staff, defended the $13 billion budget before the same senate subcommittee."[108] Collins as well as Bradley admitted that the military budget they supported - as well as the other Chief's of Staff - was not sufficient for maintaining a strong defense:

> From this record it is clear that members of the JCS, including General Bradley and myself, shared with the President, the Administration, and the Congress the responsibility for reductions in JCS estimates of military requirements, which so hampered our conduct of the Korean War.[109]

The readiness shortfalls and the leadership's inattention to them

outlined earlier indicate senior military leadership may not have grasped the extent of unpreparedness or the probable nature of warfare in the Cold War era. If they had, these in themselves raise serious questions about how existing money was spent. Another leadership pitfall is also suggested here. The senior leadership clearly gave in to the pressures of the President and Congress and failed to stand for a course of action that would promote the best defense. This supports the idea the senior leadership...

> found themselves in a tough moral dilemma. They did not agree in the slightest with Truman's budget...but Johnson was the civilian authority to whom they owed obedience and loyalty. They had either to support his orders or resign. None elected to resign; they unanimously supported the Johnson Budget.[110]

Collins commented directly on this sensitive subject - believing that his loyalty was to the President so long as he held the position as Army Chief of Staff, but, when he morally could not support that policy, then it was time to resign:

> I always believed in loyalty to the President, who as Commander in Chief, bears the ultimate responsibility for the defense of our country an officer of the armed services should fully support the president's program once it has been determined...A Chief of Staff is some times faced with the dilemma of resigning or of going directly to the President, over the head of the Secretary of Defense which he is entitled by law to do if he cannot, in all conscience as a responsible military man, accept the final budget limitations.... When Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced ...another cut in the Army budget for the fiscal year 1951, which would have resulted in a further reduction in the effective strength of the Army, I finally had to say to him, 'Mr. Secretary, this is the last cut in the Army that I will be able to accept.' Johnson glared at me, and I am afraid I glared back. I feel certain that if the Korean War had not intervened, I would have been relieved or forced to resign.[111]

Why hadn't our senior military leaders taken a stronger stance in addressing other critical deficiencies of defense? In view of the consequences to American soldiers, answers of ignorance, inattention, and loyalty to political leadership are weak defenses.

The Budget and Downsizing

As the budget dwindled, so did the strength of the armed forces. Historically, our downsizing of the force structure has resulted in a "hollow force" whereby reduced combat readiness and effectiveness has resulted. In August 1945, the United States had a little more than twelve million men and women in uniform. In January 1946, Dwight Eisenhower (Army Chief of Staff) wrote to Bernard Baruch saying: "What plans we make must be made now before our forces have completely disintegrated and before we become paralysed by public apathy which seems inevitable in times of relative peace."[112] By December 1948, at the end of Truman's first term as President and Commander in Chief, the active forces had shrunk to a mere 1.5 million men and women.[113] Bradley complained in his book, A Soldiers Life, that upon assuming the office of Chief of Staff on December 1, 1947:

> ...The Army had almost no combat effectiveness. Ike had left me an administrative rather than a military force. Half of the 552,000 officers and men were overseas on occupation duty, serving as policemen or clerks. The other half were in the States performing various administrative chores. Actually the Army of 1948 could not fight its way out of a paper bag.[114]

This insight is retrospect and is not reflected in Bradley's actions as a senior leader at the time. He gave no indication of his comprehension of a "hollow" Army in 1950.

The spartan distribution and strength of the Army during this period was spread throughout many regions. For example, MacArthur's strength in the Far East was about 114,000 men; 10,000 short of the authorized. He was informed later by the JCS to expect additional cuts in the strength - down to 106,000 men, of which only 30,000 would be stationed in Korea.[115] In 1950, the authorized strength of the Army had risen to 630,201; but it actually had 591,000 in the ranks. Of those, 360,000 were stationed in the United States; 108,500 in the Far East; 94,300 in Europe and the rest in Hawaii, Alaska, or the Caribbean.[116]

Secretary Johnson's new fiscal year 1952 budget guidelines called for a greater reduction in strength to 610,900. At that time, the United States Army had ten divisions. However, that was very misleading. To stay within budgetary constraints, the Army Chief of Staff, Joe Collins, deactivated one battalion in each of the three regiments in each division. One of the three firing batteries in each of the four artillery battalions (in each division) was also deactivated to accommodate these budget cuts. As discussed earlier (See "Training", page 14), these units were severely handicapped when it came to executing doctrinal operations in combat. It was assumed that there would be time to fill these voids before troops were committed into combat.[117] First into combat in the Korean War, the Eighth Army

divisions were severely void of their full authorized combat manpower.

> An American infantry division at full war strength numbered about 18,000 men. Owing to the budget restrictions, however, three of the Eighth Army's four divisions each were authorized only 12,500 men; the 25th (to which all blacks were assigned) 13,500. On paper the 1st CAV, 7th, and 24th divisions were thus about 6,000 men short of full war strength; the 25th, about 5,000 men short. In reality because of the limits on personnel, rotation policies, and other factors, the 1st CAV, 7th, and 24th divisions numbered only about 11,300 men each and were thus about 7,000 men short of full war strength. The 25th Division, numbering 13,000 men, was 5,500 men short of full war strength. On the whole, none of the four divisions were capable of laying down more than 62 percent of its normal infantry firepower.[118]

Eighth Army units were unsuccessful in applying doctrinal techniques and maneuvers in the first few months of combat owing to the absence of infantry and artillery battalions in the divisions. Senior leaders were brought too late to the sober realization that they had failed to conceive of and plan for the prospect that there would be no time to fill these voids before combat began.

