

**Aligning Interests:  
Korea and the Evolution of the American-  
Australian Relationship, 1947-53**

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## **Dedications**

To my five year old nephew, Antony, and my three year old niece and goddaughter, Olivia, who affirm my faith in the future. Trust your instincts and look beyond the horizon.

To Patrick Forbes, fellow guide at the South Australian Museum, friend, mentor, leader, and Korean War veteran.

To the Korean War veterans I met at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum, Abilene, Kansas.

To Lester and Kay Wurm, in appreciation of your friendship, warmth, generosity and hospitality.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement, 1947-53, in the evolution of the relationship between the two nations in the formative years of the Cold War. It shows that in the aftermath of World War Two, divergent American and Australian strategic and security interests converged and then aligned on the Korean peninsula. This study argues the interactions between key US and Australian officials throughout their Korean engagement were crucial to shaping the nature of the evolving relationship and the making of the alliance between the two nations. This analysis especially emphasises the diplomacy of Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs and Ambassador to the US; John Foster Dulles, diplomat and Special Representative of the President; and James Plimsoll, diplomat and member of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.

The thesis argues the American evaluation of the geo-strategic significance of Korea was a significant factor in the making of the ANZUS alliance and shows events in Korea remained central to the US-Australian relationship as it continued to evolve beyond the signing of the Treaty. Their Korean engagement showed the US and Australia had similar and overlapping, rather than identical interests, and that their relationship was much more nuanced and problematic than commonly perceived. This analysis of the US-Australian Korean engagement illuminates a crucial but hitherto overlooked phase in the history of the evolution of the relationship between the two nations. It challenges the Australian mythology on the origins of the ANZUS Treaty and presents a cautionary insight into the limits of Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests. This thesis therefore provides greater depth to understanding the broader historical context of the trajectory of the US-Australian relationship and alliance since the beginning of the Cold War.

## **Declaration**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

**Daniel Fazio**

## Acknowledgments

Although this thesis has taken me much longer to complete than I intended, and despite the demons and doubts, it has been an exhilarating and transformative personal and intellectual journey. This experience has affirmed my belief in the sustaining power of Tennyson's words: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

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My parents, Salvatore and Erminia, Sicilian immigrants who came to Australia to forge a new life and have a family, always encouraged their four children to aspire to a university education and, indeed, we all achieved this. From my earliest memories, my parents stressed the importance of being informed about national and international events. Their advice was the genesis of this thesis. They, along with my siblings, Sandra, Belinda and Lorenzo, have been an integral part of my life throughout my PhD candidature. I especially thank Lorenzo for reading portions of this thesis and for his forthright and rather unique feedback! I dedicate this thesis, in part, to Lorenzo's and Melanie's children, my nephew, Antony, and niece and goddaughter, Olivia, and I hope they too will follow their star. I also very much appreciate Belinda's and Sandra's efforts in formatting this thesis.

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focussed knowing I could share with Alison my innermost thoughts about the personal and intellectual revelations I was experiencing as I sought to understand what was happening to me during that defining period of my life. I also thank Alison and her parents, Keith and Heather, for extended stays at their home during which I wrote portions of this thesis. I look forward to our ongoing friendship and to many more travels to favourite places and new discoveries.

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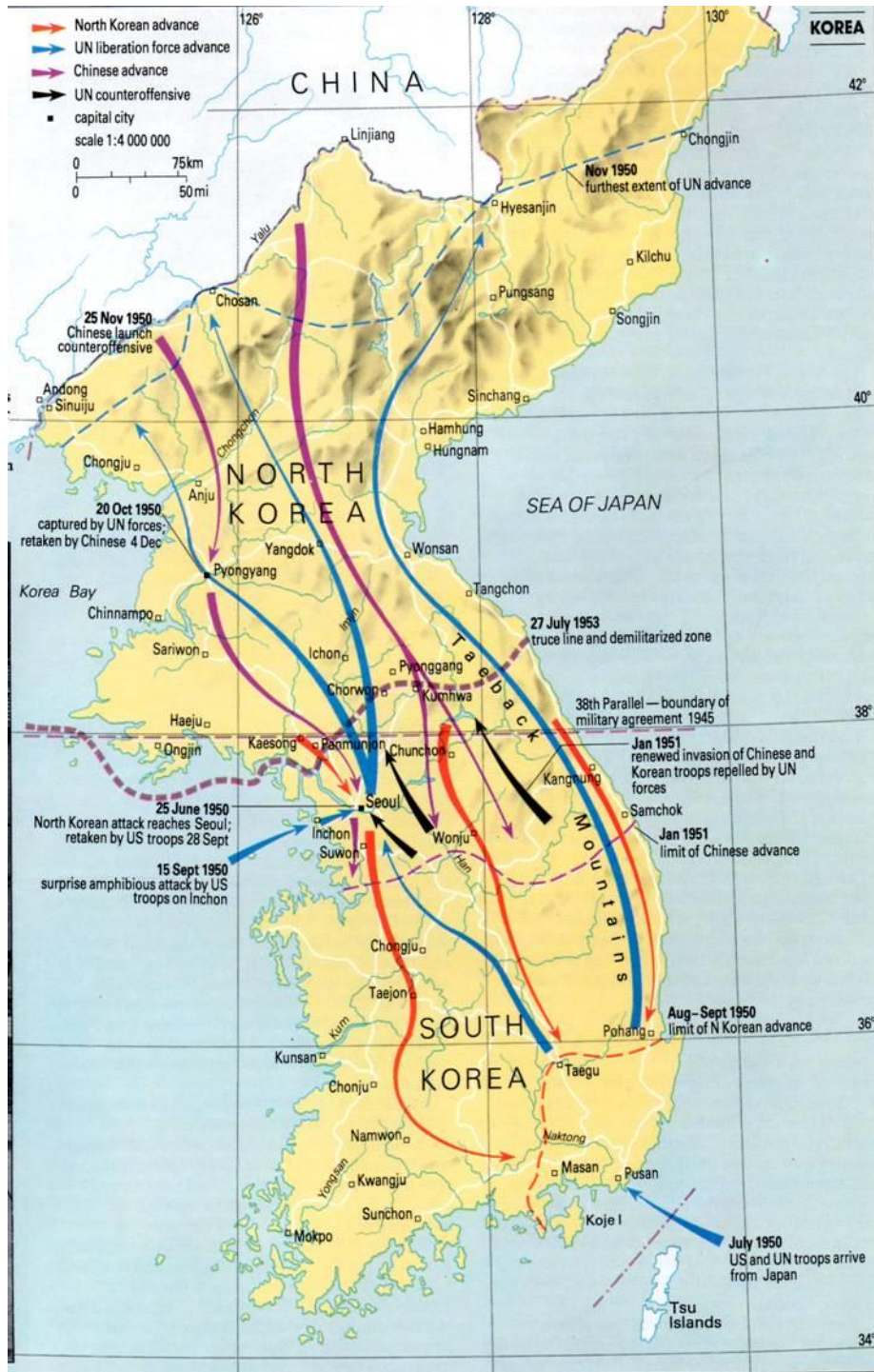
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## Map 1: The Korean War 1950-53



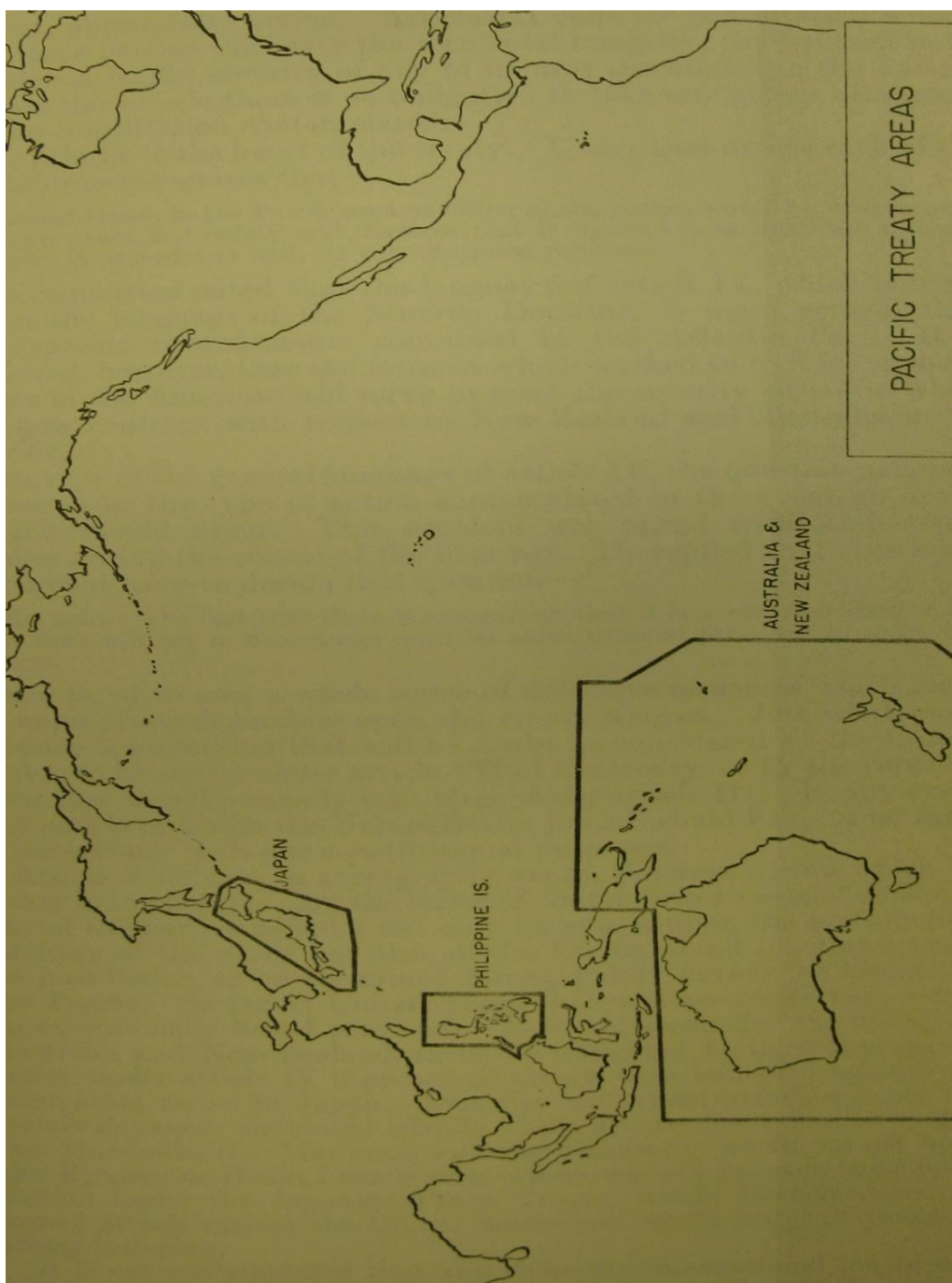
From Laurence Freedman, *Atlas of Global Strategy* (Facts on File Publications, New York, 1985) p 147.

## Map 2: Australian Operational Locations 1950-1953



From Ben Evans, *Out in the Cold: Australia's Involvement in the Korean War 1950-1953* (Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 2000) p 7.

### Map 3: Pacific Treaty Areas 1951



From “Japanese Peace Treaty and Other Treaties Relating to Security in the Pacific”, Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1952, p 23, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 61, Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty - Correspondence, 1952, Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University.

## **Abbreviations**

ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Treaty
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force
CinC UNC	Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command
EA	Department of External Affairs
FEC	Far Eastern Commission
DRRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
HSTL	Harry S Truman Library
JCS	US Joint Chiefs of Staff
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAII	US National Archives II
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	National Library of Australia
NNRC	Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission
POW	Prisoners of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
SML	Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University
UN	United Nations
UNC	United Nations Command
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNCOK	United Nations Commission on Korea
UNCURK	United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea
UNTCOK	United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea



US	United States of America
USAFIK	United States Army Forces in Korea
USAMGIK	United States Army Military Government in Korea
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

## INTRODUCTION

The 1947-53 engagement of the United States and Australia in Korea was a significant factor in the evolution of the bi-lateral relationship and the making of the alliance between the two nations in the formative years of the Cold War. For six years, Korea was the focal point of converging and aligning American and Australian geo-strategic and security interests. This analysis of this largely overlooked period in the history of the US-Australian relationship highlights the prominent roles of key individuals, most notably, John Foster Dulles, diplomat and Special Representative of the President, Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs and Ambassador to the US, and James Plimsoll, diplomat and member of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), in shaping the nature of the evolving relationship between the two nations.

This thesis demonstrates that the evolution of the US-Australian relationship was much more nuanced and problematic than commonly perceived and that its course was dependent on the confluence of the great external shifts in global politics and the diplomacy of the individual officials featured here. The two countries had similar and overlapping rather than identical strategic and security interests. Both nations sought to shape their relationship to best suit their respective interests. This study also offers a cautionary reminder of the limits of Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests. Overall, this thesis provides a broader and fuller context for understanding the origins and the basis of Australia's most important strategic alliance.

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In the aftermath of World War Two, the small and little known nation of Korea became the epicentre of the evolving US-Australian relationship because American and Australian strategic interests converged and then aligned on that peninsula. The US-Australian Korean engagement began in 1947, three years *before* the outbreak of the Korean War. This study charts the progression of the US-Australian relationship throughout their six year Korean engagement.

During the first of the three phases of this engagement, the US and Australia shared converging interests but pursued different objectives. Australian opposition to US Korean policy caused friction and acrimony between American and Australian officials. The convergence of US and Australian Korean policies following the 1948 South Korean election alleviated tensions and the ensuing collaboration between their officials augured well for the evolving relationship.

The second phase of this engagement began when the US sought to persuade a reluctant Australia to build closer ties with South Korea. Following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Australia's immediate response to US calls for international aid to defend South Korea, made Australia visible to the Americans when they were seeking allies and earned Washington's gratitude. By 1951, the re-evaluation of America's Asia-Pacific security strategy following the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb, the Communist victory in China, the outbreak of the Korean War and Chinese intervention in the conflict, and Australian persistence, led to the making of the ANZUS Treaty which formalised the US-Australian alliance.

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The depth of US-Australian diplomacy and collaboration in the third phase of this engagement during the 1952 South Korean political crisis and on China and the voluntary repatriation of Korean War POWs, demonstrated the extent of the evolution and the limits of the relationship between the two nations.

This evaluation of the Korean engagement shows that although Australia had minimal impact on over-all US strategic policy, it was able to have some influence on American policy toward Korea and Japan through the success of its diplomats. Robert O'Neill, the official Australian Korean War historian wrote:

Australia's involvement in the war was much more significant at the level of policy formulation than at that of combat operations. Australia's [military] commitment ... had no profound influence on the course of the war, but there was substantial interaction between Australia and its allies regarding both general policies towards global strategic problems and specific policies towards the Korean conflict. Participation in the war established trends which influenced the development of several other Australian relationships and commitments....<sup>1</sup>

This thesis makes clear and provides evidence showing the limits and gains in Australian influence on both general and specific American policies.

Although the evolution of the American-Australian relationship reflects the shared histories, foundations, values and common language of both nations, it was far from inevitable the two countries would forge an intricate relationship and alliance. It was a series of interlocking events and circumstances in Korea, and the diplomacy and collaboration between key US and Australian officials throughout their Korean engagement, that were instrumental in shaping and strengthening the evolving US-Australian relationship in the early years of the Cold War. Anthony Farrar-Hockley, a Korean War veteran and author of the official British history of the conflict, said of the tensions and misunderstandings between the Allies, that "in all these relationships,

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personal inclinations swayed results.”<sup>2</sup> Again, this thesis shows exactly how and when this was true, and when it was not.

Throughout this thesis, there are ongoing references to the US-Australian “relationship” and “alliance”. These terms are not interchangeable. The US-Australian relationship was and remains multi-dimensional. In this thesis, “relationship” refers to the overall relationship between the two nations. The alliance means the 1951 ANZUS Treaty – the formal security agreement between Australia, New Zealand and the US.

The literature on the US-Australian alliance is dominated by Australian authors and is overwhelmingly either quite pro or anti American: there is not much nuance. However, as Andrew Carr has written: “Careful archival research has shown the repeated capacity of Australian governments to identify their nation’s interests—as distinct from those of the United States—and to support ANZUS in a selective manner so as to support those interests.”<sup>3</sup> Carr notes the studies by James Curran, Michael Sexton, David McLean, and Lloyd Cox and Brendan O’Connor as examples of substantive multi layered analyses of the US-Australian relationship.<sup>4</sup> This thesis expands these points, offering a nuanced and problematic evaluation of the impact of the American-Australian Korean engagement and the influence of that six year shared participation on both the relationship and the alliance.

### **Background and Context**

Of course, the American-Australian relationship did not begin with their Korean engagement and the making of the ANZUS alliance in the early years of the

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Cold War. This thesis shows that Korea was a critical part of the broader story of the emergence of a bi-lateral partnership.

