The resulting provisional government of a united Korea shall meet in Korea with representatives of the four powers adhering to the Moscow agreement on Korea to discuss with them what aid and assistance is needed in order to place Korean independence on a firm economic and political foundation and on what terms this aid and assistance is to be given.

4. During all the above stages the United Nations shall be invited to have observers present.

5. The Korean provisional government and the powers concerned shall agree upon a date by which all occupation forces in Korea will be withdrawn.

6. The provisional legislatures in each zone shall be encouraged to draft provisional constitutions which can later be used as a basis for the adoption by the national provisional legislature of a constitution for all of Korea.

7. Until such time as a united, independent Korea is established, public and private Korean agencies in each zone shall be brought into contact with international agencies established by or under the United Nations.

The Russians flatly rejected the suggestion. The Moscow agreement, they insisted, provided for a joint commission as the first step toward Korean independence, and any other approach to the subject would be in violation of that agreement. Our proposals were "unacceptable."

This left us no alternative but to conclude that direct negotiations with the Russians about Korea would be futile. I therefore instructed Secretary Marshall to place the issue before the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was about to convene at Lake Success, New York. Marshall presented our side of the controversy and asked the United Nations to do what "the inability of two powers to reach agreement" had so far prevented, which was to reunite Korea.

The Russians countered this move with a proposal made in the Joint Commission on September 26, that all occupation troops in Korea be withdrawn at the same time, sometime early in 1948. The American delegation to the Joint Commission replied that they had no power to enter into such an agreement. The Russian suggestion was thereupon repeated in a formal communication to the State Department. Acting Secretary of State Lovett replied that we could not enter into separate agreements while the principal issue was pending before the United Nations.

We had, however, given thought to the question of troop removal. Our armed forces had been drastically reduced from their wartime peaks, and there was strong congressional pressure to reduce military spending even further. Our commitments were many, but our forces were limited. I instructed the State and Defense Departments to weigh our commitments and consider where we might safely withdraw.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff made a careful study of the military aspects of a troop withdrawal from Korea in 1947. In September, the Joint Chiefs of Staff made a careful study of the military aspects of a troop withdrawal from Korea in 1947, and in September 1947 reported that we had little strategic interest in maintaining our undermanned occupation units in that country. At the time, the membership of the J.C.S., besides Admiral Leahy, consisted of General Eisenhower, Admiral Nimitz, and General Spaatz. Their views were incorporated in the following memorandum which was addressed to the Secretary of State, who brought it to me.

25 September 1947

The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that, from the standpoint of military security, the United States has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea for the reasons hereafter stated.

In the event of hostilities in the Far East, our present forces in Korea would be a military liability and could not be maintained there without substantial reinforcement prior to the initiation of hostilities. Moreover, any offensive operation the United States might wish to conduct on the Asiatic continent most probably would by-pass the Korean peninsula.

If, on the other hand, an enemy were able to establish and maintain strong air and naval bases in the Korean peninsula, he might be able to interfere with United States communications and operations in East China, Manchuria, the Yellow Sea, Sea of Japan and adjacent islands. Such interference would require an enemy to maintain substantial air and naval forces in an area where they would be subject to neutralization by air action. Neutralization by air action would be more feasible and less costly than large-scale ground operations.

In the light of the present severe shortage of military manpower, the corps of two divisions, totaling some 45,000 men, now maintained in south Korea, could well be used elsewhere, the withdrawal of these forces from Korea would not impair the military position of the Far East Command unless, in consequence, the Soviets establish military strength in south Korea capable of mounting an assault on Japan.

At the present time, the occupation of Korea is requiring very large expenditures for the primary purpose of preventing disease and disorder which might endanger our occupation forces with little, if any, lasting benefit to the security of the United States.

Authoritative reports from Korea indicate that continued lack of progress toward a free and independent Korea, unless offset by an elaborate program of economic, political and cultural rehabilitation, in all probability will result...
in such conditions, including violent disorder, as to make the position of United States occupation forces untenable. A precipitate withdrawal of our forces under such circumstances would low the military prestige of the United States, quite possibly to the extent of adversely affecting cooperation in other areas more vital to the security of the United States.

When the Joint Chiefs made this report, they had available to them the results of a later much-talked-about study trip which Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer had undertaken at my request. General Wedemeyer had made a firsthand study of the situation in the summer of 1947, and on the question of American troop withdrawal he stated his conclusions in these words:

"So long as Soviet troops remain in occupation of North Korea, the United States must maintain troops in South Korea or admit before the world an 'ideological retreat.' The military standing of the United States would decline accordingly; not only through the Far East, but throughout the world . . . .

"Except as indicated above, and the fact that its occupation denies a potential enemy the use of warm-water ports and the opportunity to establish strong air and naval bases in the peninsula, the United States has little military interest in maintaining troops or bases in Korea. In the event of major hostilities in the Far East, present forces in Korea would most likely be a military liability as they could not be maintained there within our present military capabilities.

"There are three possible courses of action with reference to United States Occupation Forces in Korea:

"They may be withdrawn immediately, which would abandon South Korea to the Soviet Union through pressures which could be exerted by the North Korean People's (Communist) Army and is therefore an unacceptable course from the strategic viewpoint.

"They may remain in occupation indefinitely, which course would be unacceptable to the American public after Soviet withdrawal, and would subject United States to international censure.

"They may be withdrawn concurrently with Soviet occupation forces."

General Wedemeyer then recommended that this third course be followed, preferably on the basis of agreement with the Russians, and that we assist the South Koreans in the building and training of a native defense force before our troops were withdrawn.