Modernization

Senior Army leaders of the post World War II era had the inherent responsibility to keep the Army modern and competitive through research and development and procurement of modern equipment. Their inability to gain Congressional and Presidential support resulted in a severe compromise to the

combat power of the United States.

Cuts in the federal budget resulted in a significant reduction in the quantity and quality of equipment in the U.S. forces. T.R. Fehrenbach in his book This Kind of War captures the status of modernization in the United States between 1945 and 1950: "Since the end of World War II ground weapons had been developed but none had been procured. There were plenty of old arms around; and it has always been a yankee habit to make do. The Army was told to make do."[119]

In 1950, vehicles and equipment were in a deplorable state, especially in Japan. This was mainly due to the rapid demobilization and loss of personnel who were needed to provide continuous maintenance for the Army's maintenance program. Much of that equipment was of World War II vintage which had been through combat. It was not being replaced because of budget cuts. Vehicles were parked in the open, tires were rotted, engines were worn out, and radiators clogged. Weapons were in disrepair, especially small arms which often required unavailable parts. For example, there were no more spare barrels to be found for machine guns and manufacturing had ceased. Radios were old, poorly maintained, and in short supply. No ammunition had been manufactured since World War II and the existing ammunition stocks were in limited supply and subject to deterioration as a result of extended storage. The limited amount of ammunition in various categories was not sufficient to meet the training needs of both the Active Army and the Reserve Components even

when firing environments were available .

In a speech before the Armor Association in the fall of 1951, Army Chief of Staff Joe Collins said:

> As you remember, at the end of World War II, the nation reverted to a peacetime economy. Production was stopped on military goods and concentrated on civilian products. Army appropriations were drastically cut and the reduced budget permitted only limited funds for research and development and almost none for production. The budget for research and development on all types of automotive equipment of which tanks were only a part, averaged about $5,000,000 a year. When this is compared to Chrysler's R & D budget of $25,000,000 for the same period, you see how little we had.[120]

Collins knew that research and development was necessary to maintain a combat ready Army, but he was not effective in convincing the military and civilian leadership to make it happen.

The budget restricted the acquisition of new equipment that was sorely needed to modernize the Army.

> ...the Ordnance Department estimated that it would need $750,000,000 to cover procurement of essential ammunition and equipment, storage and distribution of ordnance material, maintenance of stand-by plants and arsenals, training research and development. The Bureau of the Budget put this figure to $275,000,000 and the Congress reduced this appropriation in final form to $242,532,000.[121]

Just after taking office as the Army Chief of Staff (December 3, 1945) from George C. Marshall, Eisenhower wrote to Bernard Baruch saying: "Developments of modern warfare tend to emphasize the necessity of more and more technical knowledge for an ever increasing number of men. This requires intensive and extensive training in the use of elaborate and expensive

equipment."[122] Eisenhower was not successful in obtaining necessary funds for the acquisition of "elaborate and expensive equipment" that he felt necessary for a modern army.

Research and development for better equipment was practically stopped following World War II and there was little to be expected in the future. Procurement, if possible, was even worse. A new heavy tank had been developed, but due to budget constraints only 310 were built; in June 1950, they were all in the United States. The 3.5 inch rocket launcher had been introduced to replace the ineffective World War II 2.36 "bazooka". However, due to budget constraints, only a few 3.5's were available in June 1950; none were available in the Far East.

Less than three months prior to the beginning of the Korean War, Omar Bradley received a **TOP SECRET** letter from Mr. Vannevar Bush outlining the Army's failure to advance in research and development. He commented on the almost negligible acquisition of new technology necessary for the Army to be effective in combat. He recommended that the Army must procure advanced weapons and ammunition to combat Russian tanks. He said:

> ...we have the means of rendering those heavy tanks absolute, of turning a great asset into a liability, of throwing the enemy preparations into confusion and forcing upon him sweeping readjustments which will take him years. We have the means in embryo in our hands now. If we had been sufficiently alert we could have had them, several years ago, but at least we have them now.[123]

He also referred to the need to develop new munitions and hardware such as antiaircraft guns and rockets, ground to air missiles, antitank mines and even new means of laying them.[124]

The technology and means to modernize the Army and other Services existed, but the senior military and civilian leadership lacked the vision and aggressiveness to improve combat effectiveness. This technology certainly would have saved many American lives as combat multiplier's against the North Koreans in June 1950.

Intelligence

The military and civilian leadership also failed to correctly assess the intelligence information coming from Korea. It is remarkable that they did not heed the warnings. General Collins felt that both the military and civilian "system" failed to paint an accurate picture of the impending battle. Collins said "More valid charges of military failures in the early phases of the Korean war - or, more accurately, failures of established civilian-military system - can be made in the field of military intelligence."[125]

As early as September of 1947, Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer investigated the military conditions that existed at that time in Korea. His assessment of the military situation noted that the North Korean Army was a potential threat to the peace of Korea - especially if the United States were to withdraw its troops.[126] He concluded in his report to President Truman that the United States would suffer an "immense loss in moral prestige among the peoples of Asia...."[127] if troops were withdrawn as South Korea was being invaded. He also noted in the

document that he considered Korea as "strategically important" and he cautioned that Lieutenant General John R. Hodge's two divisions could not hold back invading North Korean forces if attacked.[128] Wedemeyer's report had clearly shown that Korea was a hot spot that should not be overlooked. The indications were clear that future actions and policies regarding U.S. involvement in Korea should have been formulated based upon the possibility of conflict with the North Koreans. Nevertheless, Truman apparently did not take Wedemeyer's report seriously; one year later tactical U.S. troops under General Hodge were withdrawn from Korea.