Australia and the US have a shared history dating back to the 1790s soon after the formation of the United States and the establishment of the British colony of New South Wales. The US and the Australian colonies developed commercial relationships throughout the 1800s which continued after Federation in 1901. This was a peripheral association, lacking a strong foundation. Tensions rose between the US and the colony of Victoria near the end of the American Civil War when Washington challenged the legality of the Victorian government permitting the Confederate ship *Shenandoah*, to dock for repairs and supplies in January-February 1865, and the reception accorded to its captain and officers at the Melbourne Club.<sup>5</sup>

Relations between Australia and the US were much more amicable in 1908 when President Theodore Roosevelt accepted Prime Minister Alfred Deakin's invitation for the Great White Fleet to visit Australia. Roosevelt told his Secretary of State, Elihu Root, that "some day the question of the Pacific will be a dominant one and it will be necessary to know the sentiment of Australia and New Zealand."<sup>6</sup> The visit of the Great White Fleet was an enormous public relations success with the Americans warmly welcomed by the Australians.

In 1918, American and Australian forces fought alongside each other on the Western Front in the final year of World War One. Two of those US soldiers, Harry Truman and Douglas MacArthur, were instrumental in the evolution of the US-

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Australian relationship during their Korean engagement, despite their personal confrontation over American Korean War policy.

Australia sought closer ties with the US following the outbreak of the Second World War. In January 1940, the Menzies government established the first Australian diplomatic mission in Washington headed by Richard Casey. Casey laid the foundation for a defining characteristic of the US-Australian relationship: the utilisation and value of personal diplomacy and friendships in advancing the relationship. Casey cultivated and maintained regular access and earned the trust of Franklin Roosevelt's confidant and key lieutenant, Harry Hopkins, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Vice-President Henry Wallace, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Casey and Assistant Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, became close personal friends.<sup>7</sup>

Britain's inability to defend Australia was palpable in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and their rapid advance into South East Asia from December 1941 to February 1942 which encompassed the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin. Australia, isolated and exposed, looked to the US for its security. In turn, the loss of the Philippines meant the Americans needed Australia as a base from which to launch their counterattack against the Japanese. In his World War Two memoirs, Dwight Eisenhower wrote: "Australia was the base nearest to the Philippines that we could hope to establish and maintain.... This meant that ... we had to make certain of the safety of Australia itself."<sup>8</sup>

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The American-Australian wartime cooperation, notably between General Douglas MacArthur and Prime Minister John Curtin, was underpinned by their mutual strategic objective to defeat Japan.<sup>9</sup> The US-Australian relationship during World War Two has been studied extensively and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide further detail on the wartime alliance.<sup>10</sup> However, given the focus and arguments of this thesis, it is important to note that while the Second World War was a critical event in the history of the evolution of the US-Australian relationship, marking the first time the two nations formed an extensive security and military association, it did not result in a formal alliance between the US and Australia.<sup>11</sup>

Australia and the US established embassy level diplomatic links in the aftermath of World War Two as Australia's "fear of abandonment" propelled the shifting of its strategic reliance from Britain to the US as the principal guarantor of its security.<sup>12</sup> In 1946 Norman Makin and Robert Butler were appointed, respectively, the first Australian and American Ambassadors to Washington and Canberra. The security element in the US-Australian relationship became much more prominent in the early years of the Cold War as both Herbert Evatt and Percy Spender, Ministers for External Affairs in the Chifley and Menzies governments, respectively, sought a defence treaty with the US. However, the Truman Administration refused to countenance a formal defence alliance with Australia. Simultaneously, economic and education links between Australia and the US continued to grow as illustrated by the establishment of the Australian-American Fulbright Program in 1949.<sup>13</sup>

Australia also actively participated in the formation of the United Nations and was elected a non permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1945. Evatt was



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a vociferous advocate for Australia and other smaller nations having a voice at the UN. Although Evatt often clashed with, and even more often annoyed, the US representatives, his and Australia's strong reputation at the UN enabled him to serve as President of the UN General Assembly in 1948-49.<sup>14</sup> Ambassador Makin, also head of the Australian UN delegation, became the first President of the UN Security Council in 1946-47.<sup>15</sup>

Australia contributed troops as part of the US led Allied occupation of Japan and was determined to have a voice in shaping the post-war Japanese peace settlement.<sup>16</sup> Australia, still viewing Japan as a threat, looked to the US, the pre-eminent regional and global power, to safeguard its security and prevent a Japanese resurgence. This was the thinking at the heart of Canberra's move to engage with the US in Korea in 1947. Although the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan initially consisted of forces from Australia, Britain, India and New Zealand, only Australian forces remained by the time the Korean War broke out. However, the Allied occupation of Japan was almost solely an American effort led by MacArthur who governed post-war Japan without consulting America's allies. Nevertheless, Australia's military presence in nearby Japan would pay dividends when the Korean War broke out.

Amidst the growing links between the two nations, the US-Australian Korean engagement became the focal point of their evolving relationship and the pathway toward a formal alliance. The complexities of the origins of the Cold War in the Asia-Pacific region explain why Korea became the epicentre of US-Australian relations from 1947-53. Cold War politics meant Korea became a critical testing ground for

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American resolve to contain communism in Asia. While Australia also regarded the potential spread of communism as a threat, especially in South East Asia, its greater concern was preventing a resurgence of Japanese power that could again endanger its security. Australia's primary post war foreign policy goals were to obtain a security treaty with the US, promote an American presence in the Asia-Pacific, and actively engage itself in the region and the UN. Canberra involved itself in Korea because it saw an opportunity to directly engage with the US and perhaps influence American regional strategic policy to benefit its interests.

The 1947-53 US-Australian Korean engagement has received scant attention, yet it was crucial to the development of their relationship in the early years of the Cold War. This thesis does not purport to provide a comprehensive analysis of US-Australian relations during the Korean War period, nor is it a detailed study of US and Australian involvement in the conflict or of US and Australian early Cold War foreign policy. However, these four interlocking elements are central themes in this thesis. The following chapters convey the significance of the shared Korean years on the broader US-Australian relationship.

From 1947, US and Australian geo-strategic interests converged and then aligned in Korea. American interest in Korea originated during World War Two. Japan had brutally ruled Korea since 1910. Following the Japanese defeat in 1945, US and Soviet forces occupied southern and northern Korea, respectively, dividing the peninsula between them at the 38th Parallel. Between 1945 and 1950, the US, the Soviets and the UN failed to end the division of Korea.<sup>17</sup> In 1947 the UN formed the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to facilitate unification

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and self government. Australia, seeing an opportunity to engage the US and determined to influence the making of the Japanese peace settlement, sought and gained membership of UNTCOK. Aside from the US and Soviet Union, Australia, via UNTCOK and its successor, the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK), was the only other nation continuously involved in Korea from November 1947 to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950.<sup>18</sup> In October 1950, when it appeared the UN/US were on the verge of winning the Korean War and unifying the peninsula, Australia became a member of UNCURK which replaced UNCOK.

### **The American-Australian Korean Engagement**

Part I of this study examines the Korean policy differences and tensions between the US and Australia and their gradual alignment during the first phase of their Korean engagement from 1947-49. The first Chapter analyses the origins of that engagement. It argues that by 1947, although American and Australian geo-strategic interests had converged in Korea, the two nations pursued different objectives. The US was now focussed on containing communism whereas Australia still regarded the possibility of a resurgent Japan as a greater threat to its security. Australia wanted a unified and free Korea that would help curb Japanese power. The US sought to build a stable South Korea as part of its regional Communist containment strategy.

Chapter two examines the differences in US and Australian Korean policies that manifested around the 1948 South Korean election. Australia opposed holding an election only in southern Korea, arguing it would entrench the division of the peninsula. The Truman Administration, recognising the Soviets would never agree to terms on Korean unification, proceeded to create an independent anti-Communist South Korea. Australia also opposed UNTCOK observation of the impending

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election due to concerns about the veracity of the process. These policy differences created open friction between Samuel Jackson, Australia's representative on UNTCOK, and his American counterparts, John Hodge, Head of the United States Army Military Government in Korea, and Joseph Jacobs, his Political Advisor. The chapter argues that despite the policy differences and tensions between US and Australian officials, Canberra chose to continue its direct engagement with the Americans in Korea because it furthered its strategic and security interests.

The third Chapter analyses the alignment in US and Australian Korean policy following the 1948 South Korean election and the de-facto recognition of the indefinite separation of North and South Korea. It discusses the differences in US and Australian policy over the status of the newly created Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) and its government, US and Australian collaboration on Korea at the UN, and Canberra's ambivalence over its continued involvement in Korea. The convergence of US and Australian Korean policy, aligning perceptions of the Communist threat, and more amity between US and Australian officials, meant the evolving relationship became much more amicable. Jackson was replaced on UNTCOK by Arthur Jamieson and Patrick Shaw and both developed much more cordial relations with Hodge and Jacobs. The collaboration at the UN between John Foster Dulles and James Plimsoll over the status of the ROK and its government enabled Australia to exert some influence on US Korean policy. US and Australian geo-strategic and security interests were now intertwined in Korea, and despite its ambivalence about its presence there, Canberra chose to remain and maintain its direct engagement with the Americans. Cultivating the US relationship to benefit Australian strategic and security interests remained Canberra's foreign policy priority.

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The first phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement has attracted very little academic attention to what is the bedrock base of the US-Australian relationship in Korea. Decisions and patterns of trust and interaction established here were important for the entire period of the US-Australian Korean engagement. Robert O'Neill refers to the Australian involvement in Korea as part of the UN attempts to unify the peninsula from 1947 to 1950 but his focus is on the war years, 1950-53, in which he argues that Australia made a significant diplomatic contribution.<sup>19</sup> Gavan McCormack discusses Australian participation in UNTCOK and UNCOK in arguing that Australia pursued an independent foreign policy under the Chifley government but adopted a pro American stance under the Menzies government.<sup>20</sup> Part I challenges McCormack's argument, demonstrating that indeed, both Herbert Evatt and Percy Spender, and the Department of External Affairs, cultivated the US relationship, sought to keep the Americans engaged in the region, and pursued a security agreement with the Americans.

Among US scholars, James Matray has provided the most extensive coverage of the Australian presence in UNTCOK and UNCOK. Although Matray is not concerned with the US-Australian Korean engagement in pre war Korea, he refers to the Australians in explaining the tensions between the two UN Commissions and the US. The Truman Administration, argues Matray, had initially concluded Korea was not strategically significant to the US but the politics of the Cold War vis-à-vis the Soviet Union reversed this and made safeguarding South Korea's security paramount. In this context, Matray cites the work of UNTCOK and UNCOK in explaining US efforts to involve the UN in South Korea to reduce its isolation and strengthen its

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security by internationalising its situation. Matray's analysis of Korean policy divisions within and between UNTCOK, UNCOK and the US, cites the Australians, and he argues the Communist victory in China made South Korea's security an even greater political imperative but also more problematic.<sup>21</sup> Part I complements Matray's work, arguing that, similar to the US, Korea was initially of little strategic importance to Australia but was increasingly crucial, and useful, to Canberra's objective of promoting an American presence in the region, and to its goal of securing a defence agreement with the US.

William Stueck notes the UN, including Australian, involvement in pre war Korea in arguing that the US sought to manipulate the UN to lend credibility to American policy in Korea.<sup>22</sup> Bruce Cumings and Allan Millett examine the role of UNTCOK in their respective studies of the origins of the Korean War but their evaluation of the Commission is in the context of their analyses of the competing Korean political forces supported by the US and Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> Stueck's concern with the goals of US policy in Korea and Cumings's and Millett's focus on the consequences of US and Soviet involvement in Korea, underpin some of the context of the analysis in Part I which demonstrates that Australia sought to use its UN, UNTCOK and UNCOK membership by working with other US allies to exercise a moderating influence on US Korean policy.

Part II examines the strengthening of the American-Australian relationship during the second phase of their Korean engagement, 1950-51. It analyses Australia's ambivalence about closer ties to the fledgling Republic of Korea in the months preceding the Korean War, Percy Spender's seizure of the opportunity for Australia to

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make itself visible to Washington when it sought allies in the conflict, US and Australian differences over China, and the re-evaluation of American Asia-Pacific strategy that produced the ANZUS Treaty. Chapter four explores dimensions of what was becoming a US-Australian Korean partnership by 1950, the most critical year of the six year bi-national engagement in the now nation of South Korea. Washington's call for allied support in the Korean War, together with Spender's dogged pursuit of a security treaty with the US, reflected the extent of the alignment of American and Australian geo-strategic and security interests. However, this chapter argues that Australia's ambivalence about Korea, the opportunistic circumstances of its involvement in the Korean War, its caution and opposition to some US policy proposals in response to China's Korean intervention, and its criticism of General Douglas MacArthur, the United Nations commander, demonstrated that the trajectory of the US-Australian Korean engagement and relationship remained nuanced and problematic.

Although Australia's diplomatic and military contribution in the first year of the Korean War has received some scholarly attention, the importance of the wider range of US-Australian Korean commonalities throughout 1950 has been overlooked. O'Neill charts the deepening Australian-US relationship in the first phase of the Korean War in explaining the objectives and effectiveness of Australian strategy and diplomacy during the conflict, rather than the impact of the Korean engagement on the relationship.<sup>24</sup> Cameron Forbes's narrative of Australia's small but effective Korean War military contribution, is valuable but is limited to a valid plea that the stories of those who served in Korea merit greater attention than they have thus far received.<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey Grey's, Tim Carew's and Andrew Salmon's accounts of the

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performance of Commonwealth forces in the Korean War also argue their contributions have been undervalued.<sup>26</sup> William Stueck's seminal analysis of the international diplomacy of the Korean War, which he argues was a "substitute for World War III", cites some Australian diplomatic contributions in concert with the US and the Commonwealth countries.<sup>27</sup> The studies by Robert Barnes, Graeme Mount and Andre Laferriere, and Denis Stairs also analyse aspects of Australian and Commonwealth diplomacy during the Korean War, each arguing the Commonwealth's capacity to influence US policy was minimal and problematic.<sup>28</sup> David Lowe argues that despite his initial caution on committing forces to Korea, Menzies used Australian involvement in the conflict to demonstrate his anti-Communist credentials for domestic political purposes.<sup>29</sup> None of these authors are concerned with analysing the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement for their relationship.

Chapter five shows how the American re-evaluation of its Asia-Pacific strategy, precipitated by the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the Communist victory in China, gained momentum with the outbreak of the Korean War and the Chinese entry into the conflict. It was these external events which led directly to ANZUS and a benign Japanese peace treaty. The chapter evaluates the American origins of ANZUS and the pivotal role of John Foster Dulles in the making of the Treaty.<sup>30</sup> It challenges the Australian ANZUS mythology, arguing the Americans entered into the Treaty not because Percy Spender told them Australia would not accept a soft Japanese peace treaty without an American security guarantee, but because the US wanted a regional anti-Communist alliance system that included Australia, New Zealand and Japan.<sup>31</sup> The chapter notes that despite their geo-strategic



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alignment and overlapping security interests, Washington and Canberra differed over the purpose of ANZUS. To the US, ANZUS was a link in its regional Communist containment strategy. For Australia, it was a long sought goal which became the core of its foreign policy and presented an American security guarantee against a resurgent Japan, still seen by Australia as a far greater danger than communism.

ANZUS accounts and interpretations are dominated by Australians and New Zealanders and credit Spender with authoring the Treaty. Perhaps surprisingly, the only published biography of Spender by Lowe devotes minimal space to this defining achievement.<sup>32</sup> However, Lowe has analysed Spender's role in the making of ANZUS.<sup>33</sup> O'Neill argues Spender and three senior External Affairs officials, Alan Watt, Ralph Harry and Laurence McIntyre, were responsible for ANZUS.<sup>34</sup> Spender, Watt and Harry, three of the four Australian participants in the ANZUS negotiations, later published accounts of the making of the Treaty.<sup>35</sup> David McLean challenges this accepted and popular narrative, arguing that ANZUS emerged from the American creation of its regional anti-Communist alliance system, rather than Spender's pursuit of a defence alliance with the US.<sup>36</sup> McIntyre explains the evolving Anglo-American strategic outlook in the early years of the Cold War, arguing ANZUS was part of the overall American strategy to contain communism.<sup>37</sup> J.G. Starke provides an historical overview of ANZUS followed by a detailed legal analysis of the Treaty.<sup>38</sup> Chapter five extends the analysis of McLean and McIntyre further by arguing ANZUS happened because it served American strategic interests, that Dulles was pivotal to the making of the Treaty, and by weighing up the different US and Australian perspectives of the agreement.

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There is no substantial American analysis of the origins and making of ANZUS. Ronald Pruessen's biography explains Dulles's pivotal role in the making of the Japanese Peace Treaty briefly referring to ANZUS as a corollary to that treaty.<sup>39</sup> Robert Beisner's biography of Dean Acheson links ANZUS with the Japanese Peace Treaty and the US security treaty with the Philippines, arguing these three treaties formed part of the US led anti-Communist regional alliance system.<sup>40</sup> Stueck's international history of the Korean War demonstrates the impact of the conflict on American strategic thinking, especially the Chinese intervention in Korea, explains the soft Japanese Peace Treaty, ANZUS and the Philippine security treaty. He briefly mentions Dulles and argues the US agreed to ANZUS and the Philippine treaty to secure Australian, New Zealand and Philippine support for the Japanese Peace Treaty.<sup>41</sup> Mabon argues these Pacific security agreements were the result of a re-evaluation of American regional strategy following the Communist victory in China and the outbreak and course of the Korean War.<sup>42</sup> Acheson says the US agreed to the ANZUS Treaty to secure Australian and New Zealand support for the Japanese Peace Treaty.<sup>43</sup> None of these accounts analyse the pivotal role of Dulles in the making of ANZUS.