To invite some form of agreement with the Russians on Korea, I gave approval to a detailed plan which was placed before the General Assembly of the United Nations. We proposed that elections be held in the two zones before March 31, 1948, under U.N. supervision, as the first step toward the establishment of a national government. This
governmental authority from the military command and civilian occupation agencies in the southern zone to the newly constituted Republic of Korea. Our military government officers had, in the three years past, built up a complete governmental system, staffed almost completely by Koreans. This made the turnover easy.

I instructed the State Department to put it into effect as soon as possible. The people of Korea wanted a government of their own, and they were entitled to have it. On August 15, 1948, therefore, the Republic of Korea was formally proclaimed, and the American military government came to an end. Arrangements were made for the new government to assume control of the several police and security forces, and a property and financial settlement was concluded on September 11.

The Soviet occupation authorities in North Korea countered the establishment of the Republic of Korea when, on September 9, a "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" was proclaimed in Pyongyang. Then, ten days later, the Soviet Foreign Office advised our embassy in Moscow that all Soviet forces would be withdrawn from Korea by the end of December 1948. It later informed us that this had been done on schedule.

We, of course, were in favor of troop withdrawals. I have always believed that there is nothing that more easily creates antagonisms than the presence of unwanted soldiers, foreign or domestic. That was the way people in the southern states felt during the terrible reconstruction period, and when I was a very small boy I had heard much of southern reactions from my father and mother and from friends of my family. My father was just as unreconstructed as my mother was.

We knew, however, that the Russians had built up a "People's Army" in North Korea. We knew that Communist infiltration into South Korea was considerable. We knew that the new government of Syngman Rhee would find it difficult to resist effectively if it were attacked. However, a careful estimate had been made by our experts of the chances of survival of the new Republic of Korea, and the conclusion had been reached that "its prospects for survival may be considered favorable as long as it can continue to receive large-scale aid from the U.S."

In the spring of 1948 the National Security Council reported to me that we could do one of three things: We could abandon Korea; or we could continue our military and political responsibility for the country; or we could extend to a Korean government aid and assistance for the training and equipping of their own security forces and offer extensive economic help to prevent a breakdown of the infant nation. The Council recommended, however, that we choose the last course, and I gave my approval.

Secretary of the Army Royall said that in his talk with General MacArthur in early February 1949 the general expressed himself in favor of prompt withdrawal of our troops from Korea. Furthermore, when the National Security Council reviewed the situation in Korea on March 22, 1949, it had before it a report from MacArthur, stating that the training and combat readiness of the new security forces of the Korean Republic had reached such a level that complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea was justified and would not adversely affect our position in Korea.

The South Koreans, by that time, had brought together an army of about sixty-five thousand men, and their training had progressed very satisfactorily. They were aided in their tasks by an advisory group of about five hundred officers and men from our Army. Except for that group, the last of our troops left Korea on June 29, 1949.

Shortly before the expiration of the military appropriations for Korea (for fiscal 1949), I sent a message to the Congress asking for economic aid to Korea in the amount of $150,000,000. Unfortunately the Congress took over four months to authorize this sum, and when I asked for another sixty million dollars for the same purpose in the budget for 1950-51, the request was actually defeated in the House of Representatives, with most of the negative votes coming from the Republican members. While it was later passed as part of a combined Korea-China aid bill, it can be said that, generally, Congress was in no hurry to provide the aid which had been requested for Korea by the President.

To bolster Korea's military position, I approved a defense agreement, which was signed on January 26, 1950. We continued, however, to be concerned over the internal and economic situation in South Korea. One of the reasons, though a minor one, why I had approved the policy of troop withdrawal was the danger that we might be unable to escape involvement in the political arguments of the young state. President Syngman Rhee is a man of strong convictions and has little patience with those who differ with him. From the moment of his return to Korea in 1945, he attracted to himself men of extreme right-wing attitudes and disagreed sharply with the political leaders of more moderate views, and the withdrawal of military government removed restraints that had prevented arbitrary actions against his opponents. I did not care for the methods used by Rhee's police to break up political meetings and control political enemies, and I was deeply concerned over the Rhee government's lack of concern about the serious inflation that swept the country. Yet we had no choice but to support Rhee. Korea had been overrun and downtrodden by the Japanese since 1905 and had had no chance to develop other leaders and leadership.
We knew that Rhee's government would be in grave danger if the military units of North Korea were to start a full-scale attack. For that reason we wanted him to make his own area as stable as it could be made, and, in addition, we wanted him to bring a measure of prosperity to the peasants that would make them turn their backs on the Communist agitators.

CHAPTER 22

As I discussed Korean policy with my advisers in the spring of 1948, we knew that this was one of the places where the Soviet-controlled Communist world might choose to attack. But we could say the same thing for every point of contact between East and West, from Norway through Berlin and Trieste to Greece, Turkey, and Iran; from the Kuriles in the North Pacific to Indo-China and Malaya.

Of course each commander believed that his area was in the greatest danger. It is obvious that the final decisions on the allocation of forces and matériel cannot be left to an area commander and must be made by the top-level command.

The intelligence reports from Korea in the spring of 1950 indicated that the North Koreans were steadily continuing their build-up of forces and that they were continuing to send guerrilla groups into South Korea. There were continuing incidents along the 38th parallel, where armed units faced each other.

Throughout the spring the Central Intelligence reports said that the North Koreans might at any time decide to change from isolated raids to a full-scale attack. The North Koreans were capable of such an attack at any time, according to the intelligence, but there was no information to give any clue as to whether an attack was certain or when it was likely to come. But this did not apply alone to Korea. These same reports also told me repeatedly that there were any number of other spots in the world where the Russians "possessed the capability" to attack.