Brigadier General William Lynn Roberts, head of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) under Ambassador Muccio, rendered contrary and misleading intelligence reports to the Pentagon. He believed tank warfare in Korea was impossible because the roads were too narrow and the rice paddies were too soft.[129] General Roberts' reports were taken seriously and, in fact, were the basis of the testimony given to a congressional hearing in June 1949 defending the withdrawal of American troops from Korea. On that subject, Major General Charles L. Bolte testified before Congress:

> We feel that the [native] forces in Korea now are better equipped than the North Korean troops...the Army as the Executive agent for the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Far East is not only agreeable to the withdrawal of the tactical formations from Korea, but is heartily in favor of it as they [sic] feel that the point has been reached in the development of South Korean forces and in the supplying of material aid to the South Korean forces that it has reached a point [sic] where the tactical units can and should be withdrawn.[130]

Reports and testimonies such as this were pervasive and show the ineptness of the leadership to ascertain and interpret the reality that existed prior to the invasion. For example, two weeks before the invasion, William C. Foster, as the Deputy Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration, testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee regarding the ROK's ability to meet an attack from the North. He told the committee:

> The rigorous training program [of the ROK Army] has built up a well-disciplined army of 100,000 soldiers, one that is prepared to meet any challenge by the North Korean forces, and one that has cleaned out the guerilla bands in South Korea in one area after another.[131]

All these reports were being digested by Congress who were allowed to believe that all was well.

In contrast to these optimistic reports by Roberts and Foster, Ambassador Muccio provided statements to the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 6, 1950, stating: "The undeniable materiel superiority of the North Korean forces would provide North Korea with the margin of victory in the event of a full-scale invasion of the Republic...."[132] By materiel superiority, Muccio was talking about heavy infantry support weapons, such as

tanks and artillery--to include aircraft. It was a known fact that the nearly 100,000 man ROK army was understrength and under equipped. The "South Korean forces had no tanks or medium artillery whatsoever. Nor could South Korea field any fighter or bomber aircraft."[133] Contrary to Foster's and Roberts' statements, it was obvious that the South Korean Army was not prepared to meet the horde of the NKPA crossing over the 38th parallel. Senior military leadership did not control these various sources of information, but it is clear that they should have been aware of the disparities and possible consequences.

Also the civilian leadership in Washington must bear responsibility for neglecting to take appropriate action. Presidential advisors kept crucial information from the President even when intelligence information made its way back to Washington. The advisors simply chose not to believe the reports coming from Korea.

> In retrospect, the misjudgment was astonishing. Intelligence reports to Washington provided an almost classic description of enemy preparations for imminent war. North Korean civilians were being evacuated from the immediate vicinity of the parallel. Non military freight deliveries in the area had been halted. Transport was being restricted to military purposes, including large shipments of weapons and ammunition...the intelligence reports were greeted by Washington officials with all sorts of rationalizations. Forgetting the same kind of misjudgment before, at the time of Pearl Harbor, they hoped and believed that the North Koreans were unlikely to do that which they had the capacity to do. Washington was simply not persuaded that the North Koreans's intended to involve themselves in armed conflict.[134]

There are no records that show any of Truman's advisers, civilian

or military ever went to him in the month of June, 1950, to tell him of the serious developments near the 38th parallel.[135]

The State Department also proved incompetent and negligent in analyzing intelligence information. After the election of Syngnam Rhee in August, 1948, MacArthur had no further responsibility to deal with Korean issues; that responsibility came under the jurisdiction of the State Department. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Dean Rusk testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee five days before the North Korean invasion. Rusk's testimony was faulty and showed a lack of knowledge and understanding about the real conditions existing in Korea. When asked about the strength of the ROK Army and the potential of North Korea invading South Korea, he stated that "we see no present indication that the people across the border have any intention of fighting a major war for that purpose."[136] He added that the ROK Army "could meet credibly the kind of force which the North Koreans have established."[137] This statement was contrary to known information about the size and combat power wielded by the NKPA. General Ridgway later commented that Syngman Rhee and other ROK leaders had expressed their concerns about a formidable North Korean Army because they knew their own Army was so weak.[138]

Although MacArthur no longer had responsibility for Korean matters, he did retain his intelligence network there. MacArthur's intelligence officer (G-2), Major General Charles A. Willoughby, maintained contact with Korea through his "Korean

Liaison Office." It is significant that Willoughby had furnished "Daily Summaries" to Washington of invasion plans contemplated by North Korea. These reports were sent in routine intelligence messages between December 30, 1949, and May 25, 1950.[139] Willoughby himself, discredited the reports, however, as being very unlikely and no action resulted.

In retrospect, Collins later commented on the concern about the intelligence gathering process. He wrote that "...it is difficult to understand the woeful underestimating by the Korean Military Advisory Group and the Far East Command of the leadership and fighting qualities of the North Korean Army."[140] In his book Reminiscences, MacArthur attributed the blame to the Pentagon for not heeding reports his command had sent it. He would never assume any responsibility for failing to convince the JCS that an invasion was about to take place. Instead, he said:

> The doomed little country was under the sole charge of the State Department, but my intelligence section was increasingly aware of the distinct menace of an attack by the North Korean Communists in the summer of 1950...in vain were my attempts to expose the growing Communist threat in the Far East. From June 1949 to June 1950, constant intelligence reports of increasing urgency were submitted to Washington, advising of a possible North Korean thrust...one of these reports even suggested that June 1950 would be likely time for North Korea to cross the 38th parallel.[141]

Once again Willoughby was the source of many of these reports. If MacArthur was so sure that war was soon to begin, why wasn't he persuasive and persistent in presenting his concerns to the JCS and the Pentagon as he was so eloquently capable of doing in retrospect?