Chapter five extends the analysis of Stueck and Mabon and Acheson's account, arguing the Truman Administration decided to enter into a security pact with Australia and New Zealand because it wanted both countries included with Japan in its regional anti-Communist alliance system. Indeed, as chapter five shows, Truman authorised Dulles to negotiate a defence agreement with Australia and New Zealand *before* Dulles went to Canberra in February 1951.

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Part III examines the US and Australian Korean War diplomacy and collaboration during the third phase of their Korean engagement, 1952-53, that helped shape and strengthen their deepening relationship and new alliance. Chapter six analyses the impact on the US-Australian relationship of James Plimsoll's central role during the 1952 South Korean political crisis. Plimsoll's leadership of UNCURK, his rapport with both the Americans and Syngman Rhee, the South Korean president, as well as his Korean expertise, enabled Australia to maintain its visibility in Washington. Indeed, the Truman Administration sought and relied on Plimsoll's advice throughout the crisis. The chapter argues that although Washington and Canberra rejected Plimsoll's recommendation to remove Rhee, his collaboration with the Americans and his crisis diplomacy helped strengthen the growing US-Australian relationship.

Given Plimsoll's extensive and distinguished diplomatic career, it is perhaps surprising that Jeremy Hearder's insightful biography is the only full length account of Plimsoll's life.<sup>44</sup> Aspects of Plimsoll's Korean War diplomacy have been analysed by Hearder, O'Neill and Woodard. Hearder and O'Neill focus on Plimsoll's work at the UN and with UNCURK and his relationship with Rhee, in arguing Australia made effective contributions to UN/US Korean War diplomacy.<sup>45</sup> Garry Woodard's account of Plimsoll's mediation during the 1952 South Korean political crisis also discusses his relationship with Rhee and argues that Plimsoll's recommendation to remove Rhee from office demonstrated his willingness to give advice that contravened Australian and US policy.<sup>46</sup> Edward Keefer argues the US reluctance to intervene in the crisis was a failure by the Truman Administration to defend democracy.<sup>47</sup> Jong Yil Ra argues that Rhee survived the crisis because there was no

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real alternative leader.<sup>48</sup> Keefer and Jong provide cursory references to Plimsoll. The analysis in Chapter six of the impact of Plimsoll's collaboration with John Muccio, Ambassador to South Korea, and Allan Lightner, Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Pusan, in helping to shape the practical working of the new US-Australian alliance, complements the work of these authors by presenting another dimension to the evaluation of Plimsoll's Korean diplomacy.

The final Chapter of this thesis analyses Percy Spender's public and private diplomacy on China and the voluntary repatriation of Korean War POWs during his tenure as Australian Ambassador to the US and leader of the Australian UN delegation. Spender's repeated urgings to US officials to consider diplomatic options with China and his criticisms of Washington's unilateral Korean policies, show that while he forcefully advocated that Australia's strategic and security interests would be best served by the closest possible alignment with the US, he was nevertheless critical of American policies he deemed would be detrimental to Australian interests. Spender, like Plimsoll, often stretched his policy brief, particularly his attempts to moderate US China policy. Without support from Washington and Canberra, these proved barren. However, Spender's UN diplomacy on voluntary repatriation of POWs was warmly welcomed by the Truman Administration and facilitated, with US support, the UN adoption of the December 1952 Indian Resolution on POWs that was instrumental in ending the Korean War. The chapter argues that Spender's diplomacy was a cautionary reminder of the limits of Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests despite the growing American-Australian strategic, security and diplomatic collaboration.

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Lowe, O'Neill, Spender and Watt have produced accounts of aspects of Spender's life and career. However, there is no substantial examination of Spender's public and private diplomacy on China and the voluntary repatriation of Korean War POWs which this thesis argues contributed to the strengthening of the growing US-Australian alliance. Lowe's biography argues that Spender was an assertive and powerful advocate, politician and diplomat who worked tirelessly to advance Australia's interests but does not analyse Spender's Korean War diplomacy.<sup>49</sup> O'Neill's account of Australia's Korean War diplomacy gives due regard to Spender's role in the making of ANZUS but only cursory attention to his efforts as Ambassador.<sup>50</sup> In his memoirs, Spender inexplicably excluded writing about his time as Ambassador and at the UN.<sup>51</sup> Watt notes Spender's role in the making of ANZUS and his work in Washington, arguing that Spender was one of Australia's most significant foreign policy makers and diplomats, but he ignores Spender's contribution to the UN POW debate.<sup>52</sup> Chapter six assesses these hitherto overlooked aspects of Spender's Korean War diplomacy which were indicative of the strengthening US-Australian relationship but also of the limits of Australian influence on US policy.

### **American, Australian and Commonwealth Korean War Literature**

The archival sources for this thesis reflect its goal of advancing the understanding of both Australian and American perspectives on their relationship and its development into an alliance. This thesis is drawn from archival sources housed in the National Archives and National Library of Australia in Canberra, the Harry S Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, the Seeley Mudd Library at Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, and the US National Archives II at College Park, Maryland. The multiple vantage points represented by these combined

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American and Australian primary sources allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement on the evolution of their relationship and the making of the ANZUS alliance than a study based solely on just US or only Australian records. It was an alliance in the making and that occurred as a result of the differing national perspectives on the desirability of that outcome.

The significance of the Korean engagement in the evolution of the US-Australian relationship has been overlooked by both American and Australian historians. The small amount of scholarship on Australian involvement in Korea is largely focussed on the Korean War years, 1950-53. Aside from accounts of Australia's part in the making of ANZUS, this literature contains limited analysis of the American-Australian engagement during the Korean War. US studies of the Korean War are overwhelmingly focussed on the American experience in the conflict and only a few refer to the Australian and other UN members in Korea. This thesis attempts to draw the perspectives of the two sides together.

This thesis is an addition to the related and overlapping scholarly literature on US and Australian involvement in Korea, the international dimensions of the Korean War, the history of US-Australian relations, and the history of post 1945 US and Australian foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>53</sup> The American presence in Korea since 1945 has spawned a solid although not extensive scholarly literature, whereas the literature on Australian involvement in Korea is very meagre.<sup>54</sup>

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There are only a handful of Australian scholarly works on Australian involvement in Korea across the six years covered in this thesis. The most comprehensive study remains Robert O'Neill's official two volume history of Australia in the Korean War. Volume one explains Australian strategic policy and diplomacy during the Korean War, arguing Australia's diplomatic contribution during the conflict was much more significant than its modest but effective military presence. O'Neill also emphasises that Australia made its Korean War commitment while it was shifting its strategic reliance from Britain to the US as the principal guarantor of its security in the early Cold War years.<sup>55</sup> US-Australian relations are a core theme of O'Neill's work but he is concerned with Australian diplomacy and strategy, whereas this study evaluates the impact of the US-Australian Korean engagement on their evolving relationship. Also, although O'Neill gives a brief introductory account of the Australian involvement in UNTCOK and UNCOK from 1947-50, he is almost exclusively focussed on the Korean War years, 1950-53. In contrast, Part 1 of this thesis argues that understanding the trajectory of the US-Australian Korean engagement in the three years preceding the war is essential to explaining the bases for their collaboration during the conflict and indeed afterwards.

Gavan McCormack's polemical study of Australia in the Korean War argues the Chifley government pursued a more independent foreign policy than the Menzies government's alignment with the US.<sup>56</sup> McCormack's assessment begins in 1947 but does not focus on the US-Australian Korean engagement. Part I of this thesis challenges McCormack's analysis, arguing the Australian strategic policy alignment towards the US in Korea began under Chifley and continued under Menzies. Richard Trembath's study of Australia and the Korean War evaluates the faint memory of the

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war in Australia, the public perceptions of government policy during the conflict, and the personal experiences of some of the Australians who fought in Korea. Like O'Neill, Trembath explains that Australia's Korean involvement coincided with the shift in its security dependence from Britain to the US. Trembath concurs with McCormack in reflecting that Australia's "diplomatic involvement" in Korea "prior to 1950 ... was by no means negligible" (but he does not focus on it) and with O'Neill by noting the importance of the Korean War in understanding the origins of the ANZUS Treaty.<sup>57</sup> In terms of focus, like O'Neill and McCormack, Trembath is not concerned with the significance of the Korean experience on the US-Australian relationship. Cameron Forbes's account of the experiences of Australians who fought in Korea, notes the growing US-Australian relationship in explaining the context of the overlooked history of Australia's Korean War contribution. This thesis, in contrast to the above, focuses squarely on the importance of the Australian and American experience of each other in their joint involvement in Korea and the impact of that knowledge and experience in the evolution of their diplomatic and security relationship.<sup>58</sup>

This paucity of Australian scholarly work is indicative of the neglect of the significance of Australian involvement in Korea and in the Korean War.<sup>59</sup> O'Neill's official history is the most extensive study of both the diplomatic and military dimensions of Australia in the war itself. McCormack offers an analysis of Australian Korean policy and the US relationship that contrasts sharply to the assessment in this thesis. Trembath's focus is on Australian domestic perceptions of the Korean War and the remembrances of Australians who served in Korea as is Forbes' concern, as important as these matters are in terms of the impact of the war on individuals.



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However, that is not the concern of this thesis. This study takes a different tact, arguing that knowledge of the bi-national presence and engagement in Korea is essential to comprehending the nature and trajectory of the evolution of the US-Australian relationship.

In contrast to the paucity of work on Australian involvement in Korea, the literature on American engagement in Korea is significantly more voluminous. Most US Korean War studies are almost exclusively concerned with the American experience, and either have cursory references or overlook the contributions of the other fifteen UN member nations who sent combat forces.<sup>60</sup> However, four American scholars analyse aspects of the US involvement in Korea that are intertwined with arguments presented in this thesis. James Matray's study of US involvement in Korea from 1941-1950, examines how the US used UNTCOK and UNCOK to sanction and facilitate the creation of South Korea and notes Australian and Canadian opposition to some US policies. Matray argues that Cold War politics came to mean that the loss of South Korea was unpalatable to the Truman Administration which reluctantly sought to contain communism in Korea with minimal personnel and expenditure. Whereas Matray is concerned with the importance of Korea in US foreign policy, Part I of this thesis expands that story, demonstrating the significance of the first phase of the American-Australian Korean engagement and the divergence and convergence of US and Australian Korean policies.<sup>61</sup>

Bruce Cumings's and Allan Millett's authoritative histories of the origins of the Korean War argue the conflict was a civil war that morphed into an international conflagration as a result of the interplay between pre war Korean politics and the

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American and Soviet Cold War confrontation. Cumings and Millett evaluate the work of UNTCOK and UNCOK, and both make reference to Australia's Korean involvement in the pre war American effort to involve the UN in Korea. Cumings argues the US sought to implement its will in Korea under the cover of UN authority. Millett argues the Americans struggled to curb ROK President, Syngman Rhee, and were unable to prevent the 1948 uprisings in South Korea which he says heralded the beginning of the Korean War rather than the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950.<sup>62</sup> Although Cumings and Millett are not concerned with Australia in Korea, their assessments of the significance of the years 1945-50 in understanding the origins of the Korean War intersect with Part I of this thesis which analyses the significance of the 1947-49 phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement.

William Stueck's seminal work on the international history of the Korean War argues the conflict was a "substitute for World War III" and a catalyst for the cautious approach of the great powers during the Cold War, wary of the unintended consequences of military confrontation. Stueck evaluates the use of the UN by Britain, Canada and Australia in urging the US to exercise restraint, especially when China entered the war and the US considered responding with atomic weapons and bombing Manchuria. Stueck says many US allies sent forces to South Korea hoping to leverage US support and influence American policy to benefit their interests, rather than because they wanted to defend the ROK. Stueck also argues the Korean War was the impetus for the making of the US regional anti-Communist alliance system that included ANZUS. Although not specifically concerned with the US-Australian Korean engagement, Stueck's references to Australian efforts to influence American Chinese and Japanese policy and strategy, show his awareness of the collaboration

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between the two nations. Hence, his study underpins the context of the argument of this thesis that the US-Australian Korean engagement was significant in the evolution of their relationship. The analysis of US-Australian Korean diplomacy in 1950, the American origins of ANZUS, and Spender's diplomacy on China and during the 1952 UN debate on Korean War POWs, in Parts II and III of this thesis, further extends Stueck's examination of Korean War diplomacy.<sup>63</sup>

There are Canadian, New Zealand and British accounts of their Korean War participation which refer to elements of the Australian involvement that are analysed in this thesis. Although this British Commonwealth Korean War literature is not extensive, it presents incisive evaluations of broader international perspectives of the UN effort in the Korean War, contrasting with the insularity of most, but not all, American accounts of the conflict. Denis Stairs's analysis of Canada's Korean War diplomacy explains Canadian efforts to restrain what he argues was often a belligerent US attitude towards China. Stairs argues Canada had some success in tempering US policy and notes that Canada, Australia and Britain sought to influence the US to adopt more flexible and diplomatic Korea and China policies.<sup>64</sup> Although Stairs is not concerned with the US-Australian Korean engagement, his work relates to the analysis in this thesis of US-Australian diplomacy during the 1948 South Korean election, the Australian response to the outbreak of the Korean War and China's intervention, and Spender's diplomacy during the UN debate on voluntary repatriation of POWs in 1952.

Steven Lee argues that although the US, Britain and Canada were in unison regarding the Communist containment strategy in Asia, Britain and Canada were wary

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of the belligerent American posturing in Korea and Vietnam, and urged their ally to pursue diplomatic rather than military options. Lee's analysis of the British and Canadian policy divergence from the Americans on diplomacy with China, branding China an aggressor over its Korean intervention, and the impasse over US insistence on voluntary repatriation of POWs, overlaps with the evaluation of the Australian approach to these issues presented in this thesis. Lee argues Britain ultimately supported the US to maintain Allied unity against communism, and Canada did so because of its increasing economic reliance on the US. Lee notes the US, needing allied support for containment to succeed, made some concessions to Britain and Canada on China but not the POW issue.<sup>65</sup> Lee's analysis of British and Canadian apprehension about the American stance on China and the POWs reflects Spender's misgivings about US China policy but contrasts with his support of the Truman Administration's position on the POWs.

Graeme Mount's and Andre Laferriere's analysis of Canadian-US diplomacy during the Korean War argues Canada and other Commonwealth countries largely had minimal influence on US policies. They note that Commonwealth influence was strongest when it was united and Washington sought allied support and that invariably, each Commonwealth nation had virtually no influence on US policy when it acted alone. Mount and Laferriere argue the Commonwealth nations often acted alone because each prioritised their relationship with the US over Commonwealth unity, especially Spender who "was more anxious to obtain a security guarantee in the form of a military alliance with the United States than to maintain Commonwealth solidarity, and until early 1951 when he achieved his goal, he did not want to risk provoking Washington."<sup>66</sup> Their assessment contrasts with the more nuanced analysis

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presented in this thesis of Spender's forthright diplomacy before and after securing ANZUS. Chapter five argues against the notion that ANZUS was simply the result of an American *quid pro quo* for Australian support of the Japanese Peace Treaty. Chapter seven explores in far more detail Spender's public and private critique of US Korean and China policies and the significance of his diplomacy at the UN during the debate on the POW impasse.