On Saturday, June 24, 1950, I was in Independence, Missouri, to
spend the weekend with my family and to attend to some personal family business.

It was a little after ten in the evening, and we were sitting in the library of our home on North Delaware Street when the telephone rang. It was the Secretary of State calling from his home in Maryland. "Mr. President," said Dean Acheson, "I have very serious news. The North Koreans have invaded South Korea."

My first reaction was that I must get back to the capital, and I told Acheson so. He explained, however, that details were not yet available and that he thought I need not rush back until he called me again with further information. In the meantime, he suggested to me that we should ask the United Nations Security Council to hold a meeting at once and declare that an act of aggression had been committed against the Republic of Korea. I told him that I agreed and asked him to request immediately a special meeting of the Security Council, and he said he would call me to report again the following morning, or sooner if there was more information on the events in Korea.

Acheson's next call came through around eleven-thirty Sunday morning, just as we were getting ready to sit down to an early Sunday dinner. Acheson reported that the U.N. Security Council had been called into emergency session. Additional reports had been received from Korea, and there was no doubt that an all-out invasion was under way there. The Security Council, Acheson said, would probably call for a cease-fire, but in view of the complete disregard the North Koreans and their big allies had shown for the U.N. in the past, we had to expect that the U.N. order would be ignored. Some decision would have to be made at once as to the degree of aid or encouragement which our government was willing to extend to the Republic of Korea.

I asked Acheson to get together with the Service Secretaries and the Chiefs of Staff and start working on recommendations for me when I got back. Defense Secretary Louis Johnson and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff General Omar Bradley were on their way back from an inspection tour of the Far East. I informed the Secretary of State that I was returning to Washington at once.

The crew of the presidential plane Independence did a wonderful job. They had the plane ready to fly in less than an hour from the time they were alerted, and my return trip got under way so fast that two of my aides were left behind. They could not be notified in time to reach the airport.

The plane left the Kansas City Municipal Airport at two o'clock, and it took just a little over three hours to make the trip to Washington. I had time to think aboard the plane. In my generation, this was not

the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war. It was also clear to me that the foundations and the principles of the United Nations were at stake unless this unprovoked attack on Korea could be stopped.

I had the plane's radio operator send a message to Dean Acheson asking him and his immediate advisers and the top defense chiefs to come to Blair House for a dinner conference.

When the Independence landed, Secretary of State Acheson was waiting for me at the airport, as was Secretary of Defense Johnson, who himself had arrived only a short while before. We hurried to Blair House, where we were joined by the other conferees. Present were the three service Secretaries, Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews, and Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Finletter. There were the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, the Army Chief General Collins, the Air Force Chief General Vandenberg, and Admiral Forrest Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations. Dean Acheson was accompanied by Under Secretary Webb, Deputy Under Secretary Dean Rusk and Assistant Under Secretary John Hickerson, and Ambassador-at-Large Philip Jessup.

It was late, and we went at once to the dining room for dinner. I asked that no discussion take place until dinner was served and over and the Blair House staff had withdrawn. I called on Dean Acheson first to give us a detailed picture of the situation. Acheson read us the first report that had been received by the State Department from our Ambassador in Seoul, Korea, at nine twenty-six the preceding evening:

According Korean army reports which partly confirmed by KMAF field advisor reports North Korean forces invaded ROK territory at several points this morning. Action was initiated about 4 A.M. Ongjin blasted by North Korean artillery fire. About 6 A.M. North Korean infantry commenced crossing parallel in Ongjin area, Kaesong area, Chunchon area and amphibious landing was reportedly made south of Kangnung on east coast. Kaesong was
reportedly captured at 9 A.M., with some 10 North Korean tanks participating in operation. North Korean forces, spearheaded by tanks, reportedly closing in on Chunchon. Details of fighting in Kangnung are unclear, although it seems North Korean forces have cut highway. Am conference with KMAG advisors and Korean officials this morning re situation.

It would appear from nature of attack and manner in which it was launched that it constitutes all out offensive against ROK.

Muccio

There were additional messages from Ambassador Muccio, too, giving more details, but all confirmed that a full-fledged attack was under way, and the North Koreans had broadcast a proclamation that, in effect, was a declaration of war.

Earlier that Sunday evening, Acheson reported, the Security Council of the United Nations had, by a vote of 9 to 0, approved a resolution declaring that a breach of the peace had been committed by the North Korean action and ordering the North Koreans to cease their action and withdraw their forces.

I then called on Acheson to present the recommendations which the State and Defense Departments had prepared. He presented the following recommendations for immediate action:

1. That MacArthur should evacuate the Americans from Korea—including the dependents of the Military Mission—and, in order to do so, should keep open the Kimpo and other airports, repelling all hostile attacks thereon. In doing this, his air forces should stay south of the 38th parallel.

2. That MacArthur should be instructed to get ammunition and supplies to the Korean army by airdrop and otherwise.

3. That the Seventh Fleet should be ordered into the Formosa Strait to prevent the conflict from spreading to that area. The Seventh Fleet should be ordered from Cavite north at once. We should make a statement that the fleet would repel any attack on Formosa and that no attacks should be made from Formosa on the mainland.

At this point I interrupted to say that the Seventh Fleet should be ordered north at once but that I wanted to withhold making any statement until the fleet was in position.