Even the Director of the CIA "implied" to the Senate Appropriations Committee that an attack from the North was coming.[142] It seems that many key agencies of the State Department and the Pentagon and even the CIA had predicted a North Korean attack could come, but none, had predicted it would come.[143] For example, Major General Alexander R. Bolling, the Department of the Army G-2, responded to criticism that he had failed to properly interpret the information he received from the Far East Command. He maintained that "there is no intelligence agency that reported a definite date for the opening of hostilities or stated that an invasion was imminent."[144] This answer was unsatisfactory. In fact, there were enough reports being sent to his office to warrant serious analysis to determine if a war was imminent or not.

Perhaps it is possible that war could have been averted altogether if these reports had been taken seriously. In The Korean War, General Matthew Ridgway raised the appropriate questions in regard to the senior leadership: "How could it happen that a major conflict like this could explode without warning? Was there ineptitude among our decision makers or were our intelligence forces lacking? Why did the outbreak of war find us so ill-prepared to fight?"[145]

Quality of Soldiers

The poor quality of the soldiers in the peacetime Army was a problem that compromised the Army's capability to fight future wars and conflicts. As the Army downsized following World War II, senior leaders failed to realize the need for higher quality, intelligent soldiers. They accepted what was offered instead demanding what was required. In addition, the Army undertook social efforts such as education, which seriously detracted from unit training.

The post World War II peacetime Army underwent unfathomable personnel turnover and turbulence as it reduced from a force of 8.2 million in 1945 (which included the Air Force at that time) to 591,000 in 1950.[146] The draft was discontinued in March 1947 and the last draftee separated from the Army on June 30, 1947. Soon thereafter, volunteer enlistments dropped off dramatically. In July of 1948, the draft was resumed to compensate for the shortfall of draftees that had reached expiration of their enlistments and new conditions for enlistment were established. Accession standards were lowered to bring more people into the Army in order to meet the manning requirements.

The problem was further compounded when budget cuts forced basic training to be reduced from 17 weeks to eight weeks and the burden of training fell on the gaining units. This meant overall much less training was provided for the new enlistee's. Contrary

to this practice, these recruits actually needed more time for such training because of their lower capacity to learn. It didn't make sense to lower the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) scores and reduce basic training time for soldiers that actually required more training! This problem was further compounded by the adoption of an Army education program designed to teach reading and writing skills to soldiers in the units. This extensive social effort used valuable training time. In effect units became incumbered conducting a social program of literacy training courses that caused an inordinant administrative burden and training impediment.[147] It effectively precluded team training.

In April 1949, forty three percent of Army enlisted personnel were classified with ratings of IV and V on the Army General Classification Test.[148] The Army test scores for the Eighth Army reflected a significant flaw in the quality of its soldiers by this standard. In 1948, "...90% of the personnel of one battalion were illiterate."[149] On an average, over fifty percent of the Eighth Army personnel fell into Class IV and V, the lowest two categories. Sixty percent of the soldiers in the 7th Infantry Division fell within Class IV and V. This was considered by the Department of the Army to be "...a serious handicap to the attainment of a satisfactory state of effectiveness...."[150] The 21st Regiment, Task Force Smith's regiment, consisted of 55% soldiers in Class IV and V. In October 1949, Army test scores for Eighth Army soldiers were the

following:

Command:	Percentage of Grade IV and V on AGCT:
8th CAV Rgt (1st CAV Div)	51%
7th Inf Div	60%
24th Inf Div	48%
25th Inf Div	55%

Remedial literacy training schools were conducted throughout the theater, either at the regiment level, or consolidated at division level.[151] Significant and crucial training time that could have been devoted to combat training was diverted to remedial literacy training. Consequently, the Eighth Army was unable to create a "team" concept in training. Soldiers absented for literacy training courses were not available to participate in a much needed integrated team training environment for the remainder of the unit. Eighth Army units never achieved a cohesive training capability which was an essential requisite for discipline, coordination, and maneuver in combat. For example, in October 1949, the 24th Infantry Division had 188 soldiers attending a literacy training course, yet there were 1,603 that still needed the training.[152] During the same period, the 25th Infantry Division had a total of 1,279 soldiers identified for the same program.[153]

Lowering the entrance test scores also resulted in increased disciplinary problems in the units. These soldiers tended to be more disruptive, indifferent, and disgruntled about military life

than their predecessors and were more difficult to train. The "poor character of many replacements" to the Far East Command was seen as significant training obstacles.[154] A former battalion commander in the 2d Infantry Division during this period claimed that many soldiers had "sullen and resentful attitudes."[155] The situation was considered so bad a formal recommendation was made that further replacements with Class V scores in the Far East Command not be assigned to units on occupation duty.[156]