Like O'Neill's two volume official history of Australia in the Korean War, Ian McGibbon's two volume official history of New Zealand in the Korean War examines New Zealand's strategic policy, diplomacy, and combat operations during the conflict.<sup>67</sup> He argues that, as in the Australian case, New Zealand's diplomatic impact during the Korean War was much greater than its limited military contribution and that it participated in the conflict because it was staunchly anti-Communist, it sought to fulfil its obligations as a UN member and saw an opportunity to obtain a security guarantee from the US. McGibbon's references to Australian and New Zealand cooperation in urging Allied unity within the Commonwealth and at the UN relate to the analysis in Chapters four and seven of this thesis. His most extensive references to Australia are in his examination of New Zealand's role in the making of ANZUS which relates to the analysis in Chapter five of this thesis. McGibbon refers to the evolving US-Australian relationship in the context of the similarly growing US-New Zealand association.<sup>68</sup>

Anthony Farrar-Hockley's two volume official history of Britain in the Korean War examines British strategy, diplomacy, politics and combat operations sequentially rather than separately. Farrar-Hockley argues Britain participated in the

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Korean War because the Attlee Government was determined the North Korean aggression could not be left unchecked by appeasement like the initial British response to German, Italian and Japanese aggression in the 1930s. He also argues that the role played by the British in Korea solidified the Anglo-American alliance. Although Farrar-Hockley makes only passing references to the US-Australian Korean engagement, he notes the continuous Australian diplomatic and military presence in Korea from the creation of UNTCOK in 1947 to the armistice in 1953, particularly Australian diplomacy on UNTCOK and UNCOK, on the UN/US response to China's intervention in the war, and on the POW question. These issues appear in Part I and Chapters four and seven in this thesis.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, this thesis also makes a contribution to the Commonwealth literature on the geo-political significance of participation in the Korean pre-war crises and the conflict itself. This thesis therefore also helps connect the Australian experience of Korea with the Commonwealth literature on the subject. This combined literature shows that the Commonwealth nations influenced US policy only when they were united and the Americans needed allied support. Robert Barnes's analysis of US-Commonwealth Korean War diplomacy also argues the Commonwealth nations had minimal influence on US policy and were more concerned with cultivating their individual relationship with the US than with Commonwealth unity. Barnes's focus on the Commonwealth differentiates his work from the above authors who are specifically concerned with the separate Canadian, British, and New Zealand Korean War diplomacy.<sup>70</sup> These British Commonwealth studies on Korean War diplomacy demonstrate the intertwined nature of the Commonwealth's participation in the conflict and that each nation's relationship with the US dominated its policy making.<sup>71</sup>

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From 1947-53, Korea was central to the evolving US-Australian relationship. American and Australian geo-strategic and security interests converged and aligned in Korea. The Korean diplomacy and collaboration between key US and Australian officials were instrumental in shaping the growing relationship between the two nations. While John Foster Dulles and Percy Spender have not completely faded from recognition for their central roles in the making of ANZUS and the shaping of the US-Australian relationship, the work of other officials evaluated in this thesis has largely remained obscure. Any examination of the origins of what continues to be Australia's most critical and enduring strategic alliance must recognise the centrality of the Korean engagement in the evolution of the US-Australian relationship. That is the story of this thesis.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol I, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) p xv.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Vol II, An Honourable Discharge* (HMSO, London, 1995) p 406. It is not my purpose in this thesis to analyse schools of thought and theories on the role of individuals in diplomacy. However, I do argue that how individuals approach their task and relate to one another does impact on whether or not positive outcomes are achieved and sustained. Kenneth Weisbrode's, *The Atlantic Century: Four Generations of Extraordinary Diplomats who Forged America's Vital Alliance with Europe* (Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009) is a fascinating and informative historical study of the sustained and positive achievements of a number of US diplomats connected with the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs who forged America's relationship and alliance with Europe throughout the twentieth century. Some of the prominent officials in Weisbrode's study, Dean Acheson, George Marshall, Dean Rusk, John Hickerson, Livingston Merchant and especially John Foster Dulles, are also key players in this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Carr, "ANZUS and Australia's role in world affairs", in Peter Dean, Stephan Fruhling, and Brendan Taylor, (eds), *Australia's American Alliance* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2016) p 71.

<sup>4</sup> James Curran, James, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2015); Michael Sexton, *War for the Asking: How Australia Invited Itself to Vietnam* (New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 2002); Lloyd Cox and Brendan O'Connor, "Australia, the US, and the Vietnam and Iraq wars: 'Hound dog, not lapdog'", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 47, 2, 2012, pp 173-87; David McLean, "From British Colony to American Satellite?: Australia and the USA during the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 52, 1, 2006, pp 64-79.

<sup>5</sup> Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988) Ch 1 and Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners: A History of Australian-American Naval Relations* (Hodder & Stoughton, Sydney, 1992) Ch 1. On the *Shenandoah* in Melbourne see Cyril Pearl, *Rebel Down Under: When the 'Shenandoah' shook Melbourne, 1865* (Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970) and Terry Smyth, *Australian Confederates: How 42 Australians Joined the Rebel Cause and Fired the Last Shot in the American Civil War* (Ebury Press, Melbourne and Sydney, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners*, p 16. See also Greg Sheridan, *The Partnership: The Inside Story of the US-Australian Alliance Under Bush and Howard* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2006) pp 302-306.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Watt, "The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future", *Australian Outlook*, 24, 1, 1970, pp 19-20. When Casey was assigned to the Middle East in 1942, his two children remained in the care of the Acheson family.

<sup>8</sup> Dwight Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (William Heinemann Limited, London, 1948) p 23.

<sup>9</sup> For a succinct summation of the scholarly analysis of the Curtin-MacArthur relationship, see Peter Edwards, "Curtin, MacArthur and the 'surrender of sovereignty': a historiographical assessment", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 55, 2, 2001, pp 175-185.

<sup>10</sup> There is no attempt here to provide an extensive analysis of the scholarship on US-Australian relations during World War Two. However, the following studies have influenced my thinking on the evolution of the US-Australian relationship: David Day, *The Politics of War* (Harper Collins, Sydney, 2003); David Horner, *High Command: Australia's Struggle for an Independent War Strategy, 1939-45* [1982] (Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1992); David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort, 1939-45* (Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996); Peter Thompson, *Pacific Fury: How Australia and Her Allies Defeated the Japanese Scourge* (William Heinemann, Sydney, 2008); Roger Bell, *Unequal Allies: Australian-American Relations and the Pacific War* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1977); E. Daniel Potts & Annette Potts, *Yanks Down Under 1941-45: The American Impact on Australia* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985); Barry Ralph, *They Passed this Way: The United States of America, The States of Australia and World War II* (Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 2000). Two works by US historians that give due attention to some aspects of the overall Allied effort, including Australia, in the Pacific War are Eric Bergerud, *Touched With Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific* (Penguin Books, New York, 1997) and William B. Hopkins, *The Pacific War: The Strategy, Politics, and Players That Won the War* (Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Peter Edwards, *Permanent Friends?: Historical Reflections on the Australian-American Alliance* (Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 2005) Chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Allan Gyngell, *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942* (La Trobe University Press, Carlton, 2017)



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<sup>13</sup> Alice Garner and Diane Kirkby, “‘Never a Machine for Propaganda’? The Australian-American Fulbright Program and Australia’s Cold War”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 44, 1, 2013, pp 117-133, provide an illuminating analysis of the origins of the Australian-American Fulbright Program. On the evolving US-Australian relationship during this period see Peter Edwards, “Evatt and the Americans”, *Historical Studies*, 18, 1979, pp 546-60 and Joseph Siracusa and Glen St John Barclay, “Australia, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945-51: From V-J Day to ANZUS”, *Diplomatic History*, 5, 1, 1981, pp 39-52.

<sup>14</sup> Neville Meaney, “Dr HV Evatt and the United Nations: The problem of collective security and liberal internationalism”, in James Cotton and David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations* (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012) pp 34-65. On the tensions between Evatt and the US see Peter Edwards, “Evatt and the Americans”, pp 546-60 and Joseph Siracusa and Glen St John Barclay, “Australia, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945-51: From V-J Day to ANZUS”, pp 39-52.

<sup>15</sup> David Lee, “Australia and the Security Council”, in James Cotton and David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations* (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012) pp 66-104. Australia has served five stints as a non permanent member of the UN Security Council: 1946-47, 1956-57, 1973-74, 1985-86 and 2013-14.

<sup>16</sup> James Wood, *The Forgotten Force: The Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952* (Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1998)

<sup>17</sup> The two volumes by Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981) and Vol. 2: *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990) remain the most comprehensive English language study of this period. See also Charles Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950* (Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1981); James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade: American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985); Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2005); Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2nd edition (Longman, London, 1997); Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (Norton, New York, 2013) Chapters 1-3; John Lewis Gaddis, “Korea in American Politics, Strategy, and Diplomacy, 1945-50” in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye (eds), *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1977) pp 277-298.

<sup>18</sup> See David Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 43, 2, 1997, pp 153-167.

<sup>19</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Ch 1.

<sup>20</sup> Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) Chapters 2-4.

<sup>21</sup> James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade*, passim.

<sup>22</sup> William Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: US Policy Towards China and Korea* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1981) Ch 3 on US Korean policy in 1947-48 and especially pp 95-98 on UNTCOK, the US and the 1948 South Korean election.

<sup>23</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, Chapters 1-3, especially pp 70-78 and Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, Chapter 2-6.

<sup>24</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapters 4-12.

<sup>25</sup> Cameron Forbes, *The Korean War: Australia in the Giants’ Playground* (Macmillan, Sydney, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988); Tim Carew, *The Korean War: The Story of the Fighting Commonwealth Regiments, 1950-1953* (Pan Books, London, 1970); Andrew Salmon, *Scorched Earth, Black Snow: Britain and Australia in the Korean War, 1950* (Aurum, London, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995). The quotation is on page 3.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War: Communism in the Far East and the American Struggle for Hegemony in the Cold War* (I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2014); Graeme S. Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War: The Case of Korea* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2004); Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974).

<sup>29</sup> David Lowe, *Menzies and the ‘Great World Struggle’: Australia’s Cold War 1948-1954* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1999)

<sup>30</sup> Dulles was an American diplomat who served the Truman Administration as an Ambassador at Large at the UN and was the chief American negotiator of the Japanese Peace Treaty and ANZUS. He is chiefly remembered as President Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State from 1953-59. Although it does not cover his years as Secretary of State, Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (Free Press, New York, 1982) is the best biography of Dulles. Another excellent analytical study is Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Spender was the Australian Minister for External Affairs from 1949-51, and the Australian Ambassador to the US and head of the Australian UN delegation from 1951-58. He remains the longest serving Australian Ambassador to the US. The most detailed biographical accounts of Spender are David Lowe, *Australian Between Empires: The Life of Percy Spender* (Pickering & Chatto, London, 2010) and Spender's two memoirs *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969) and *Politics and a Man* (Collins, Sydney, 1972). See also David Lowe, "Percy Spender, Minister and Ambassador", in Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making, 1941-1969* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003) pp 62-87; David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington: An Ambassador's Vision of Australian-American Relations, 1951-58", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 2, 1996, pp 278-295; David Lowe, "Percy Spender and the American Century", *The Trevor Reese Memorial Lecture 2002* (Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, King's College London, University of London, 2002) pp 1-37, and Allan Gyngell, *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942*, pp 51-56.

<sup>32</sup> David Lowe, *Australian Between Empires*.

<sup>33</sup> David, Lowe, "Percy Spender's Quest", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 55, 2, 2001, pp 187-198; David Lowe, "Brave New Liberal: Percy Spender", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 51, 3, 2005, pp 389-399 and David Lowe, "Percy Spender, Minister and Ambassador", in Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making, 1941-1969* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003) pp 62-87.

<sup>34</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Ch 13; Robert O'Neill, "The Korean War and the Origins of ANZUS", in Carl Bridge (ed), *Munich to Vietnam: Australia's Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991), pp 99-113. See also Sandra Penrose, "Percy Spender and the Origins of ANZUS: An Australian Initiative", Paper presented to the Australian Political Studies Association Conference, University of Adelaide, September 29-October 1, 2004, and Allan Gyngell, *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942*, pp 51-56.

<sup>35</sup> Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969); Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1967) pp 117-142; Alan Watt, *Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1972) pp 173-185; Alan Watt, "The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future", pp 17-36; Ralph Harry, "Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America", *Australian Outlook*, 35, 1981, pp 201-12.

<sup>36</sup> David McLean, "ANZUS Origins: A Reassessment", *Australian Historical Studies*, 24, 94, April 1990, pp 64-82.

<sup>37</sup> David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policy-Making, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945-1955* (Macmillan, New York, 1995).

<sup>38</sup> J.G., Starke, *The ANZUS Treaty Alliance* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965).

<sup>39</sup> Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles*, Chapters 16-17.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2006) Chapter 29.

<sup>41</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War*.

<sup>42</sup> David Mabon, "Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951", *Pacific Historical Review*, 57, 1988, pp 147-177.

<sup>43</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969) pp 540-41 and 686-89.

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Header, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll* (Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat, 2015). Chapter 3 covers his Korean experience. A good biographical outline of Plimsoll's life is Priscilla Roberts, "Plimsoll, James" in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 520-21.

<sup>45</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, chapter 3 and Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, especially chapters 9-10 and 21.

<sup>46</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 56, 3, 2002, pp 473-486.

<sup>47</sup> Edward C. Keefer, "The Truman Administration and the South Korean Political Crisis of 1952: Democracy's Failure?", *Pacific Historical Review*, 60, 2, 1991, pp 145-168.

<sup>48</sup> Jong Yil Ra, "Political Crisis in Korea, 1952: The Administration, Legislature, Military and Foreign Powers", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27, 2, 1992, pp 301-318.

<sup>49</sup> David Lowe, *Australian Between Empires*.

<sup>50</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* and "The Korean War and the Origins of ANZUS".

<sup>51</sup> Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy and Politics and a Man*.

<sup>52</sup> Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965*, pp 112-117, *Australian Diplomat*, pp 173-185 and "The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future", pp 17-36

<sup>53</sup> Notable works on the history of US-Australian relations include Glen St John Barclay, *Friends in High Places: Australian-American Diplomatic Relations Since 1945* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985); Joseph Camilleri, *Australian-American Relations: The Web of Dependence* (Macmillan, Melbourne, 1980); L.G. Churchward, *Australia and America 1788-1972: An Alternative History* (Alternative Publishing Cooperative, Sydney, 1979); Peter Edwards, *Permanent Friends?: Historical Reflections on the Australian-American Alliance*; Malcolm Fraser, *Dangerous Allies* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2014); Norman Harper, *A Great and Powerful Friend: A Study of Australian American Relations Between 1900 and 1975* (University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1987); Norman Harper, *Australia and the United States* (Nelson, Melbourne, 1971); Norman Harper, *Pacific Orbit: Australian American Relations Since 1942* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968); John Hammond Moore, *The American Alliance: Australia, New Zealand and the United States 1940-1970* (Cassell, Melbourne, 1970); Dennis Phillips, *Ambivalent Allies: Myth and Reality in the Australian-American Relationship* (Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1988); Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968* (Oxford University Press, London, 1969); David McLean, "American and Australian Cold Wars in Asia", *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 9, 2, 1990, pp 33-46; David McLean, "From British Colony to American Satellite?: Australia and the USA during the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 52, 1, 2006, pp 64-79; Joseph Siracusa and Glen St John Barclay, *Australia, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945-51: From V-J Day to ANZUS*, *Diplomatic History*, 5, 1, 1981, pp 39-52. See also Christopher Hubbard, *Australian and US Military Cooperation: Fighting Common Enemies*, (Ashgate, Hampshire, 2005).

There is no attempt here to provide a comprehensive analysis of the literature on the US presence in the Asia-Pacific following World War Two. The following are some of the works that inform the broader historical context of my thesis: Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2002); Frank Gibney, *The Pacific Century: America and Asia in a Changing World* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1992); Francis Pike, *Empires at War: A Short History of Modern Asia Since World War II* (I.B. Tauris, London, 2011); Lisle Rose, *Roots of Tragedy: The United States and the Struggle for Asia, 1945-1953* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn, 1976); Ronald Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (Random House, New York, 2007); Robert Smith Thompson, , *Empires on the Pacific: World War II and the Struggle for the Mastery of Asia* (Basic Books, New York, 2001).

Similarly, there is no attempt here to provide a thorough examination of works on Australian foreign policy after the Second World War. The following studies link my thesis to the broader issues in the history of Australian foreign policy from 1945: Joan Beaumont, Chistopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making, 1941-1969* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003); Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988); Peter Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983); Allan Gyngell, *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942*; David Lee, *Search for Security: The Political Economy of Australia's Postwar Foreign and Defence Policy* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1995); David Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle': Australia's Cold War 1948-1954* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1999); T.B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations Since 1788* (ANU Press, Sydney, 1991); Christopher Waters, *The Empire Fractures: Anglo-Australian Conflict in the 1940s* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 1995);

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Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1967). See also Peter Edwards with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992) Chapters 1-9.

<sup>54</sup> The volume of US literature on the Korean War that has been published since the 1980s suggests that, at least in a literary sense, Korea is no longer “the forgotten war”. However, although the US literature on the Korean War is now solid, it is minuscule in comparison to the very extensive US literature on American involvement in World War Two and the Vietnam War. Similarly, the Australian literature on Australian involvement in World War Two and Vietnam also overwhelms the scant Australian literature on Australian involvement in the Korean War.

<sup>55</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* and *Vol II, Combat Operations* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1985). Volume two is an extensive study of Australian combat operations during the Korean War.

<sup>56</sup> Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War*.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Trembath, *A Different Sort of War: Australians in Korea 1950-53* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2005). The quotation is on page xvi.

<sup>58</sup> Cameron Forbes, *The Korean War: Australia in the Giants' Playground*.