After this report I asked each person in turn to state his agreement or disagreement and any views he might have in addition. Two things stand out in this discussion. One was the complete, almost unspoken acceptance on the part of everyone that whatever had to be done to meet this aggression had to be done. There was no suggestion from anyone that either the United Nations or the United States could back away from it. This was the test of all the talk of the last five years of collective security. The other point which stands out in my mind from the discussion was the difference in view of what might be called for. Vandenberg and Sherman thought that air and naval aid might be enough. Collins said that if the Korean army was really broken, ground forces would be necessary. But no one could tell what the state of the Korean army really was on that Sunday night. Whatever the estimates of the military might be, everyone recognized the situation as serious in the extreme.

I then directed that orders be issued to put the three recommendations into immediate effect.

As we continued our discussion, I stated that I did not expect the North Koreans to pay any attention to the United Nations. This, I said, would mean that the United Nations would have to apply force if it wanted its order obeyed.

General Bradley said we would have to draw the line somewhere. Russia, he thought, was not yet ready for war, but in Korea they were obviously testing us, and the line ought to be drawn now.

I said that most emphatically I thought the line would have to be drawn.

General Collins reported that he had had a teletype conference with General MacArthur. The Far East commander, he told us, was ready to ship ammunition and supplies to Korea as soon as he received the green light.

I expressed the opinion that the Russians were trying to get Korea by default, gambling that we would be afraid of starting a third world war and would offer no resistance. I thought that we were still holding the stronger hand, although how much stronger, it was hard to tell.

I asked the three Chiefs of Staff, Collins, Vandenberg, and Sherman, what information they had on Russian forces in the Far East. Then I asked Admiral Sherman what the location of the Seventh Fleet was. The admiral said the fleet was nearing the Philippines, two days out of Japan, and when I asked how long it would take to bring these ships to the Formosa Strait, he replied that it would take one and a half to two days.

I asked General Collins how many divisions we had in Japan and how long it would take to move two or three of them to Korea. The general gave the information.

Next I asked the Secretary of the Air Force Finletter and General Vandenberg what the present disposition of the Air Force was and how long it would take to reinforce our air units in the Far East.

I instructed the service chiefs to prepare the necessary orders for the eventual use of American units if the United Nations should call for action against North Korea, and meanwhile General MacArthur was directed to send a survey party to Korea to find out what kind of aid
would be most effective and how the military forces available to the
Far East commander might be used. He was also to furnish such ammu-
nition and equipment to the Republic of Korea as he could spare, and
was authorized to use air and naval cover to assure the delivery of these
supplies and to protect the American dependents being evacuated from
Korea. The Seventh Fleet was placed under MacArthur's command and
was to have its base at Sasebo, Japan.

As the meeting adjourned, Acheson showed me a message which had
reached him from John Foster Dulles, who had just returned to Tokyo
from Korea. For some time Dulles had been at work for the State
Department on the preparation of the peace treaty with Japan, and he
too seemed to have little doubt about the course of action we had to take.

"It is possible," his message read, "that South Koreans may them-
selves contain and repulse attack, and, if so, this is best way. If, how-
ever, it appears they cannot do so then we believe that US force should
be used even though this risks Russian counter moves. To sit by while
Korea is overrun by unprovoked armed attack would start disastrous
chain of events leading most probably to world war. We suggest that
Security Council might call for action on behalf of the organization
under Article 106 by the five powers or such of them as are willing to
respond."

By Monday the reports from Korea began to sound dark and dis-
couraging, and among the messages that arrived was one from Syngman
Rhee asking for help in the telegraphic style of the State Department
messages:

"Beginning in early morning 25 June, North Korean Communist
Army began armed aggression against South. Your Excellency and Con-
gress of US already aware of fact that our people, anticipating incident
such as today's, established strong national defense force in order to
secure bulwark of democracy in the east and to render service to world
peace. We again thank you for your indispensable aid in liberating us
and in establishing our Republic. As we face this national crisis, putting
up brave fight, we appeal for your increasing support and ask that you
at the same time extend effective and timely aid in order to prevent this
act of destruction of world peace."

The Korean Ambassador, who brought me President Rhee's appeal,
was downhearted almost to the point of tears. I tried to encourage him
by saying that the battle had been going on for only forty-eight hours
and other men in other countries had defended their liberties to ultimate
victory under much more discouraging circumstances. I told him to hold
fast—that help was on the way.

But the Republic of Korea troops were no match for the tanks and
heavy weapons of the North Koreans. Seoul, the capital of Syngman
Rhee's government, seemed doomed; Communist tanks were reported
in the outskirts of the city. Rhee moved his government to Taegu, about
one hundred and fifty miles to the south.

Throughout Monday the situation in Korea deteriorated rapidly. I
called another meeting at Blair House Monday night. The same persons
who attended the first meeting were again present except Secretary of
the Navy Matthews, while Assistant Secretary of State Matthews took
Rusk's place. MacArthur's latest message was alarming:

"... Piecemeal entry into action vicinity Seoul by South Korean
Third and Fifth Divisions has not succeeded in stopping the penetration
recognized as the enemy main effort for the past 2 days with intent to
seize the capital city of Seoul. Tanks entering suburbs of Seoul. Govt
transferred to south and communication with part of KMAG opened
at Taegu. Ambassador and Chief KMAG remaining in the city. FEC mil-
survey group en route to Korea has been recalled, under this rapidly
deteriorating situation.

"South Korean units unable to resist determined Northern offensive.
Contributory factor exclusive enemy possession of tanks and fighter
planes. South Korean casualties as an index to fighting have not shown
adequate resistance capabilities or the will to fight and our estimate is
that a complete collapse is imminent."