Failure to establish high enlistment standards for post war soldiers in light of the massive drawdown illustrated a lack of vision and understanding by the senior leadership and the consequences proved to be insurmountable. By lowering intelligence requirements and permitting enlistment of new soldiers with backgrounds of questionable character, the leadership acquiesced to the unprepared and combat "unready" Army.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Task Force Smith is a classic illustration of unpreparedness. Major historical interpretations of this period conclude, as Fehrenbach so vividly illustrated, that Task Force Smith went into combat unprepared as a direct result of insufficient national political commitment to a strong defense and as a result of the failure of the senior military leadership to recognize the nature of the threat and compete effectively with domestic political issues. There is no reason to doubt the validity of these historical interpretations, but they beg the question of what role did the senior military leadership of the Army and the institution of the Army itself play in the unpreparedness of forces? The answers to that question suggest that both fell far short of what might have been done. The following major conclusions summarize the nature of this failure:

a. The senior leadership of the military failed to visualize the nature of the next war.

b. Senior Army leadership did not understand the state of preparedness (readiness) of the forces subordinate to them and had no standard or clearly defined procedures or means to

identify or measure readiness.

c. Standards of readiness were not established and enforced.

d. Senior Army leadership failed to develop and present a credible program for the military forces required for national defense and protection of U.S. national interests.

e. Training across the Army was unrealistic and not focused on war fighting. This was compounded by a lack of resources and facilities, but the basic failure was one of institutional environment and values.

f. Officer leadership at every level in the chain of command failed to address readiness issues, resulting in a institutional acceptance of unpreparedness.

g. Senior leadership failed to develop and advocate adequate programs of research, development, and acquisition.

h. Senior leadership tolerated low quality accession and retention standards for personnel at a time when the lack of resources and ambiguity in threat demanded higher quality standards.

i. Senior leadership demonstrated reluctance in advising the political leadership on critical matters of national security in light of contemporary politics.

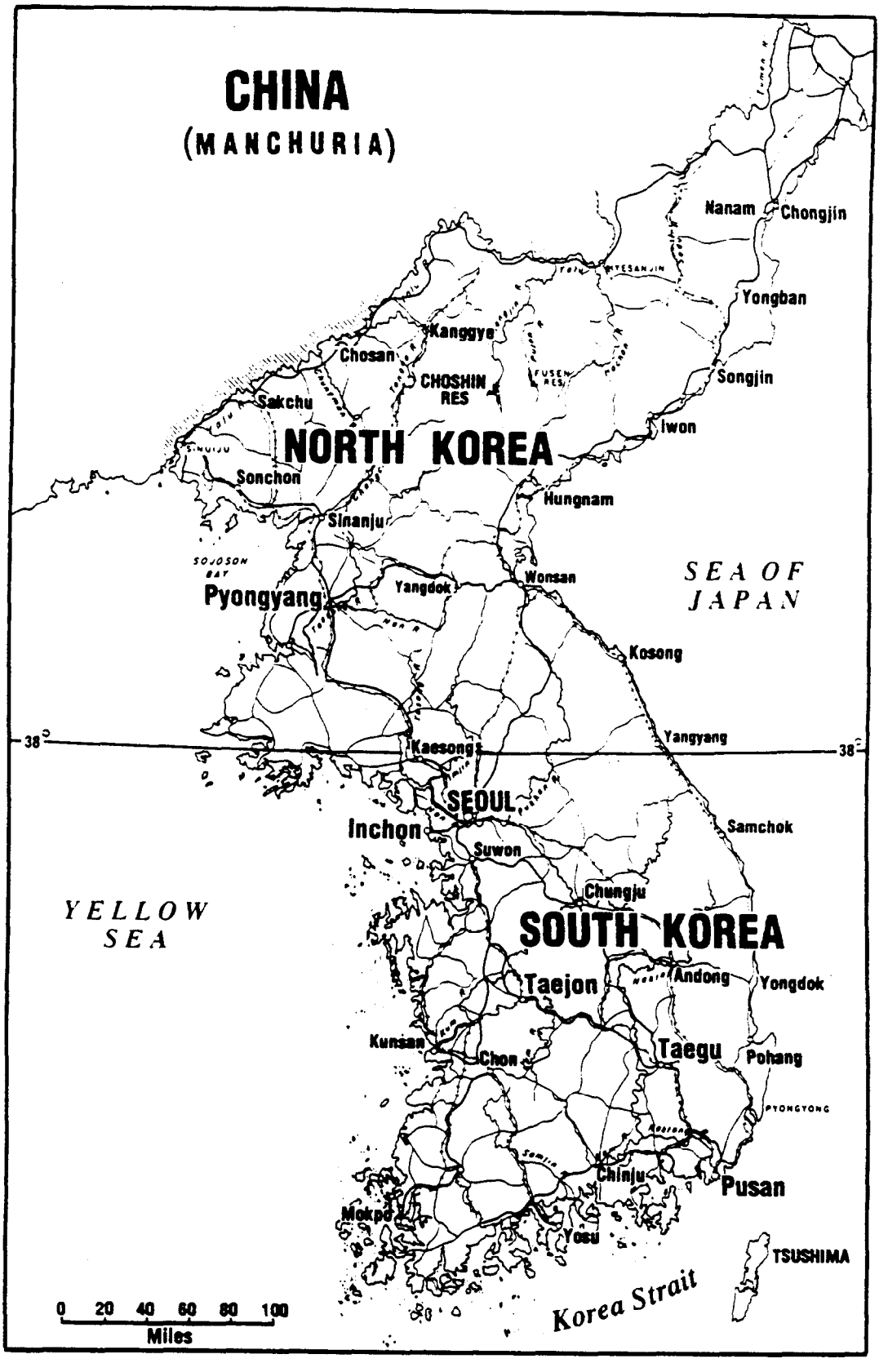
j. Intelligence information was not objectively analyzed and resolved. Decisionmakers were not aware of critical intelligence information and had no system for considering contrary opinion.

k. Non-military programs and duties such as literacy training courses were accepted even when counter productive to readiness.

l. Equipment was allowed to deteriorate reflecting the lack of interest and emphasis on readiness.

m. Units that were allowed to become under strength - hollowed out by assignment shortages and personnel policies - resulting in loss of capability to meet mission and doctrinal requisites.