<sup>59</sup> There are other works on Australian participation in the Korean War aside from the studies by O'Neill, McCormack, Trembath and Forbes. However, this wider literature consists mostly of accounts of Australian combat experiences in Korea that record specific engagements, the service of individual units, and the recollections of Australian personnel. These works include but are not limited to the following: Norman Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1954); Ben Evans, *Out in the Cold: Australia's Involvement in the Korean War 1950-1953* (Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 2000); Jack Gallaway, *The Last Call of the Bugle: The Long Road to Kapyong* (University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1994); Doug Hurst, *The Forgotten Few: 77 RAAF Squadron in Korea* (Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2008); Stephen Lewis, *Korea: The Undeclared War* (The Royal Australian Regiment Association, Linden Park, 2008); George Odgers, *Across the Parallel: The Australian 77th Squadron with the United States Air Force in the Korean Air War* (William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1952); Ben O'Dowd, *In Valiant Company: Diggers in Battle – Korea, 1950-1951* (University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2000); Maurie Pears and Fred Kirkland, (eds), *Korea Remembered: The RAN, ARA and RAAF in the Korean War of 1950-1953* (Combined Arms Training and Development Centre, Sydney, 1998); Lt. Col. Neil Smith, *Home by Christmas: With the Australian Army in Korea 1950-1956* (Mostly Unsung, Melbourne, 1990); Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin, *Keep Off the Skyline: The Story of Ron Cashman and the Diggers in Korea* (John Wiley and Sons, Brisbane, 2004); David Wilson, *Lion Over Korea: 77 Fighter Squadron RAAF 1950-53* (Banner Books, Canberra, 1994).

<sup>60</sup> One exception is Sheila Miyoshi Jager's, *Brothers at War*. Jager's comprehensive study of the conflict incorporates all the major players, the North and South Koreans, the US, China, Soviets, and the UN and she makes some passing references to the Australian presence. Although her focus is mainly on analysing the war, she also provides a very good examination of the origins of the war and its ongoing aftermath and legacy. Other notable Korean War histories by American authors include Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The Lost War* [1986] (Arrow Books, London, 1989); Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (Times Books, New York, 1987); Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (Modern Library, New York, 2010); Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1985); Joseph Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (McGraw Hill, New York, 1982); David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (Hyperion, New York, 2007); Burton Kaufman, *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (Knopf, New York, 1986); Robert Leckie, *The Korean War* (Barrie and Rockliff with Pall Mall Press, London, 1963); Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came From the North* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2010); Matthew B. Ridgway, *The War in Korea* (Barrie and Rockliff, The Cresset Press, London, 1968); John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea 1950-1953* (William Morrow, New York, 1991); Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero* (Touchstone, New York, 2001); Richard Whelan, *Drawing the Line: The Korean War, 1950-1953* (Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade*.

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<sup>62</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* and *Vol. 2: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*; Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*.

<sup>63</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* pp 3-9 and Chapters 2-4, 6, 8-9. The quotation is on page 3.

<sup>64</sup> Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974).

<sup>65</sup> Steven Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (Liverpool University Press, 1995) especially pp 3-27 and 252-56.

<sup>66</sup> Graeme S. Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War: The Case of Korea* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2004) pp xvii-xxxiv and 185-89. The quotation is on page 185.

<sup>67</sup> Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War, Vol I, Politics and Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992) and *Vol II, Combat Operations* (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1996)

<sup>68</sup> Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War, Vol I, Politics and Diplomacy*, especially Chapter 19 on the ANZUS Treaty.

<sup>69</sup> Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Vol I, A Distant Obligation* (HMSO, London, 1990) and *Vol II, An Honourable Discharge* (HMSO, London, 1995)

<sup>70</sup> Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War*. See also Robert Barnes, "Branding an Aggressor: The Commonwealth, the United Nations and Chinese Intervention in the Korean War, November 1950-January 1951", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 231-253.

<sup>71</sup> There is no official history of Canada in the Korean War similar to the Australian, New Zealand and British official Korean War histories cited above. Lt. Colonel Herbert Wood, *Strange Battleground: Official History of the Canadian Army in Korea* (Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1966) is an account of the Canadian Army contribution in Korea as is David Bercuson, *Blood on the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999). See also John Melady, *Korea: Canada's Forgotten War*, 2nd ed (Dundurn, Toronto, 2011). Notable Korean War histories by British historians include Brian Catchpole, *The Korean War* (Robinson, London, 2001), Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (Michael Joseph, London, 1987), Michael Hickey, *The Korean War: The West Confronts Communism, 1950-1953* (John Murray, London, 2000), Callum MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (Macmillan Press, London, 1986) and David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (Macmillan, London, 1964). See also Andrew Salmon, *Scorched Earth, Black Snow: Britain and Australia in the Korean War, 1950* (Aurum, London, 2011) an account of the operations by British and Australian troops in Korea in 1950 and John Blaxland, *Strategic Cousins: Australian and Canadian Expeditionary Forces and the British and American Empires* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, 2006) pp 109-120 for an analysis of the Australian and Canadian military contribution in the Korean War.

# **PART I:**

## **From Tension to Co-operation: 1947-49**

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Different Objectives, Converging Interests: The Origins of the American-Australian Korean Engagement**

#### **Introduction**

In the formative years of the Cold War, the Korean peninsula became the epicentre of the evolving American-Australian relationship. Beginning in 1947, *three years before* the outbreak of the Korean War, the US-Australian Korean engagement was a significant conduit in the building of a strong and deep relationship between the two nations. Yet this period in the history of the US-Australian relationship has languished in virtual obscurity.<sup>1</sup> This chapter analyses the origins of the American-Australian Korean engagement from 1945 to 1947. It examines the divergent US and Australian interest in the Korean peninsula from the time of its division in 1945. The chapter evaluates why Korea became politically and strategically important to the US and Australia in the aftermath of World War Two. It argues that by 1947 American and Australian strategic and security interests converged on the Korean peninsula and this explains the origins of their Korean engagement which began with the creation of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) in November 1947.

At the beginning of the Cold War, Washington and Canberra differed over the future strategic function of Korea and Japan. Whereas the Truman Administration was now focussed on confronting the growing Communist threat, the Chifley government remained fearful of a resurgent Japan. From Washington's perspective, the Japanese threat had been extinguished in 1945. However, Japan remained a key regional power and the emerging Cold War geo politics meant the Truman Administration came to regard Japan as a necessary ally in its regional Communist

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containment strategy. Canberra too recognised the Communist danger but in contrast to Washington, it still regarded Japan as the greater threat and was determined to prevent its potential resurgence. Whereas Japan and southern Korea were now crucial to the American strategy for an anti-Communist regional bulwark, Australia wanted an independent and united Korea that would help prevent a Japanese resurgence. The US ideally also wanted a free and united Korea but knowing this would be unlikely, it was determined to deny southern Korea to the Communists. These different perceptions in Washington and Canberra over the reality of the Communist threat and the potential resurgence of Japan, explains their divergent objectives during the first phase of their Korean engagement.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter shows that although Canberra differed with Washington over Korea and Japan policy, the Chifley government pursued two intertwined objectives to maximise Australia's security: engagement with the US, and encouraging an American presence in the Asia-Pacific to contain Japan. Australia involved itself in Korea because it provided an avenue to pursue its strategic and security interests through direct engagement with the Americans. Indeed, throughout the US-Australian Korean engagement, despite disagreements and frustration with some US policies, Canberra was careful never to jeopardise the direct access to the Americans it gained by involving itself in Korea in 1947.

The other key element of the US-Australian Korean engagement this chapter anticipates is the significance of the collaboration between key American and Australian officials in shaping the evolving relationship between the two nations. This analysis of the origins of the American-Australian Korean engagement suggests



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the evolution of their relationship during these years was much more nuanced and problematic than the existing scholarship and common perceptions suggest.

### **The US and Australia after World War Two**

In the wake of World War Two, Australia resolved to play a prominent role in international diplomacy, determined to pursue its interests and safeguard its security. Under the direction of Dr Herbert Evatt, Minister for External Affairs from 1941-49, Australia adopted an internationalist foreign policy with engagement in the Asia-Pacific region as one of its pillars. Considering the size of his department, Evatt set ambitious goals for himself and his officials. Despite the expansion of the Department of External Affairs (EA) throughout these years, the number of accredited Australian diplomats was still relatively small. This meant Australian officials often held multiple positions within EA. The Australian officials referred to in this analysis of the US-Australian Korean engagement were, throughout their careers, periodically based in Canberra, Tokyo, Seoul, the UN and Washington DC.

An outline of the structural workings of External Affairs during these years helps explain the movements, particular tasks and outlook of these officials. EA was an entity of the Prime Minister's Department until it became an independent department in 1935.<sup>3</sup> World War Two and Evatt's determination for Australia to pursue an activist international role were the main catalysts for the expansion of EA in the 1940s. Australia's four overseas diplomatic posts in 1940 (London, Washington, Ottawa and Tokyo) had expanded to twenty six by 1949. Following the Second World War, EA was organised into four divisions with each having "either a geographical or functional basis." The divisions were: Administrative and General, Pacific, United Nations and International Organizations, and European, American and

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Middle East. By 1949 EA employed 642 staff (140 were diplomatic officers) which was more than triple its wartime numbers.<sup>4</sup>

The outlook and objectives of Australian foreign policy under Evatt help explain Australia's interest in the fate of Korea following its liberation from Japanese occupation. Australia emerged from its experience in World War Two determined to ensure the Allies would impose harsh peace terms on Japan and prevent its resurgence as a military power. Fearing an aggressive Japan and concerned about the spread of communism, Australia's primary foreign policy objective was to ensure the US remained directly engaged in the Asia-Pacific beyond Japan and the Philippines because the US was the only power that could keep Japan subdued and contain communism.<sup>5</sup> From Australia's perspective, an active American presence in the region was vital to safeguarding its security. Australia was determined to engage with the US and wholly supported American efforts to build peace and security in the Asia-Pacific. As a prominent Allied nation in the war against Japan, Australia was part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) and a member of the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) and the Allied Council whose roles were to facilitate Allied policy towards Japan. However, the Allied occupation of Japan was almost wholly an American effort and General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) rarely involved US allies in his decision making.<sup>6</sup>

Australia also sought to play an activist role in the UN, supporting the US while vigorously pursuing its own foreign policy interests.<sup>7</sup> However, despite Australia's internationalist foreign policy and determination to play an active role in the Asia-Pacific, a substantial US-Australian diplomatic engagement appeared highly

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problematic and extremely unlikely throughout 1945-47. Nevertheless, the convergence of American and Australian strategic and security interests on the Korean peninsula set the stage for their Korean engagement.

Washington and Canberra had very different perspectives of the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region. The US was resolved to thwart the spread of communism. Australia too recognised the Communist threat, but its main security concern was the resurgence of Japanese military power which it believed could only be prevented by American strength. The US repeatedly rebuffed Australian requests for a security guarantee and also sought to minimise its involvement in the Asia-Pacific beyond Japan and the Philippines, and had no intention of remaining in Korea. All the while, the situation in China was continuing to deteriorate with the weakness of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime vis-à-vis Mao Zedong's Communists becoming increasingly apparent. American policymakers were not concerned with Australian fears about its isolationism, security and a Japanese resurgence. By 1947, Australia, ever wary of Japan, was becoming suspicious of American indications it would impose a soft peace on Japan to ensure it became a powerful anti-Communist bulwark in the Asia-Pacific. James Curran has written that America and Australia "seemed to be at cross purposes: as US policy makers worried about the prospect of a third world war, Australians seemed to be stuck refighting old battles from the second. They could not countenance the argument that the global struggle against communism justified the appeasement of Japan."<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, even though at that time the US-Australian relationship was problematic and the two nations differed in their respective perceptions of security

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threats in the Asia-Pacific, there were indications of a more nuanced and deeper relationship emerging. The US-Australian cooperation during World War Two had strengthened their association, and the upgrading of their diplomatic representation to embassy level in 1946, together with increasing education and economic links, signalled an evolving and stronger relationship between the two countries.

There were signs too that individual personal connections were shaping the relationship. Evatt was personally disliked and mistrusted by senior US officials largely because of his abrasive and pugnacious conduct and suspicious character.<sup>9</sup> However, some US and Australian officials had been collaborating with and befriending one another since 1940 when the Menzies government opened an Australian Mission in Washington. Richard Casey and Sir Owen Dixon, the first two heads of the Australian Legation were highly regarded by the Americans.<sup>10</sup>

Another Australian who attracted the attention of US officials and would become a key figure in the US-Australian Korean engagement was James Plimsoll. During World War Two, Plimsoll worked for the Australian Army Directorate of Research preparing policies for territories following their liberation from the Japanese. Plimsoll's performance was such that in 1945 he was selected to go to the School of Military Government at Charlottesville, Virginia. The school trained US, Australian, British and Canadian officers for the "post-war military occupation and administration" of Japan, Germany and Italy. Plimsoll successfully completed the course, emerged as a recognised expert on Japan and spent extended time in the US. He was assigned to the Australian Military Mission in Washington and his knowledge of Japan led to Evatt appointing him to represent Australia on the FEC. This gave

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Plimsoll “access to reports” from MacArthur’s headquarters in Tokyo before they were received by US State Department officials. Plimsoll served with distinction on the Commission from 1945-47.<sup>11</sup> Although MacArthur largely ignored the FEC, Plimsoll’s experiences and American connections would pay dividends during the US-Australian Korean engagement.

### **The US, Australia and Korea: 1945-47**

Japan occupied Korea after the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05, formally annexed it in 1910, and controlled it for the next 35 years. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, US President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin, agreed the Russians would enter the Pacific war three months after the European conflict ended. The Soviets entered the war against Japan in August and to the Americans’ consternation, rapidly advanced through Manchuria and into northern Korea. US concerns about the geopolitical consequences of this Soviet advance prompted their request to the Russians to divide Korea between them at the 38th Parallel. To the Americans’ surprise, the Soviets agreed and in September 1945, a month after Russian troops reached the 38th Parallel, US forces landed and occupied southern Korea to prevent a power vacuum in the wake of the Japanese defeat and to thwart the Soviets from taking the entire Korean peninsula. This division created by the Soviet and US occupation of northern and southern Korea, respectively, was intended to be temporary, ending when a unified Korean government could be established.

From September 1945 to August 1948, southern Korea was governed by the US military government led by Lieutenant-General John Hodge, Commander of the United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK).<sup>12</sup> A veteran of World War One and

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the Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Leyte and Okinawa campaigns during World War Two, Hodge headed the US military government in southern Korea from the Japanese surrender in 1945 to the creation of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) in 1948. A staunch anti-communist, Hodge refused to deal with southern Koreans suspected of having leftist political leanings. Hodge attracted a great deal of scorn from southern Koreans who vehemently opposed his retention of some Japanese officials in their former colonial posts.<sup>13</sup> Hodge's frequent dealings with Australian officials in 1948 made him a central figure in the first phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement and he features prominently in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

However, the political differences between the Soviets and the US and the emerging Cold War meant neither would agree to terms for Korean unification and self government. By 1947, the Truman Administration saw Korea as one of the many Cold War fronts in Europe and Asia and was adopting an increasingly realist position vis-à-vis the Soviets. With neither side willing to co-operate or make concessions, all attempts to unify Korea ended in a stalemate. Meanwhile, the Soviets and Americans concentrated on organising regimes in northern and southern Korea that each claimed were the legitimate representatives of all Koreans. The US was not interested in Korea for the sake of the Koreans. It wanted southern Korea to be politically and economically stable and thus be a bulwark against Soviet expansionist designs in Asia especially regarding Japan.

Herein lay a difference in outlook that permeated the US-Australian Korean engagement until the signing of the ANZUS and Japanese Peace Treaties in

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September 1951. As the Truman Administration became increasingly determined to contain communism, so the significance of the status of Korea grew incrementally for US foreign policy makers. The sole rationale for the US presence in southern Korea was always to prevent its fall to the Communists.

In contrast to the American focus on containing communism, the Chifley government, although concerned about communism, nevertheless continued to regard a resurgent Japan as the primary threat to Australia's security, whereas the US reasoned that Japan, defeated and occupied, no longer posed a danger to the Asia-Pacific region but could become an important bulwark against the USSR. The American presence in southern Korea and concern about the status of the peninsula was about containing communism, whereas the Australian interest in Korea was about preventing a resurgence of Japanese military power. Both countries agreed on the importance of Korea, but for very different reasons. Australia calculated that a liberated Korea would reduce Japanese power and act as a counterbalance to any future Japanese strategic ambitions. Thus, the different perceived security interests of the US and Australia came to converge on the Korean peninsula.

Australia's concern with the fate of the Korean peninsula was a corollary of its wariness toward Japan, its concern about communism and its objective of ensuring direct US engagement in the region. The respective US and Australian perceptions of the geopolitical significance of Korea and their differences regarding the Communist and Japanese security threats in the Asia-Pacific, reflected the two nations' contrasting views about the nature of the Soviet threat and the Cold War in its early years. Until 1948, in contrast to the realist geopolitical American stance, Australia

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still hoped the UN could facilitate US-Soviet co-operation to unite Korea under a government chosen by the Korean people.<sup>14</sup> The Chifley government continued to pursue its policy of attempting to have the US and Soviets resolve their differences through the UN until the Soviet blockade of West Berlin in June 1948 convinced Canberra of the futility of having the UN facilitate efforts to accommodate the differences between the US and Russians.<sup>15</sup> Slowly, Australia came to accept the reality of the geopolitical struggle between the US and Soviets, even as it still regarded a resurgent Japan as the primary threat to its security. The Australian interest in the status of Korea remained inextricably linked to its policy of ensuring Japan would never again pose a security threat to the Asia-Pacific region.