There was now no doubt! The Republic of Korea needed help at once
if it was not to be overrun. More seriously, a Communist success in
Korea would put Red troops and planes within easy striking distance of
Japan, and Okinawa and Formosa would be open to attack from two
sides.

I told my advisers that what was developing in Korea seemed to me
like a repetition on a larger scale of what had happened in Berlin. The
Reds were probing for weaknesses in our armor; we had to meet their
fighting with the same ruthless determination.

I directed the Secretary of Defense to call General MacArthur on the
scrambler phone and to tell him in person what my instructions were.
He was to use air and naval forces to support the Republic of Korea
with air and naval elements of his command, but only south of the
38th parallel. He was also instructed to dispatch the Seventh Fleet to
the Formosa Strait. The purpose of this move was to prevent attacks by
the Communists on Formosa as well as forays by Chiang Kai-shek
against the mainland, this last to avoid reprisal actions by the Reds that
might enlarge the area of conflict.

I also approved recommendations for the strengthening of our forces
in the Philippines and for increased aid to the French in Indo-China.
Meanwhile the Security Council of the United Nations met again and adopted on June 27 the resolution calling on all members of the U.N. to give assistance to South Korea.

That same morning, Tuesday, I asked a group of congressional leaders to meet with me so that I might inform them on the events and the decisions of the past few days. With me that morning, in addition to the "Big Four" (Barkley, McFarland, Rayburn, McCormack), were Senators Connally, Wiley, Alexander Smith, George, Tydings, Bridges, and Thomas of Utah, and Representatives Kee, Eaton, Vinson, and Short. Acheson, Johnson, Pace, Matthews, Finletter, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were present, with some of their aides.

I asked the Secretary of State to summarize the situation. Then I pointed out that it was the United Nations which had acted in this case and had acted with great speed. I read a statement which had already been prepared for release to the press later that day, and I asked for the views of the congressional leaders.

Senator Wiley asked what forces General MacArthur had dispatched so far. Secretary Johnson assured him that MacArthur had sent his air and naval units as soon as he had received his instructions to do so.

Senator Tydings said that his Armed Services Committee had that morning acted to extend the draft act and to give the President power to call out the National Guard.

Senator Smith commented that it was the United Nations which had acted in this case and was acting on our own and not on behalf of the U.N.

John McCormack wanted to know from Admiral Sherman if the Navy would not have to be enlarged, and Secretary Johnson replied that the Joint Chiefs had already begun to study such expansion of the services as might be needed but that a balanced program would be maintained.

Congressman Kee, Senator Connally, and the Secretary of State made several suggestions regarding the wording of the U.N. resolution, and Dewey Short expressed the hope that other nations would join in supporting the U.N. in this cause.

The congressional leaders approved of my action. On that same day Thomas E. Dewey, Republican leader, pledged his full support.

This is the statement I gave out to the press at the conclusion of this meeting with the congressional leaders:

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

June 27, 1950

In Korea the Government forces, which were armed to prevent border raids and to preserve internal security, were attacked by invading forces from North Korea. The Security Council of the United Nations called upon the invading troops to cease hostilities and to withdraw to the 38th parallel. This they have not done, but on the contrary have pressed the attack. The Security Council called upon all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution.

In these circumstances I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.

The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.

Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack upon Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland.

The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done. The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.

I have also directed that United States Forces in the Philippines be strengthened and that military assistance to the Philippine Government be accelerated.

I have similarly directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indo-China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces.

I know that all members of the United Nations will consider carefully the consequences of this latest aggression in Korea in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations. A return to the rule of force in international affairs would have far-reaching effects. The United States will continue to uphold the rule of law.

I have instructed Ambassador Austin, as the representative of the United States to the Security Council, to report these steps to the Council.

Our allies and friends abroad were informed through our diplomatic representatives that it was our feeling that it was essential to the maintenance of peace that this armed aggression against a free nation be met firmly. We let it be known that we considered the Korean situation vital as a symbol of the strength and determination of the West. Firmness now would be the only way to deter new actions in other portions of the world. Not only in Asia but in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere the confidence of peoples in countries adjacent to Soviet Union would be very adversely affected, in our judgment, if we failed to take action to protect a country established under our auspices and confirmed in its freedom by action of the United Nations. If, however, the threat to
South Korea was met firmly and successfully, it would add to our successes in Iran, Berlin, and Greece a fourth success in opposition to the aggressive moves of the Communists. And each success, we suggested to our allies, was likely to add to the caution of the Soviets in undertaking new efforts of this kind. Thus the safety and prospects for peace of the free world would be increased.

The top-level policy discussions were continued on Wednesday, June 28, when I opened another meeting of the National Security Council with a survey of the most recent developments reported from Korea. I told the departments concerned that I wanted a complete restudy made of all our policies in areas adjoining the U.S.S.R., and Secretaries Johnson and Acheson reported that a study of some of the immediate aspects growing out of the Korean situation had already been begun.

At this point Vice-President Barkley joined the meeting. He had been detained on Capitol Hill, but for a good cause, for he was able to report that the Senate had just voted unanimously to extend the draft.

Secretary Acheson pointed out that the unanimity of support for my policy might not be of lasting duration. What had been done in Korea had had tremendous effect, but the responsibilities that went with it were equally significant, for what had been done in the last three days might ultimately involve us in all-out war.

I replied that the danger involved was obvious but that we should not back out of Korea unless a military situation elsewhere demanded such action.

Averell Harriman, who had just arrived from Europe, observed that the people there had been gravely concerned lest we fail to meet the challenge in Korea. After my decision had been announced, he said, there had been a general feeling of relief, since it had been believed that disaster would otherwise be certain. He added that the Europeans were fully aware of the implications of my decision.