In retrospect, the insights afforded by examining this period in U.S. military history may seem obvious. This is particularly true in view of the current Army's focus on training and readiness and the obvious preparedness evidenced in the recent Gulf War. But the period is not irrelevant and serves as a stark warning of how successful militaries of democratic societies deteriorate rapidly in a "peacetime" environment. After all, the leadership of the Army that failed Task Force Smith commanded the greatest Army in the world just five years earlier.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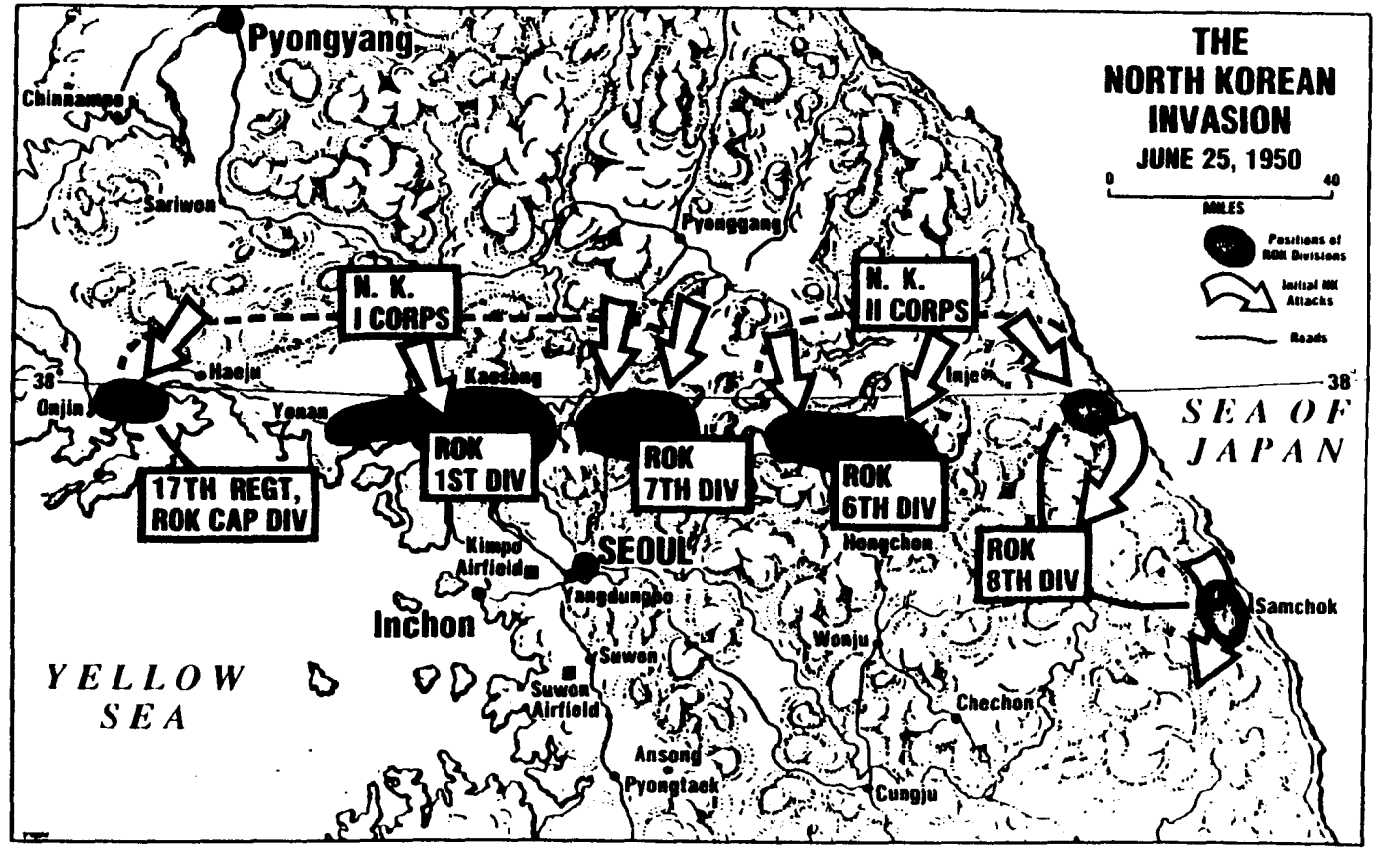
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MILES
Positions of ROK Divisions
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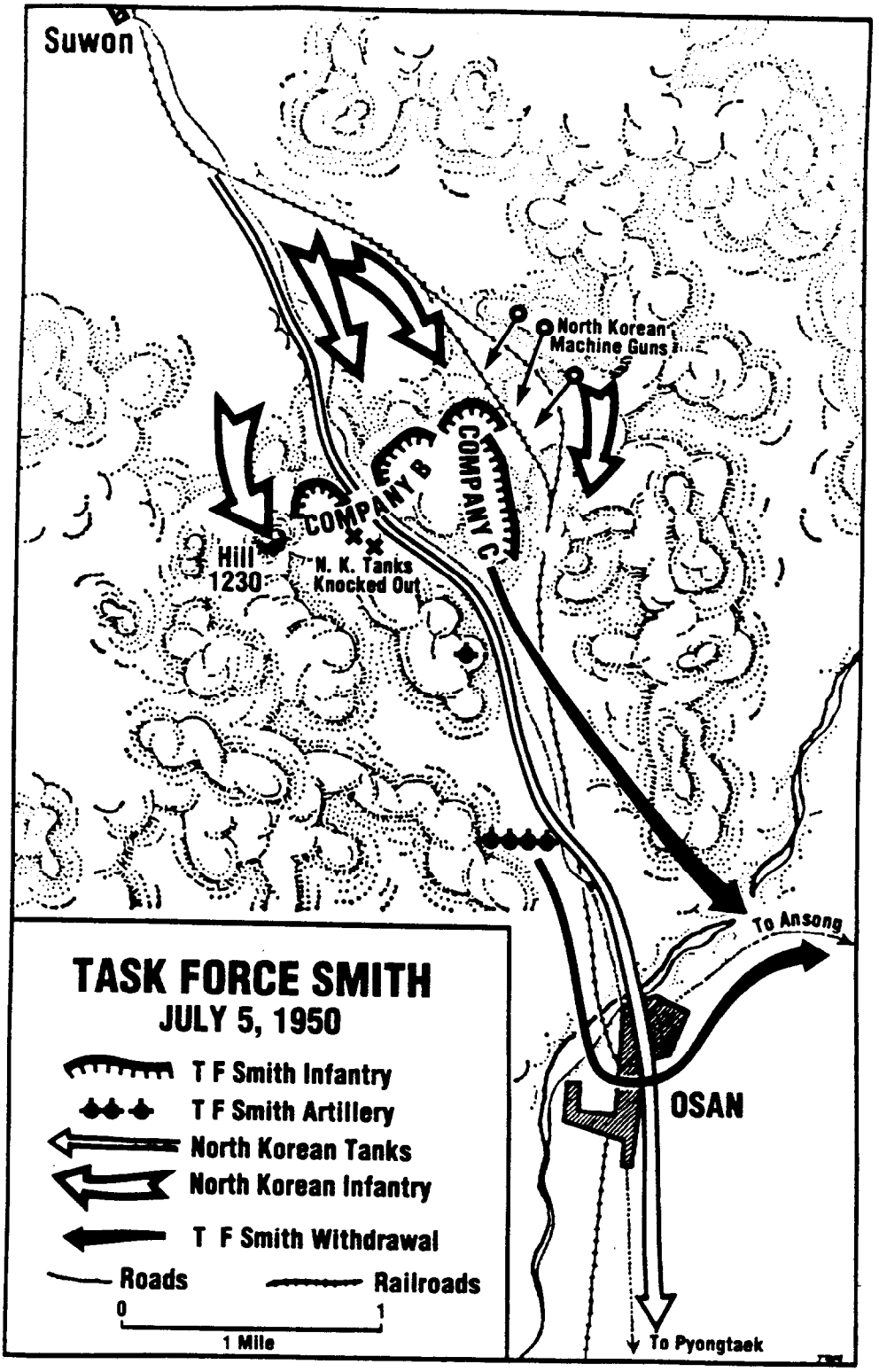