The convergence of US and Australian security interests in Korea provided an opportunity for their officials to directly engage each other over the future status of the peninsula. Increasing Cold War tensions meant the US reluctantly continued its presence in southern Korea, determined this territory would not fall to the Communists and pose a threat to Japan. Australia regarded a resolution of the division of Korea as inextricably linked to the status of post war Japan and was determined it would have a voice regarding this impending settlement. The US resolved to prevent the Communists from taking southern Korea because the Korean peninsula in Communist hands would weaken Japan's position as a bulwark against communism, thereby undermining American security in the Asia-Pacific. Australia envisaged a unified and independent Korea would be a force against a resurgence of Japanese military power that could again threaten Australia. Korea mattered to the US because its primary objective was preventing the spread of communism. Australia too was concerned with communism but unlike the US it regarded a free and united



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Korea as part of a post war American led security framework that would cauterise any outbreaks of future Japanese threats to security in the Asia-Pacific region.

The genesis of Australia's interest in Korea in the aftermath of the Second World War was its desire to have a voice in shaping the coming peace treaty with Japan and in determining the status of former Japanese territories. Britain had minimal interest in Korea but was mindful that Australia was keen to be involved in the peninsula. Therefore on May 14, 1947, the British government confirmed it would "ask for Australia to be substituted" for the UK as the fourth member of the Four Power Trusteeship for Korea agreed at the Moscow Conference in December 1945. This conference had decided the US and Soviet Union would form a Joint Commission to facilitate the formation of a provisional government for a united Korea. The Joint Commission would then be superseded by a Four Power Trusteeship (US, USSR, UK and China) that would supervise Korean independence and the withdrawal of US and Soviet troops from the peninsula.

Australia preferred the principle of a UN Trusteeship for Korea rather than a Four Power Trusteeship and proposed the establishment of a Trusteeship of at least five powers including Australia.<sup>16</sup> The rejection of this proposal did not deter Evatt from continuing to pursue direct Australian involvement in Korea. Evatt's response also signalled that Australia would pursue its own interests and not simply endorse US policy. On June 6, 1947, Evatt said that Australia, "as a Pacific Power, is naturally interested in political developments in Korea, and is keeping in close touch" with the UK government.<sup>17</sup> John Burton, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, similarly stated in July that Australia, "as a major Pacific belligerent, has

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every right to interest itself in arrangements made concerning the future of Korea and other former territories of Japan”.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, EA was determined to have an Australian presence in Korea as early as possible “so that fuller information can be obtained on political situation there.” EA instructed the Tokyo Mission to discuss this with Evatt during his forthcoming trip to Tokyo.

External Affairs also suggested sending an official from the Mission to Korea on a “fact-finding mission” or an Australian officer from the BCOF could be “temporarily attached” to the Headquarters of Lieutenant General John Hodge, Commander of USAFIK “if it is not possible to have permanent representation.”<sup>19</sup> Although, none of these options canvassed by EA resulted in an Australian presence in Korea, they all show the active determination and tenacity of Evatt, Burton and EA to ensure that Australia’s voice was heard.

It was Britain that facilitated Australia’s membership of UNTCOK which spawned the US-Australian Korean engagement. In August 1947, in a final effort to implement the Moscow agreement of December 1945 and resolve the Korean impasse without involving the UN, the US proposed a four power (US, USSR, Britain and China) conference be held in Washington DC on September 8 to “discuss” the “future of Korea.”<sup>20</sup> Although the Soviet refusal to attend meant this conference did not take place, the US proposal was nevertheless significant for Australia which had expressed a strong interest in the status of Korea. American and British acknowledgment of the “special interest of the Australian Government in the future of Korea” meant Australia would have been represented at this conference. The US had decided that if the proposed Washington conference failed or did not eventuate, it would refer the

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“Korean problem” to the UN.<sup>21</sup> The Soviet refusal to attend the conference prompted the US to consider holding informal talks on Korea with Britain and China, and inviting Australia, but it decided to refer the Korean issue directly to the UN.<sup>22</sup> This laid the foundation for the creation of UNTCOK, Australia’s membership of the Commission, and the US-Australian Korean engagement.

The impasse with the Soviets and the US desire to withdraw its occupation forces from Korea, resulted in the American referral of the Korean issue to the UN in September 1947. This American action coincided with the British notification to the US and USSR that it would nominate Australia to replace her on the Four Power Trusteeship for Korea agreed at the 1945 Moscow Conference. Proposing that Australia should therefore be fully informed and invited to participate in any discussions relating to Korea, the British reminded the Americans of Australia’s “contribution to the war against Japan and the several undertakings” by the US and UK “that in all negotiations relating to the Japanese Settlement, Australia would participate as a party principal.”<sup>23</sup> Britain’s stance resulted in Australia’s membership of UNTCOK. Irrespective of its overtures to the US and Britain, it is likely that without British facilitation, Australia would not have become so intricately involved in Korea. Britain’s acknowledgement of Australian concerns about Japan were a reminder that although the US and Australia shared similar goals regarding Korea, they did so for different reasons.

At the UN on October 28, 1947, John Foster Dulles introduced the US resolution calling for the formation of UNTCOK.<sup>24</sup> Although Australia supported the establishment of UNTCOK, Evatt was critical of the Americans and Russians,

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lamenting the failure of the Joint US-Soviet Commission formed by agreement at the Moscow Conference in December 1945 to settle the Korean issue. Evatt's declaration that Australia wanted the Korean issue resolved as part of an overall Japanese peace settlement, further emphasised that Australia regarded the resolution of the status of both Korea and Japan as synonymous. He urged the US and Soviets, as the "two countries now in control in Korea", to continue to try and resolve the Korean impasse. However, Evatt said if this was not possible, Australia would "in principle" support the US proposal for the creation of UNTCOK. Seeking a place for Australia on UNTCOK, Evatt argued membership of the Commission "should primarily be contributed from those powers which made a direct contribution towards Pacific victory." Evatt said the contribution of Australian forces to the defeat of Japan, their participation in the occupation of Japan as part of the BCOF and US forces under MacArthur, and Australia's membership of the FEC, demonstrated Australia's commitment to ensuring peace and security in the Pacific. However, Evatt's argument that UNTCOK "could and should be regarded as a preliminary part of the entire Japanese Peace Settlement" contrasted with the American viewpoint. The Americans were adamant that UNTCOK's role was to facilitate the formation of an elected government for a unified Korea. In contrast to Australia's stance, the US regarded the status of Korea and Japan as very separate issues.<sup>25</sup>

In November 1947, the UN approved the creation of UNTCOK to facilitate the unification of northern and southern Korea.<sup>26</sup> Along with Australia, the other members of UNTCOK were Canada, China, El Salvador, France, India, the Philippines, Syria and the Ukraine. The creation of UNTCOK spawned the US-Australian Korean engagement by providing a direct avenue for Australian officials to

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actively work with their American counterparts in the region Australia regarded as vital to its security. Australia's membership of the Commission was also a conduit for its officials to directly engage with their US counterparts in the UN efforts to peacefully reunify Korea while continuing to pursue three key Australian foreign policy objectives: a security treaty with the US, containment of Japan, and active engagement in the Asia-Pacific.

### **Conclusion**

US policy and resolve to contain the spread of communism in the early years of the Cold War and Australian determination to prevent the resurgence of Japanese military power led to a convergence of their security interests in Korea by 1947. Together with the inability of the US and Soviets to resolve the division of Korea which resulted in the creation of UNTCOK, these factors explain the origins of the US-Australian Korean engagement.

Neither the US nor Australia actively planned or sought to engage with each other in southern Korea. It was the respective American and Australian perceptions that the status of Korea was important to their own and separate security interests which heralded their Korean engagement.

Although the American-Australian relationship during these years was problematic and a substantial engagement appeared improbable, their connection was nevertheless evolving and much deeper and more nuanced than has been perceived. While there was some tension between the senior levels of the Truman Administration and the Chifley government, lower level American and Australian officials had been engaging with each other and building a rapport since shortly after the outbreak of the

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Second World War. This indicated that even before the beginning of the US-Australian Korean engagement, individual and personal connections were instrumental in shaping the nature of the relationship between the two nations.

The American-Australian Korean engagement therefore began amidst an already evolving relationship between the two nations. The Korean peninsula was not the only place where American and Australian officials had significant interactions during these early Cold War years. Indeed, the US and Australia had recently upgraded their respective presence in Canberra and Washington to embassy level, and their officials had contact at the UN and in Japan. Nevertheless, although the US-Australian relationship was evolving on multiple levels in the diplomatic, education and economic spheres, it remained problematic and nuanced. As the next chapter shows, the opening phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement in the lead up to the 1948 south Korean election exhibited a considerable level of tension and disagreement between the key US and Australian officials even as a closer relationship emerged.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The pre Korean War American presence in Korea has been examined in a number of US scholarly studies. Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2005) Chapters 2-5, argues that although the US occupation of southern Korea achieved some tangible gains, its greatest error was an inability and unwillingness to understand the depths and divisions of conflicting and implacable elements of Korean nationalism. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981) also asserts the US failed to understand the strength and nature of Korean nationalism and its inflexible attempt to impose its values on a culture and traditions completely alien to its own inevitably failed. James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade: American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985) contends the clear US support for rightist Korean political groups undermined the legitimacy of American nation building goals. Charles Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950* (Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1981) concludes the reluctant US presence in southern Korea was compounded by an unwillingness to recognise the legitimacy of some competing Korean political elements. James Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsula Origins of the War* (University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1989) deduces that US support for rightist groups further polarised already strident Korean political and social divisions. William Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: US Policy Towards China and Korea* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1981) argues the US exacerbated its difficulties in Korea because of its failure to give the divided nation adequate attention until the Communists gained the ascendancy in the Chinese civil war. Lisle Rose, *Roots of Tragedy: The United States and the Struggle for Asia, 1945-1953* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn, 1976) examines the US presence in Korea in a comparative framework that evaluates post World War Two American policies regarding China, Vietnam and Korea and argues the US was solely interested in establishing an anti-Communist bulwark in Asia and was less concerned about the nature of individuals and regimes that supported this goal.

The impact of the US-Australian Korean engagement during the three years that preceded the outbreak of the Korean War on their evolving relationship has received no substantial scholarly attention. More specifically, the origins of Australian involvement in Korea from 1945-47 have only attracted fleeting references in the published literature. Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Chapter 1, focuses on the Korean War years, not the machinations of Korean and great power politics from 1945-1950. O'Neill's introductory chapter briefly refers to Australia's role as a member of UNTCOK but does not address the origins of Australia's interest in Korea following the Second World War. Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) Chapters 1-3, examines Australia's membership of UNTCOK and its successor UNCOK, in some detail but without probing into the origins of post 1945 Australian concerns with Korea. David Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 43, 2, 1997, pp 153-167, examines the significance of Korea in Australian foreign policy from 1943-1950, in the context of Australia's relations with the US, its aspirations for the UN, and its focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Despite the dates in the title, Dutton's article does not examine the origins of Australia's interest in Korea predating 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-1951* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1962)

<sup>3</sup> It remained External Affairs until it was renamed Foreign Affairs in 1970 and it became the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1987.

<sup>4</sup> The quotation and figures are from Christopher Waters, "The Great Debates: H.V. Evatt and the Department of External Affairs, 1941-49", in Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making, 1941-1969* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003) p 55. See also Peter Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy, 1901-1949* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983) Chapters 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> At the end of World War Two in Asia, there were US forces in Japan, the Philippines, China and southern Korea. China and Korea were the only places on the Asian mainland where there were American forces present. US forces in China attached to the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek engaged in some fighting against Mao Zedong's Communists. Whether an American presence would

remain in China and Korea was very problematic. All indications from the Truman Administration were that the US had no intention of remaining in either country indefinitely.

See Ronald Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (Random House, New York, 2007), Richard Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-1951* and Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 38, 3, 1992, pp 316-33.

<sup>6</sup> James Wood, *The Forgotten Force: The Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952* (St. Leonards, 1998). For a good positive contemporary account of the work of the FEC, see Samuel Stratton, "The Far Eastern Commission", *International Organization*, 2, 1, 1948, pp 1-18. The members of the FEC were Australia, Canada, China, France, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, UK, US and USSR.

<sup>7</sup> Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 38, 3, 1992, pp 316-33 and Neville Meaney, "Dr HV Evatt and the United Nations: The problem of collective security and liberal internationalism", in James Cotton and David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations* (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012) pp 34-65.

<sup>8</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2015) pp 30-31.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans", *Historical Studies*, 18, 1979, pp 546-60.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans", p 552 and Alan Watt, "The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future", *Australian Outlook*, 24, 1, 1970, pp 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll* (Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat, 2015) Chapter 2. The quotations are on pp 33 and 40, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> On the US military government see the following: E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (King's Crown Press, New York, 1951); Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*; Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, Chapters 2-6; Charles Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950*; Leland Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of US Policy in the United Nations* (Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1956); James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade: American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950*; William Stueck and Boram Yi, "'An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US-South Korean Alliance", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 177-209.

<sup>13</sup> Dean Corey and William Head, "Hodge, John R.", in Spencer Tucker, (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 257-58.

<sup>14</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, Korea—Foreign Policy—Relations with Australia, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", p 155.

<sup>15</sup> Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", pp 327-29; James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War*, p 31.

<sup>16</sup> Cable from External Affairs (hereafter EA) to Australian Mission in Tokyo, "Australian Participation in Trusteeship of Korea", July 15, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See also Note on Korea, monthly summary for Cabinet, May 20, 1947 and Cable from Australian Legation in Washington to War Cabinet, EA and Defence, "Korea", December 5, 1945, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>17</sup> Extract on Korea from Ministerial Statement by Evatt, June 6, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Burton to Gibson, July 11, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>19</sup> Cable from EA to Australian Mission in Tokyo, "Australian Participation in Trusteeship of Korea", July 15, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>20</sup> Cable from Australian Embassy, Washington DC, to EA, "Korea", August 30, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See also British Commonwealth Conference, Canberra, 1947, UK Delegation to Evatt, August 30, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>21</sup> Cable from Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to EA, "Korea", September 10, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See also British Commonwealth Conference, Canberra, 1947, UK Delegation to Evatt, August 30, 1947 and "Proposals



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... by US government ... for the consideration of the governments of the UK, USSR and China”, August 30, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>22</sup> Cable from Australian Embassy, Washington DC, to EA, September 8, 1947 and Cable from Australian Embassy, Washington DC, to EA, “Korea”, September 6, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>23</sup> “Korea”, September 1, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See also Letter from UK Delegation to Evatt, August 31, 1947; British Commonwealth Conference, Canberra, 1947, UK Delegation to Evatt, August 30, 1947; Letter from UK High Commissioner in Canberra to John Burton, September 9, 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>24</sup> See Cable from Australian Delegation to the UN to EA, 28 October 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1, for details of the UN debate on the US proposal for the creation of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (hereafter UNTCOK).

<sup>25</sup> Cable from Australian Delegation to the UN to EA, Text of Evatt’s Statement on Korea, 28 October 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See also Cable from Australian Delegation to the UN to EA, “Korea”, 17 October 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.

<sup>26</sup> Cable from Australian Delegation to UN to EA, 29 October 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. See Cable from Australian Delegation to the UN to EA, 5 November 1947, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1, for the text of the resolution authorising the formation of UNTCOK and explaining its role.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **A Clash of Policies and Personalities: S.H. Jackson, the US and the 1948 South Korean Election**

#### **Introduction**

The Korean policy differences between the US and Australia in the five months leading up to the May 10, 1948, South Korean election, represented the greatest divergence between the two nations throughout their Korean engagement. This chapter evaluates those policy differences and the tensions between Samuel Jackson, Australia's representative on the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), and his US counterparts, Lieutenant-General John Hodge, Head of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) and his political advisor, Joseph Jacobs.

Jackson was a World War One veteran who served at Gallipoli and the Western Front. During World War Two, Jackson served as a General Staff officer in Australia and the Pacific, and as Director of Security in Victoria and New South Wales. From 1945-47, Jackson was Australia's Assistant Director General of Security. In March 1947, Jackson was posted as a Counsellor to the Australian Mission in Tokyo, where he was an advisor to Patrick Shaw, who was the Head of the Mission and the British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council. In December 1947, Jackson was appointed Australia's delegate to UNTCOK. Jackson's appointment to UNTCOK indicated that Australia saw the resolution of the division of Korea and the post war Japanese settlement as synonymous, and that it was determined to exert its influence upon the future status of both nations.<sup>1</sup>

## A Clash of Policies and Personalities

Jacobs was a career foreign service officer, an Asian and Russian expert and a staunch anti-communist. Prior to serving as political advisor to Hodge in 1947-48, Jacobs was Vice-Consul and Consul in China, 1915-1930. A member of the State Department's Far Eastern Division, 1930-34, Jacobs was then appointed Foreign Service Inspector, 1935-36, Chief of the Office of Philippine Affairs, 1936-1940, Counsellor in the US Legation to Cairo, 1940-45, and US representative to Albania, 1945-46. Jacobs' experience, outlook and appointment as Hodge's political advisor, signalled the American determination to prevent southern Korea falling to the Communists.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter argues that although the US and Australia pursued similar goals regarding Korea, their divergent outlooks, perspectives and policies were exacerbated by the tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs. The fraught personal relationship between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs heightened the difficulties that arose from the differing US and Australian Korean policies. This analysis of the tensions between the US and Australia in this period of their Korean engagement reflects the problematic nature of the relationship between the two nations at that time.