The Vice-President mentioned that he had heard one of the senators doubt the willingness of other NATO countries to help. I said that we had just received a specific offer by the British to furnish naval assistance, and I asked Secretary Johnson to provide the Vice-President with the details so that Barkley might be able to inform the members of the Senate.

The Secretary of the Air Force, Thomas Finletter, brought up the question of mutual understanding between Washington and the Far East Command in Tokyo. He felt that personal contact might help us avoid mistakes and suggested that General Vandenberg be sent over to inform General MacArthur more specifically on the thinking in Washington.

It was my opinion, however, that at the present moment the Chiefs of Staff were most urgently needed in Washington. Nevertheless, I understood the need for mutual understanding between Washington and Tokyo and expressed my regret that General MacArthur had so consistently declined all invitations to return to the United States for even a short visit. There had been no opportunity for him to meet me as Commander in Chief. I felt that if the Korean conflict was prolonged I would want to see General MacArthur.

Secretary of the Army Pace reported that instructions had been issued to military intelligence to be alert for any evidence of Soviet participation in the Korean fighting, and wanted to know if there were any other special intelligence targets. I replied that our strategic intelligence was watching other areas besides Korea and I thought that Soviet activities in the vicinity of Yugoslavia, in Bulgaria especially, and in the vicinity of northern Europe should be given special attention.

The Army Secretary also reported that arrangements had been made for a system of military briefings to be given on Capitol Hill, whereupon I told the Vice-President that I wanted to be certain that those briefings were bi-partisan and that I wanted him to select those to attend them.

The National Security Council met again Thursday, when Secretary of Defense Johnson introduced a proposed directive to General MacArthur. The final paragraph of this proposed directive, however, permitted an implication that we were planning to go to war against the Soviet Union. I stated categorically that I did not wish to see even the slightest implication of such a plan. I wanted to take every step necessary to push the North Koreans back behind the 38th parallel. But I wanted to be sure that we would not become so deeply committed in Korea that we could not take care of such other situations as might develop.

Secretary Pace expressed the belief that we should be very careful in authorizing operations above the 38th parallel and that we should clearly limit such operations. I agreed, pointing out that operations above the 38th parallel should be designed only to destroy military supplies, for I wanted it clearly understood that our operations in Korea were designed to restore peace there and to restore the border. Secretary Acheson said that the Air Force should not be restricted in its tasks by a rigid application of the 38th parallel as a restraining line, but he wanted to be sure that precautions would be taken to keep the air elements from going beyond the boundaries of Korea. He suggested that the directive to MacArthur include some instructions in the case of Soviet intervention, perhaps to the effect that he defend his positions and our forces, and report at once for further instructions from the President.

I accepted this suggestion, and I told Acheson and Johnson to get together and work out the wording.
The Secretary of State then reviewed the reply received from the Soviets to our appeal to them to help bring the fighting in Korea to an end. Acheson expressed the belief that a statement which had been released in Peiping, taken together with the Russian reply, seemed to indicate that the Soviets would not intervene themselves but might help the Chinese Communists to do so. Acheson suggested, and I approved, the public release of our note to the U.S.S.R. and their reply.

The Secretary of State reported offers of assistance from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Netherlands. I said that it was my hope that the forces assisting South Korea could be made truly representative of the United Nations.

Before closing the meeting I asked the Secretary of Defense to prepare a directive in my name to General MacArthur instructing him to make a full and complete report on the situation in the Far East each day.

A little later that day Secretary Acheson returned to the White House, and among the things we discussed was a communication from the Chinese government offering assistance in Korea. Chiang Kai-shek had instructed his Ambassador to tell us that he was willing to send ground forces numbering up to thirty-three thousand men but that he had neither air nor sea units and that U.S. assistance would be needed to get the ground forces from Formosa to Korea and then to supply them there.

I told Acheson that my first reaction was to accept this offer because I wanted, as I had said to the National Security Council earlier in the day, to see as many of the members of the United Nations as possible take part in the Korean action. Acheson suggested that the situation of Nationalist China was different from that of other U.N. members. Formosa was one of the areas most exposed to attack. That had been the reason we had dispatched the Seventh Fleet, and it would be a little inconsistent to spend American money to protect an island while its natural defenders were somewhere else. He also raised the question whether the troops of the Generalissimo would not require a great deal of re-equipping before they could go into combat under modern conditions.

I asked Acheson to bring up the matter the next day at a meeting with Defense Secretary Louis Johnson and the Joint Chiefs. The following morning I was still inclined to accept the Chinese offer. Frank Pace, the Secretary of the Army, telephoned me at five o'clock in the morning. He said that he had just spoken to General Collins, who had had a long telecon conference with MacArthur. General MacArthur had asked for the conference immediately upon his return from a flying trip to the Korean front line. MacArthur said he was convinced that only American ground units could stop the North Korean advance. He had asked for permission to commit one regimental combat team at once and to build up to two divisions as rapidly as possible.

The Secretary of the Army asked for my instructions.

I told Pace to inform General MacArthur immediately that the use of one regimental combat team was approved.

At seven that morning a staff colonel from the Joint Chiefs' office came over to brief me on the night's reports from Korea. As soon as he had finished, I called Pace and Johnson and told them to be prepared to discuss at a meeting at 8:30 A.M. MacArthur's request for authority to commit the two divisions and the offer of troops by Chiang Kai-shek.