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North Korean Machine Guns
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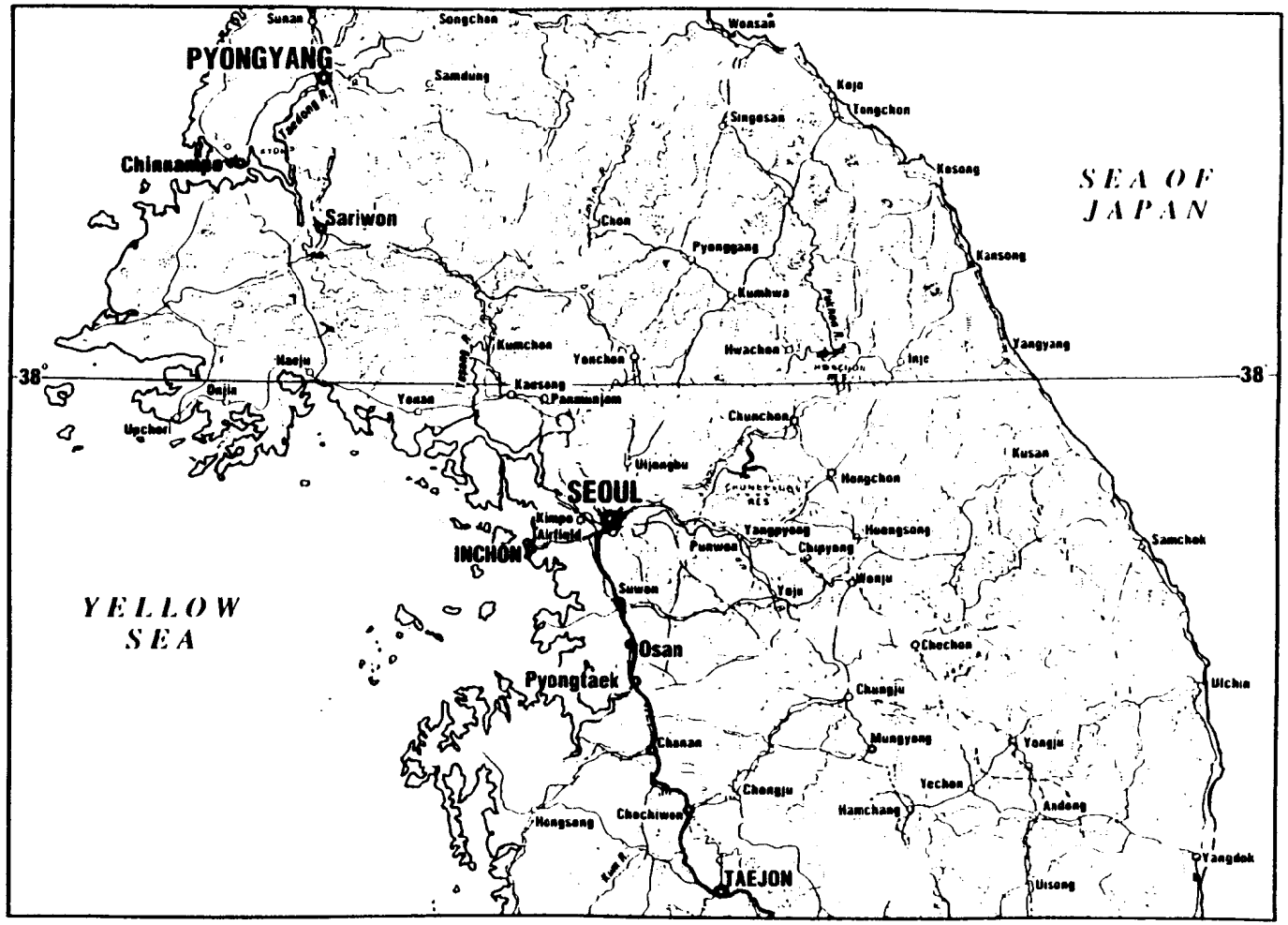
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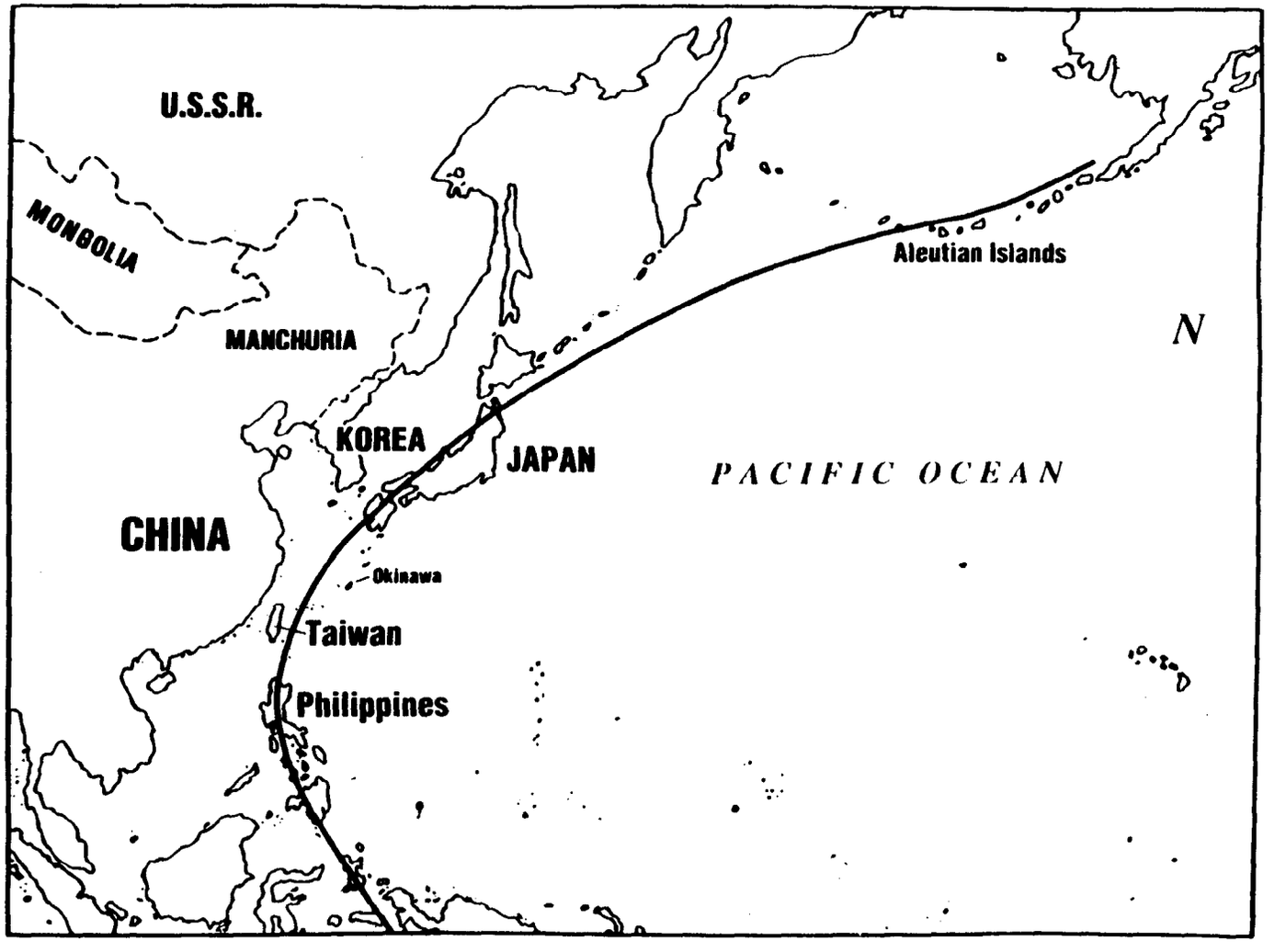
U.S. FAR EAST DEFENSE LINE (JAN 1950)



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