This thesis argues the 1947-53 American-Australian Korean engagement was a significant factor in the constantly evolving relationship between the two countries which was much deeper, and more nuanced and problematic than commonly perceived. By 1947, US and Australian security interests had converged on the Korean peninsula. Australia's presence in southern Korea throughout the lead up to the 1948 South Korean election enabled US and Australian officials to directly engage with each other over the future status of Korea. This chapter sheds light on this defining moment in the history of the growing American-Australian relationship and the two Koreas.<sup>3</sup>

## Aligning Interests

In November 1947, at the behest of the Truman Administration, the United Nations (UN) created UNTCOK to facilitate self government and the unification of Korea which had been occupied and divided by the US and the Soviet Union since the Japanese defeat in 1945. Australia's membership of UNTCOK ushered in its direct involvement in Korea and the first phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement.

The tensions in the relationship between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, arose from the divergent American and Australian Korean policies, and the role of the UN and UNTCOK in the lead up to the 1948 South Korean election. From January to May 1948, the US and Australia differed over the viability and legitimacy of holding an election only in southern Korea, as well as Korean unification, their assessment of Syngman Rhee (the US backed Korean nationalist leader) and approaches to the USSR and its sponsored regime in Pyongyang. The US and Australia also had different conceptions of the role of the UN and UNTCOK in facilitating Korean unification and independence. These issues were key elements in the political machinations leading up to the 1948 South Korean election, and were reflected in the interlocutions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs and other American and Australian officials. The 1948 South Korean election was a microcosm of the broader tensions then afflicting the Korean peninsula, and of the differences in American and Australian policies regarding that divided nation.

Australia's membership of UNTCOK provided a new avenue for addressing its fundamental concern on containing a future Japanese resurgence. Korea allowed Australian diplomats to directly engage with US officials in the region Australia regarded as vital to its security. Dr Herbert Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, and senior officials in his department, hoped this expansion of US-Australian diplomatic

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engagement would improve Australia's chances of gaining a security treaty with the US that would protect it from a future Japanese threat. From 1948, US and Australian officials were extensively engaged in the political and military conflict that engulfed Korea. Despite the differences between their respective Korean policies, and the tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, the US and Australia shared similar goals and interests. America and Australia both sought a free and unified Korea, the prevention of conflict on the peninsula, and believed the fate of Korea was linked to their respective security interests in the Asia-Pacific. These common goals and interests facilitated frequent interactions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs throughout the lead up to the 1948 South Korean election which was a harbinger of the future status of Korea.

Although the frequent meetings between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs created a familiarity with each other, the overt tensions between them meant they remained wary of one another. Australia chose to remain engaged in Korea despite recognising its limited capacity to influence the Americans and acceded to supporting US Korean policy despite its strong reservations regarding the organisation and holding of the 1948 South Korean election. None of this diluted the tension and wariness that accumulated between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs from January to May 1948. Nevertheless, the US-Australian Korean engagement placed events on the peninsula at the epicentre of their relationship in these early Cold War years and, irrespective of its problematic nature, enabled their diplomatic relationship to grow deeper.

The US was determined the 1948 South Korean election take place for two reasons. Firstly, it wanted to create an anti-Communist bulwark on the Korean peninsula to contain Soviet influence in North East Asia. Whether an independent non-Communist South Korean regime would be truly democratic was of secondary

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concern to the Truman Administration. What mattered to the US was ensuring the new South Korean government would be staunchly anti-Communist and was perceived as legitimate. Secondly, the American military government led by Hodge had controlled southern Korea since 1945 but the US did not want to remain in Korea indefinitely. The US intended to withdraw its forces from Korea as soon as possible and by allowing the South Koreans to manage their own affairs with a token US presence and UN assent, the Americans hoped to secure an anti-Communist front with minimal commitment of personnel and resources. The US wanted to concentrate its efforts on the areas it regarded as the critical frontlines in the fight to contain communism: Western Europe, Japan and China.

The US and Australia agreed on the need to contain communism and prevent conflict on the Korean peninsula, but unlike Australia, the Americans were prepared to accept a divided Korea. Determined to form a Korean government as quickly as possible, the US wanted UNTCOK in Korea, calculating the Commission could serve two purposes. Firstly, by helping facilitate the election and thereby bestowing it with UN legitimacy, the US could claim the new Korean government had international recognition rather than being solely an American creation. Secondly, the US reasoned that internationalising the Korean issue offered the fledgling South Korean nation greater security from Communist designs on its sovereignty than if it was perceived as only an American client state.

Soviet intransigence from 1945-47 led the US to conclude that the Russians would never co-operate with Korean unification so the Americans decided to form a Korean government under UN auspices, despite knowing its jurisdiction would be limited to southern Korea and would very likely perpetuate the division of the peninsula. Australia supported the US intent to form a representative Korean

government but not at the expense of a divided Korea, concerned such a division would last indefinitely. Hence, Australia continued to urge the US and Soviets to cooperate, arguing only these two powers could unify Korea.<sup>4</sup>

The Korean dilemma reflected the wider divergence of American and Australian perceptions of the Soviet threat in the early Cold War years. By 1948, the US had concluded the Soviets were implacable geopolitical and ideological rivals who were unwilling to cooperate to meaningfully diffuse the tensions between them. Conversely, Australia continued to argue that US-Soviet differences, including those over Korea, could be resolved via the UN. In essence, the US sought to exercise its newly acquired superpower authority through the UN as part of its strategy to contain Soviet expansion, whereas Australia believed the UN together with US leadership offered the best means to resolve international disputes through diplomacy. These differing views of the role of the UN reflected how both nations perceived the role of UNTCOK in Korea.<sup>5</sup>

### **Australia opposes US plans for an election only in South Korea**

Arriving in southern Korea in January 1948, UNTCOK's primary task was to organise and supervise elections for a Korean government that would be held in May that year. The US had decided that further attempted negotiations with the Soviets over Korea would be futile, and sought to install a government in southern Korea even if it meant the continued division of the country. The Americans wanted UNTCOK to legitimise the regime they had installed in southern Korea led by Syngman Rhee and thereby isolate and discredit the Soviet sponsored regime under Kim Il-sung in northern Korea.

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Australia's membership of UNTCOK exposed the differences on Korean policy between the US and Australia and also the split within the Department of External Affairs (EA) between the UN Division and the Pacific Division. The UN Division argued UNTCOK must facilitate an election for the entire Korean peninsula, convinced an election restricted to the US zone would divide Korea indefinitely. The Pacific Division supported a more liberal version of the American view of focussing on producing a legitimate government in southern Korea even if the result would be two separate Korean states. Pacific Division's view differed from the American policy only in so much as Pacific wanted a government that was truly democratic and representative of the southern Koreans, whereas the US was determined the new government would be implacably anti-Communist, whether democratic or not.<sup>6</sup>

Evatt and John Burton, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, came down in favour of the UN Division proposal. Accordingly, Samuel Jackson, a counsellor at the Australian Mission in Tokyo since March 1947, and appointed Australia's representative to UNTCOK in December, was instructed by EA to indicate that Australia would not support attempts by the US and UNTCOK to organise elections only in southern Korea. Jackson, yet to go to Korea, was at this stage sympathetic to the American viewpoint, and without authorisation from Canberra, he met in Tokyo with General Douglas MacArthur who, as Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) in charge of the American/Allied occupation of Japan, also had jurisdiction over American forces in Korea. The US had announced the forthcoming election would be for a government for the whole Korean peninsula. Despite his instructions, Jackson presented MacArthur with his own plan proposing that an election be held in the US occupation zone for only a southern Korean government.



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Jackson's response reflected his maverick character and signalled his preparedness to act on his own initiative irrespective of pressure from the US or directives from Canberra. The US and Australia were at cross purposes regarding the role of UNTCOK and Jackson's action demonstrated that Australian officials too were divided over whether or not to support the American decision to exclusively hold elections in southern Korea.<sup>7</sup>

Although the US would come to regard Jackson as a major irritant, the initial American impression of him was very positive. On December 26, 1947, William Langdon, acting political advisor to Hodge, informed George Marshall, US Secretary of State, he had met Jackson and "was well impressed with him." Langdon also arranged for Jackson to meet Hodge and Major General William Dean, US military governor in southern Korea. Langdon told Marshall that Jackson "seems to be a man of affairs, personally close to Mr. Evatt, confident, practical, penetrating, and with original but sound ideas." However, in a portent of the impending clashes between Jackson and the Americans, Langdon also noted Jackson "appeared very sensitive about the independence and high authority" of UNTCOK, and in "several instances made it plain he would resent anything remotely suggesting attempts on the part of the occupation authorities to control or influence" the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

When UNTCOK arrived in Seoul in January 1948, the magnitude of its task became apparent. The Australian delegation, led by Jackson, was vociferous about the problems the Commission confronted, and attracted the displeasure of the Americans. UNTCOK representatives soon realised that southern Korea was ruled by Rhee and his right wing followers supported by the US military occupation force

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commanded by Hodge. Rhee's regime was authoritarian and relied on coercion to suppress any dissent. Under these circumstances, it was highly unlikely that truly democratic elections could be held in southern Korea. UNTCOK's task was made even more difficult because of its own divisions. The US and Rhee wanted the Commission to act as observers so the forthcoming elections would have a veil of respectability. In reality, Rhee and Hodge ensured the outcome of the elections would never be in doubt. Rhee's police force, with tacit US support, rounded up and imprisoned and murdered many of the regime's opponents. Many other potential candidates refused to contest the poll, fearing violent retribution. Some of the UNTCOK delegates, especially the Nationalist Chinese, were quite willing to play the token role that Rhee and the Americans had scripted for them.<sup>9</sup>

Upon witnessing first hand the conditions in southern Korea, Jackson altered his view on the viability of an election in the US zone. Jackson and two other UNTCOK representatives, George Patterson from Canada and Krishna Menon from India who was also the Commission chairman, were concerned UNTCOK was being perceived to be supporting Rhee's right wing regime.<sup>10</sup> Patterson was a Chinese speaking missionary and diplomat with vast experience in Japan, China and Korea. Preceding his appointment as Canada's representative on UNTCOK, Patterson was a Counsellor (briefly Charge d'Affaires in October 1946) at the Canadian Embassy in Nanking. Serving on UNTCOK Patterson sought mediation between the US and Soviets and the two Koreas. This led to frequent clashes between himself and Hodge who considered Patterson to be a communist sympathiser because of his opposition to US Korean policy.<sup>11</sup> UNTCOK announced it intended to carry out its mandate to observe elections throughout the whole of Korea. It attempted to contact the

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Pyongyang regime and became a conduit for the concerns of moderate and leftist politicians in southern Korea who were opponents of Rhee.<sup>12</sup>

Jackson told Canberra that all Korean political groups except the right wanted elections held in the whole of Korea. He also said that based on his observations of the political situation in southern Korea, free elections could not be held. This assessment was supported by Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo. The difference between Shaw's and Jackson's assessment was that Shaw said both the US and the Rhee regime were the culprits regarding the situation in southern Korea, whereas Jackson placed the responsibility on Rhee's supporters, saying the Americans were trying to restrain the excesses of the regime. But Jackson soon also invoked the ire of the Americans for suggesting UNTCOK recommend that the US military government reorganise Rhee's security forces and improve the conditions in southern Korea so that an election could be held. The Americans were angered by UNTCOK's stance and were irate with Jackson, wrongly believing he no longer supported an election exclusively in southern Korea.<sup>13</sup>

Jackson was not opposed to an election in southern Korea. Rather, he questioned UNTCOK's purpose if an election was only held in the US zone given the Commission was formed to facilitate elections for all of Korea. Jackson argued that any government formed following an election solely in southern Korea could not claim to be a national government representing all Koreans. Without Canberra's authority, Jackson met with Hodge in February 1948 and told him that Australia's position regarding Korea reflected Canberra's "insufficient" knowledge of the issue.

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When Jackson again met with MacArthur and again without Canberra's consent, proposed his own policy, he was rebuked by Burton.<sup>14</sup>

Following its failure to contact the Pyongyang regime, UNTCOK then referred the question of whether or not elections "could or should" be held only in southern Korea to the Interim Committee of the UN General Assembly. Australia argued UNTCOK's purpose was to facilitate the formation of a national government for a unified Korea, something that would not be achieved by holding elections only in the south. Canberra therefore instructed its delegation to oppose any proposal for a separate election. Australia also expressed concerns the UN could be discredited if it was seen to be merely an instrument of American policy. One of Evatt's foreign policy goals was for Australia to play a role in attempting to defuse US-Soviet tensions, and although his stance displeased the Americans, he did not believe that approval of either of the regimes in Seoul or Pyongyang would be conducive to improved US-Soviet relations.<sup>15</sup>

America and Australia had divergent policies for resolving the Korean impasse. Although both wanted an elected Korean government, the US, unlike Australia, was willing to accept a divided peninsula to achieve this. The US, realising an agreement with the Soviets on Korean unification was not forthcoming, and wanting to end their military occupation of southern Korea, sought to establish a legitimate Korean government to be followed by an American withdrawal. Accepting that Korea wide elections were not going to happen, the US wanted UNTCOK to facilitate an election in southern Korea, arguing that under the circumstances, this was the most practical although unsatisfactory solution to the Korean impasse. Indeed, on

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February 8, 1948, Joseph Jacobs, political adviser to Hodge, advised Marshall the US should urge the UN Interim Committee to instruct UNTCOK to proceed with organising an election in the American zone.<sup>16</sup>

Australia, still not accepting the nature of the US-Soviet conflict and regarding the UN as a medium through which the two protagonists could resolve their differences, remained hopeful the Americans and Russians would agree on Korean unification. Australia thus continued to oppose holding elections only in the US occupation zone, arguing this would divide Korea indefinitely. Jacobs's assessment of Australian and Canadian opposition to holding an election only in southern Korea was nevertheless wrong. Jacobs advised Marshall he felt Australia and Canada were "following instructions ... based on British policy" which sought "to keep" the US "tied up in Korea and their idea" of the "best way to accomplish this" was to "prevent elections for [the] establishment of a government" in southern Korea. The Australians and Canadians were not acting in collusion with Britain.<sup>17</sup> However, Jacobs believed otherwise, referring to Jackson, Patterson and Menon, as the "British bloc" or "anti-American bloc" because of their opposition to holding an election only in the US zone.<sup>18</sup>

This again illustrated the very deep differences between the US and Australian perceptions of the significance of Korea at this time. The American objective was to prevent southern Korea falling to the Communists, whereas Australia believed a free and united Korea would help curb Japan. It did not specifically matter to the Australians whether or not the US remained in Korea. Australia's primary concern was preventing a resurgent Japan again threatening its security and hence, it desired

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American engagement in the Asia-Pacific and embraced the US occupation of Japan because only US power could thwart Japan.

Jacobs was especially scathing in his criticism of Jackson. On February 12, he advised Marshall that “our big problem” with UNTCOK is “Jackson, the Australian.” Jacobs stated Jackson was “definitely anti-American and clearly came to Korea with the preconceived idea” of “showing us up.” Jackson embarked on his quest to ascertain whether a “free atmosphere” existed for an election in southern Korea before the UN decision to hold an election. This prompted Jacobs to claim that Jackson’s real intent was to find “dirt” on the US military government. Seeking to determine the reasons for Jackson’s strong opposition to US Korean policy, Jacobs surmised to Marshall that before Jackson’s appointment to UNTCOK, he was part of the Australian Mission in Japan and seemed to “harbor ill-will towards Americans” emanating from the Australian belief they were not given a more prominent role in post war Japan.<sup>19</sup>

The divergent US and Australian attitudes towards Japan cast a shadow over the relationship between the two nations from the beginning of their Korean engagement. Jackson was possibly seeking to “vent ... his feelings by criticising” the US “role in Korea.” Jacobs claimed that before going to Korea, Jackson had “conferred frequently” with US journalists “known to be antagonistic” to the US military government and known to “be leftist in their sympathies.” This led Jacobs to “believe that Jackson himself may be a leftist sympathizer.” Jacobs told Marshall the British consul General in Seoul described Jackson as a “man of very strange and wild ideas, in many cases very radical.”<sup>20</sup>

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The intensity of Jacobs's dislike of Jackson was palpable. Continuing his criticism of the Australian, Jacobs told Marshall that Jackson was "insistent" Menon go to the UN Interim Committee with a report "criticizing" the US military government in Korea despite UNTCOK's opposition. Jacobs reported Jackson's determination to convey to the UN the false idea that southern Korea was a "police state" devoid of a "free atmosphere for elections." Jackson further incurred the ire of the Americans by describing Hodge's rebuttal of his criticisms of US policy in Korea as "sheer nonsense." Indignant that Jackson had "even questioned [the] authenticity of recent Communist strike incidents", Jacobs informed Marshall that Pyongyang's references to these actions meant Jackson "cannot deny Communist responsibility" for them.<sup>21</sup> UNTCOK's rejection of Jackson's proposal to submit a report to the UN Interim Committee on "unsatisfactory conditions" in the US zone failed to assuage the American annoyance with him. Nor were the Americans pleased when the Commission decided to request the view of the Interim Committee on whether an election should be held in southern Korea.<sup>22</sup>

Jacobs also cautioned Marshall there was "strong circumstantial evidence" US officials in the State and War Departments opposed to the Truman Administration's Korean policy "may be feeding information to Jackson." Jacobs based this claim on some of Jackson's remarks which indicated he "certainly" possessed "more information" than he had obtained from the Korean leaders he had met. Jacobs told Marshall that if Jackson's arguments, supported by Menon and Patterson, prevailed, the UN would decide against holding an election in southern Korea. Jacobs explained to Marshall that unless the State Department "feels certain" it could "control

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developments” at the UN, “Hodge and I feel that I should be” at the UN “to assist and advise” on the forthcoming “difficult ... discussions which may well change [the] whole course of events” in Korea. Acknowledging the “imperfections” in southern Korea, Jacobs also assured Marshall that when the UN “decides” to proceed with the election, the US military government would co-ordinate with UNTCOK and “spare no effort” to “guarantee as free and fair elections as anyone can reasonably expect in the peculiar and trying circumstances that exist” in southern Korea. Jacobs concluded by telling Marshall that other UNTCOK members were “putting up [a] valiant fight” in supporting US policy, and he was hopeful Jackson’s “group may not have its way.”<sup>23</sup>

The US preparation for the groundwork for an election exclusively in southern Korea confirmed the reality that the Americans and Soviets were never going to agree on terms for Korean unification. However, Australia was still unwilling to concede the unification of the peninsula was a forlorn hope. Australia attributed the Korean impasse to the failure of the US and Soviets to implement the 1945 Moscow Conference agreements. Among the US allies at the UN, only Australia and Canada strongly opposed the American decision to hold elections solely in southern Korea. However, External Affairs informed the State Department that although Australia opposed holding an election in the US zone, it would accept UNTCOK observation of an election should the UN Interim Committee instruct the Commission to perform this task.<sup>24</sup> This was a clear indication that Australia would remain engaged in Korea irrespective of its capacity to influence US policy.