At this meeting I had with me about the same group that met with me at Blair House the evening of my hurried return from Independence. I informed the meeting that I had already granted authority for the use of the one regimental combat team and that I now desired their advice on the additional troops to be employed. I asked if it would not be worth while to accept the Chinese offer, especially since Chiang Kai-shek said he could have his thirty-three thousand men ready for sailing within five days. Time was all-important.

At the same time I asked them to consider carefully places where trouble might break out. What, for instance, would Mao Tse-tung do? What might the Russians do in the Balkans, in Iran, in Germany?

Secretary Acheson suggested that if Chinese troops from Formosa appeared in Korea the Communists in Peiping might decide to enter that conflict in order to inflict damage on the Generalissimo's troops there and thus reduce his ability to defend himself whenever they might decide to try an invasion of Formosa.

The Chiefs of Staff pointed out that the thirty-three thousand men offered, even though the Generalissimo called them his best, would have very little modern equipment and would be as helpless as Syngman Rhee's army against the North Korean tanks.

Furthermore, the transportation they would require would be better used if we assigned it the task of carrying supplies and additional man-power of our own to MacArthur.

I was still concerned about our ability to stand off the enemy with the small forces available to us, but after some further discussion I accepted the position taken by practically everyone else at this meeting; namely, that the Chinese offer ought to be politely declined. I then decided that General MacArthur should be given full authority to use the ground forces under his command.

The first American ground troops sent into the Korean fighting were infantrymen from the 24th Infantry Division. By sea and by air, units
of this veteran combat organization were rushed to the front lines to slow down the Communist advance, and the story of their action will always remain a glorious chapter in the history of the American Army. Inspiringly led by that wonderful fighting commander, Major General William F. Dean, the men of the 24th, most of them young recruits without battle experience, put up one of the finest rear-guard actions in military history.

I kept myself posted on the battle-front situation by way of a daily briefing which I was given each morning by General Bradley or by an officer from the Joint Chiefs’ office. I also arranged for the National Security Council to meet each week, and at each of these meetings a briefing on the Korean situation was given by General Bradley himself or by an officer of his staff. This began on July 6, 1950, at the first meeting of the National Security Council after American troops had been committed to the ground action. It was then that General Bradley described the difficult position of the 24th Division and reported that the 25th Division, also from Japan, stood ready to move to Korea but that shipping was critical in the Far East and that another week would pass before these reinforcements could reach the front lines.

The Vice-President asked if I knew how many North Koreans were in the operation, and General Bradley told him that our intelligence estimated that there were ninety thousand. Vice-President Barkley then inquired how many troops were now engaged on our side, and Bradley told him that there were now about ten thousand Americans and about twenty-five thousand ROK regulars. Bradley also mentioned a new type of bazooka that was being rushed to Korea to give the troops there a weapon capable of stopping the heavy Russian-made tanks the North Koreans were using.

Navy Secretary Matthews asked about possible additional North Korean forces that might be brought in, and General Bradley said that intelligence from the Far East reported two more enemy divisions in North Korea that had not been committed, in addition to the possibility of elements, Korean or Chinese, that might be brought in from Manchuria.

In reply to a question from Secretary Snyder, Bradley said that North Korean divisions were smaller than ours, running about ten thousand men, but Secretary Pace added that the estimate of the intelligence agencies was that there were two hundred thousand Chinese Communist troops in Manchuria.

Furthermore, he went on to say that all three service Secretaries felt strongly that we should re-examine our entire “military posture” for the days ahead. I agreed, adding that it was my understanding that...
Soviets had ignored the order, as in all likelihood they would have done, either the United Nations would have stood convicted of weakness or World War III would have been on.

It was our policy to strengthen the weak spots in the defense of the free world. Iran, Greece, Berlin, and NATO all stand as landmarks in the fight against Communism. In the same way, our increased aid to Indo-China and the Philippines and our move for the defense of Formosa by the Seventh Fleet were designed to reinforce areas exposed to Communist pressure. Yet every one of these steps had to be taken without losing sight of the many other places where trouble might break out or of the danger that might befall us if we hazarded too much in any one place.

Clement Attlee and his Cabinet had a similar world-wide view, and we agreed early in July, at Attlee’s suggestion, to hold British-American talks in Washington. I designated General Bradley and Ambassador Jessup to speak for us, and the British were represented by their Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, and Marshal of the R.A.F. Lord Tedder, chairman of their Joint Services Mission in Washington. In these discussions, all the world’s danger spots were reviewed to determine what policies the two countries should pursue in common in case of further Communist aggressions. Our representatives stated that it was our policy to concentrate our attention on the main trend of Soviet intentions. Korea, in the view of the conference, had greatly increased the risk of total war. This reflected my own view as I had expressed it to Bradley and Jessup and to other leaders of the administration. If a second serious blow were to follow the one in Korea, it might well mean inescapable total war. It was in line with this policy that certain proposed flying photo-reconnaissance missions were not permitted. Some Air Force planners had proposed, on July 6, to fly some very high-level photo missions over Dairen, Port Arthur, Vladivostok, Karafuto, and the Kurile Islands. Fortunately, however, there were those on the Air Force staff who realized that political questions were involved and asked for State Department advice. Dean Acheson brought the matter to me. I told him that I took a most serious view of any such plan. I asked him to get in touch with Secretary of the Air Force Finletter and tell him that I wanted him to make it very plain to the Air Force commanders in the Far East that it was contrary to our policy to engage in activities that might give the Soviet Union a pretext to come into open conflict with us. All it would take would be for some of these photo-reconnaissance planes to be shot down by the Russians. This, of course, would create a new and more serious situation.

It was only natural for the Air Force commanders in the Far East to plan such reconnaissance missions. The information to be gained in this way would have been of help to their local situation. But there were over-all considerations that outweighed these local advantages, and the decision, therefore, had to be against the proposal. This view was also taken by the agencies that prepared the studies on which I based my decisions.

General MacArthur was naturally preoccupied with Korea. Almost as soon as he was given the mission of aiding the South Koreans against the aggressors, he had worked out a strategic plan and begun then to call for the troops necessary to carry out his plan.

His request for additional troops deserved high priority. I gave approval to an immediate alert order for the 2d Infantry Division, in addition to the 1st Marine Division, which was already preparing for the move to Korea, and instructed Secretary Johnson to call on Selective Service to furnish the armed forces with manpower needed to fill up the skeleton units and ships. I then directed that General Collins and General Vandenberg fly to Tokyo to confer with General MacArthur.

A few days earlier I had approved a proposal prepared jointly by the Departments of State and Defense to introduce in the U.N. a resolution creating a unified command in Korea, asking us to name a commander and authorizing the use of the blue U.N. flag in Korea. This resolution was approved by the Security Council on July 7, and on the following day I named General MacArthur to the post of U.N. commander.

On July 12 Lieutenant General Walton Walker arrived in Korea and established headquarters there for his Eighth Army and took over the command of United Nations forces in Korea. Meanwhile, our forces were still fighting a rear-guard action and were withdrawing steadily and doggedly toward the beachhead city of Pusan.

The American press made dramatic news out of this retreat. News stories spoke of entire units being wiped out and exaggerated the rout and confusion. Truth was that a small band of heroic youngsters led by a few remarkable generals was holding off a landslide so that the strength for the counterpunch could be mustered behind their thin curtain of resistance. The fact is that there was more panic among the civilians at home than among the soldiers in Korea.

By this time, however, General MacArthur had already conceived the basic plan for the counterattack. On July 7 the general had advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that his basic operating plan would be to stop the enemy armies; to exploit fully the control of the sea and of the air; and, by amphibious maneuvers, to strike behind the mass of the enemy ground forces.
These major plans were the topics which General Collins and General Vandenberg discussed with General MacArthur during their visit with him. They had also discussed the problem of meeting the needs of the Far East Command within the over-all requirements of national policy and the use of Allied troop elements in Korea.

General MacArthur agreed to the use of Allied troops within his command, even though he realized that an amalgamation of nationalities would make his job more difficult. He did, however, advise against accepting the offer of thirty-three thousand Chinese Nationalist troops made by Chiang Kai-shek. He offered the opinion that these troops would be of little effect in Korea; they were infantry, without artillery or other support elements, and of unknown quality. They would, he said, require extensive logistical support from us and, in fact, would be an albatross around our necks for months. Furthermore, it was his opinion that the diversion of this force from Formosa to Korea would leave a gap on that island that would invite attack. He suggested that he would himself go to Formosa and explain the situation to Chiang Kai-shek.

As for the plans for the counterattack, it seemed that General Collins had serious misgivings about it. The MacArthur plan was for two divisions to land by sea near Inchon, in the vicinity of Seoul, and for one regimental combat team to be air-dropped in the same area. At the same time, the forces in the Pusan beachhead would break out toward the north. It was a bold plan worthy of a master strategist.

To make this plan possible required, however, a considerable stepping up of the rebuilding of the armed forces, and almost every time he communicated with us the Far East commander asked for increased numbers of troops. The JCS would scrutinize these recommendations and then submit their proposals to the Secretary of Defense. Of course I was not asked to decide on each and every troop movement decision. Nevertheless, basic decisions which the law placed in my responsibility were often necessary. Thus, on July 31, I approved a recommendation that four National Guard divisions be called into active federal service.

Earlier, on July 19, I had asked Congress to remove the limitations on the size of the armed forces and had urged legislation to authorize the establishment of priorities and allocations of materials to prevent hoarding and requisitioning of necessary supplies. I then stated that it would be necessary to raise taxes and to restrict consumer credit, and that an additional ten billion dollars for defense would be needed.

An advance copy of this message was sent to General MacArthur to inform him of the approach that was being taken at home. He thanked me for this in a most courteous telegram.

CHAPTER 23

On July 31 General MacArthur undertook the flying trip to Formosa that he had discussed with General Collins and General Vandenberg when they had visited him in Tokyo.

Our policy toward Formosa had been one of the topics discussed in Washington on July 27 at a meeting of the National Security Council. There was a recommendation from the Joint Chiefs before the Council that we grant all-out aid to the Chinese Nationalists so as to enable them to defend themselves against a possible Communist attack on the island. Many other phases of the situation were discussed. I approved three specific proposals: the granting of extensive military aid to Nationalist China; a military survey by MacArthur's headquarters of the requirements of Chiang Kai-shek's forces; and the plan to carry out reconnaissance flights along the China coast to determine the imminence of attacks against Formosa.

These decisions were communicated to General MacArthur by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 3, and on the same day I also informed him that I was sending Averell Harriman to Tokyo at once to discuss the Far Eastern political situation with him. Harriman's report to me on his meetings and conversations follows. (For reasons of brevity and for military security I have omitted portions of the Harriman memorandum.)

General MacArthur met me at Haneda Airport on our arrival at 9:45 A.M., August 6, 1950. He drove me to the guest house at the Embassy. As the window between the driver and his aide, and ourselves, was open, our conversation was general.

He described the satisfactory political development in Japan since my last visit. He spoke of the great quality of the Japanese; his desire to work, the satisfaction of the Japanese in work, his respect for the dignity of work. He