Despite the escalating tensions and suspicions between them, Hodge and Jacobs maintained frequent contact with Jackson. This reflected that despite their



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policy differences, the US and Australia also had converging interests regarding the status of Korea. Hodge's report to Marshall following his February 13 meeting with Jackson reflected his frustrations with the Australian and other UNTCOK members' continued opposition to US policy in Korea. Hodge painted a disparaging and sinister portrait of Jackson, informing Marshall, that Jackson had seen him alone and requested that no other member of UNTCOK be told of their meeting. Hodge told Marshall that Jackson "seemed rather perturbed and confused", saying he was going to Tokyo to contact Evatt to "inform him of the situation in Korea" and the internal politics of UNTCOK.<sup>25</sup>

Hodge was slightly surprised by Jackson's unqualified admission that all UNTCOK members were "acting strictly on instructions" from their own governments. And Jackson amazed Hodge when he disparagingly noted that some UNTCOK member governments, "particularly" Australia's, "did not know enough about the Korean situation" to give properly informed instructions to their delegations. Jackson told Hodge UNTCOK members were currently five to three against having an election solely in southern Korea. Hodge told Marshall that Jackson's remarks "confirmed our belief here" that the "British block ... definitely do not want to take any action that will allow US troops to withdraw from Korea" for the "foreseeable future."<sup>26</sup>

Hodge thought Jackson was completely oblivious to developments in North Korea, expressing his "definite opinion" that the Russians "will soon ... allow" Korea to reunite which he said was "his personal opinion". Jackson "seemed quite surprised" when Hodge told him about the Soviet announcement on February 8 of the

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formation of the North Korean Army and failed to grasp the significance of announcements by the North Koreans that their new army and constitution were “for all of Korea.” Jackson also failed to consider the implications too of a “Korean Communist army capable of invading South Korea.” Jackson then abruptly reversed course and told Hodge he would recommend that UNTCOK demand the formation of a South Korean army of 100,000 men which “would have to be armed, equipped and trained by the US.” Jackson had Hodge seething with his “insistent ... demands” about what the US “intended to do” about this matter.<sup>27</sup>

Jackson further aggravated Hodge by declaring the UN Interim Committee would not instruct UNTCOK to proceed with an election in southern Korea and should it do so, the representatives of the Commission, under instruction from their governments, would not comply with such a directive. This was contrary to what External Affairs had told the State Department. Hodge was very critical of Jackson, saying “his entire attitude was that he and certain other members” of UNTCOK “will do everything in their power to sabotage” the US “desire to establish anything in South Korea that can take over sovereignty at present.” That Hodge could not comprehend Jackson’s continued hope for “Russian cooperation” in resolving the Korean impasse, again reflected the even sharper divergent US and Australian perspectives of the Soviet threat. Nor was Hodge impressed with Jackson’s idea for a “permanent” UN presence in Korea “verging on [a] UN trusteeship” protected by US troops. Hodge told Marshall it appeared “no amount of information makes any impression” on Jackson regarding the desire of the Korean people for a non-Communist government that would “rally” both northern and southern Koreans.<sup>28</sup>

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The increasing US irritation with Jackson was also making the Americans wary and suspicious of Australia's entire Korean policy. Knowing Jackson was going to Tokyo, Hodge sent MacArthur a request: "If Jackson sees you I would greatly appreciate your analysis of his line of thought and your estimate of his future action."<sup>29</sup> Jackson did confer with MacArthur who, on February 18, reported to Marshall, Hodge and Jacobs, that Jackson had advised Evatt that "to establish permanent security" in southern Korea, the US should have until May 1948 to "continue its plan without interference" to transfer political control to a South Korean government. UNTCOK, said Jackson, should "be withdrawn temporarily" and "return to re-examine the situation" in May and "continue its original task" if it was practicable to do so. Jackson said UNTCOK "could strengthen" the US military government "by recommending appropriate action based upon expert advice" on constitutional, policing, electoral and security matters. MacArthur noted Jackson believed South Korea would become "strong enough to allow" the "simultaneous withdrawal" of US and Soviet troops. MacArthur was especially intrigued by Jackson's opinion that the UN General Assembly "must not be involved in local [Korean] politics." The UN, said Jackson, "should make identical recommendations" to northern and southern Korea, thereby giving the Russians the option "to participate at any stage." Jackson also told MacArthur he believed the US "position" in southern Korea was "becoming progressively stronger."<sup>30</sup>

Jackson's meeting with MacArthur led the Americans to seek clarification from Canberra on Australia's position. On February 18, External Affairs assured the State Department that Jackson would return to Seoul and that Australia would continue its "active representation" on UNTCOK "as long as [the] Commission

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functions.”<sup>31</sup> Despite Australia’s resolute opposition to an election only in southern Korea, Evatt and EA had no intention of withdrawing from UNTCOK. Meanwhile, US concerns regarding Jackson remained unabated. On February 19, Marshall sent to the US delegation at the UN, the substance of Jacobs’s February 12 criticisms of Jackson, stating that Australia, Canada and India “constituted” a “British bloc” in opposing US policy in Korea and surmising that Jackson was “definitely anti-American” and was intent on “discrediting” the US in Korea. Marshall said Jackson’s “basic sympathies” were “pro-left and anti [the] US military occupation.” Jackson’s attitude, said Marshall, was “critical” and “contemptuous” of the US presence in Korea and he appeared “determined” to have South Korea labelled a “police state.”<sup>32</sup>

The following day, February 20, Marshall notified several US Embassies that, Jackson who was “definitely anti-US”, was leading Australia, Canada and India in opposition to American policy for an election in southern Korea.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, on the same day, the Australian UN Delegation informed External Affairs that “if we are to prevent United States policy prevailing it may be necessary for us to take [the] initiative fairly early in [the] debate” regarding UNTCOK’s observation of the Korean election.<sup>34</sup> The Australians asked Canberra to consider the “value” of UNTCOK “exploring the possibility of a conference of leaders” from northern and southern Korea to discuss unification. Although the Australians thought there was ‘little likelihood that such a conference could be arranged’, they retained a glimmer of hope because there appeared to be ‘no objection to it in principle.’<sup>35</sup>

UNTCOK Chairman Menon’s report to the UN Interim Committee was highly critical of the US military government. In response, Hodge was scathing of the

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Commission, notably Jackson and Patterson, the leaders of the “anti-election faction”<sup>36</sup>. On February 22, Hodge reported to Marshall that the UNTCOK hearings presided over by Jackson and Patterson reflected their “preconceived ideas” and their “wilful interpretation” of witnesses’ statements, with both men “selecting what fits their own ideas and discarding or discrediting the remainder.” Hodge said that both Jackson and Patterson were naïve, believing that if “civil liberties and freedom” in southern Korea were “not on par” with Australia and Canada, it was “impossible to hold any elections.” Neither Jackson nor Patterson, had “any concept or consideration of the bitter ‘cold war’ against communism that goes on” in Korea and “neither seems to understand that there is no sovereign Korean Government to guarantee a free election.”<sup>37</sup>

These tensions at a personal level reflected and were exacerbated by the divergent US and Australian policies regarding Korea, the Soviets and the Cold War. The intensity of Hodge’s criticism of Jackson was again evident in his report to Marshall on his February 24 meeting with the Australian which portrayed a confused, misguided, devious and almost incompetent Jackson, “appearing at times to be apologetic in efforts to rationalise his position.” Jackson, reported Hodge, indicated “he would continue” his “efforts to dominate” the Commission, “taking advantage of [the] weak-spined attitude of several delegates.”<sup>38</sup>

Hodge noted that despite Jackson’s “many protestations of friendship and admiration for the US efforts in Korea”, he “showed great determination to delay any solution and an utter lack of realism in viewing the situation in Korea.” Jackson’s claim that the Interim Assembly would not support the US proposal for an election in South Korea, indicated to Hodge that if the Assembly would indeed support the

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Americans, Jackson would do all he could to “sabotage the work” of UNTCOK “even though he stoutly maintained” that the Commission “should stay in Korea.” Hodge noted the “maneuvering” in UNTCOK by Jackson and Patterson to appease the Soviets in the hope they would co-operate with the Commission, overlooked the “factual situation in Korea.” Hodge was adamant that Jackson and Patterson had “teamed up” and were intent on preventing UNTCOK “furthering” the US “mission” in Korea. Hodge told Marshall that Jackson’s activities and statements indicated he would “make all the difficulties he can” if the Interim Assembly supported the US.<sup>39</sup>

The November 14, 1947, UN General Assembly resolution endorsing the formation of UNTCOK stipulated the purpose of the Commission was to “supervise elections and aid in establishing a National Government of Korea.”<sup>40</sup> During the UN debate on the US resolution that UNTCOK observe the election in southern Korea, the Australian delegation said the Commission should proceed “without taking steps which would perpetuate division between” northern and southern Korea.<sup>41</sup> On February 26, 1948, the Interim Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted an American resolution stating it was “incumbent” upon UNTCOK, under the terms of the November 1947 resolution, to observe elections “in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the Commission.” The US resolution passed by 31 votes to 2 (Australia and Canada), and there were 11 abstentions. Australia and Canada voted against the American proposal arguing the November 14, 1947, resolution “envisaged the holding of elections throughout the whole of Korea and that the Interim Committee had no authority to change the terms of the General Assembly’s resolution.” Australia and Canada were especially concerned “there was grave danger that the holding of elections under United Nations auspices in the south zone alone would intensify and

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perpetuate the division of Korea.” Australia believed “*a decision risking such serious consequences should be taken only by the Assembly itself.*”<sup>42</sup>

However, despite its opposition to the US proposal, immediately following the vote, Australia announced it would “continue to cooperate fully in the work” of UNTCOK.<sup>43</sup> Evatt and External Affairs decided Australia would remain directly engaged in Korea. Evatt and EA fully comprehended that if Australia was to have any hope of making an impact and influencing US policy, it had to remain a member of UNTCOK. Remaining on the Commission meant there was always the possibility that Australia could influence US policy, whereas disengaging from Korea by withdrawing from UNTCOK would ensure Australia had no voice at all.

Australia therefore continued its diplomatic balancing act, opposing US policy for a Korean election only in the American zone of occupation, yet resolved to remain a vociferous UNTCOK participant. On February 27, Jackson reported to Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo, his concerns about the repercussions of holding an election only in southern Korea under the façade of creating a democratic government. As Jackson observed, most Korean political parties decided to boycott the election because of intimidation by right wing groups supporting Syngman Rhee and because they were disgruntled with the US insistence on having an election only in southern Korea. Jackson informed Shaw of divisions between the US authorities. Hodge wanted to support a centrist coalition “to keep Syngman Rhee out of power” but the State Department supported Rhee leaving a frustrated Hodge no option but to do likewise. Jackson believed the political situation was so problematic that the UN “should not be drawn into this confusion in South Korea which is the

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responsibility” of the US and Soviet Union. Jackson suggested that Australia not participate should the UN Interim Committee decide UNTCOK would “observe the elections.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Australia’s dilemma**

On March 1, 1948, UNTCOK announced it “would observe elections in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the Commission” to be held “not later than May 10, 1948.”<sup>45</sup> John Burton, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, acknowledged the dilemma facing Australia, informing Jackson on March 5 that “despite the defeat of our proposals, we have agreed to co-operate with” UNTCOK “in implementation of the wishes of the majority.”<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, on March 6, EA instructed the Australian Embassy in Washington to inform the State Department that Australia’s “understanding of the functions” of UNTCOK “is that it should be able to exercise full supervision of elections” and to “make it clear” that Australia “would be compelled to oppose the supervision of elections” by UNTCOK “if it has not full power to ensure that preliminary arrangements and electoral procedure are in accordance with decisions” of the UN General Assembly and the Interim Committee. It was Australia’s “hope” that the US “will not proceed until” UNTCOK “is satisfied that conditions favourable to the conduct of elections in a democratic atmosphere do, in fact, exist.”<sup>47</sup>

Jackson likewise continued to be a major irritant to the Americans, advising Menon, UNTCOK’s Chairman, on March 9, that the “political situation in southern Korea has deteriorated considerably” and due to boycotts by some parties and intimidation by rightist groups, the election was “under the control of a single party” and therefore could not take place in a “free atmosphere.” Thus Jackson argued,



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UNTCOK “cannot observe the elections.” Jackson’s proposal, which attracted more ire from the US, had three elements: the UN should avoid being “held responsible for decisions in South Korea which do not contribute directly towards the establishment of a national government” for all of Korea; UNTCOK should encourage North Korean participation in and Soviet co-operation with the election; the Korean people “must be given the best possible opportunity to gain control of their country with a minimum of disorder”.<sup>48</sup>

Jackson now proposed that UNTCOK should withdraw from Korea by April 15, “leaving a small liaison group” in Seoul. Jackson proposed UNTCOK then return in August 1948 “to re-examine the situation and, if advisable, to carry out its task”. William Langdon, political advisor to Hodge, acknowledged some of the irregularities Jackson identified as obstacles to a free election (the boycotts by leftist parties, the intimidation of opponents by the Rhee-Hankook coalition, and that twelve of the fifteen appointments by the US military government to the Korean National Elections Committee, were Hankook Party members) but said Jackson’s “bombshell” reflected “his own personal views and emotions”. Aside from the boycotts, Langdon explained to Marshall, Jackson’s “other arguments” were “based on isolated incidents or on conditions that ... are in process of being corrected.” Although confident Jackson’s proposal would be rejected by UNTCOK, Langdon labelled it defeatist and “unfair”, telling Marshall it was contrary to the “letter and spirit” of the February 27 statement by the Australian UN delegation in New York.<sup>49</sup>

At the UNTCOK meeting on March 11-12, Jackson announced that Australia “did not subscribe” with the UN Interim Committee’s decision that it was

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“incumbent” on the Commission “to observe elections in South Korea”. Although Australia argued the “primary aim” of UNTCOK was “to help Koreans regain control of their country with minimum disturbances” and Jackson voted against an election in southern Korea alone, predictably, he failed to persuade UNTCOK to adopt his proposal.<sup>50</sup> On March 12, the Commission accepted the February UN Interim Committee’s resolution, 4 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions: Australia and Canada again opposed the resolution. Jackson said Australia voted against the Commission’s resolution because it continued to oppose “the holding of elections in South Korea only”, and because the boycott of the poll by a majority of Korean political parties meant the election would only be contested by the “extreme right group.” From Australia’s perspective, an election under these circumstances lacked legitimacy and Jackson argued that UNTCOK “has the authority and discretion to discharge its duties in Korea wherever and to the extent that circumstances permit.”<sup>51</sup>

When UNTCOK intimated it would not observe the election and would withdraw from Korea, Australia was adamant the Commission remain in Korea and do all it could to influence US policy. On March 12 Burton urged Jackson that the Commission “advise the United States that it could not participate in the conduct of elections in the present circumstances” and to inform the US that only when UNTCOK was “satisfied” the election could be “held in a free and democratic atmosphere” and the US could assure the Commission that it “would have full power to approve electoral procedure and preliminary arrangements”, Australia would then support UNTCOK’s observation of the election.<sup>52</sup>

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Now that American policy had prevailed, Langdon was more temperate in his references to Jackson and even noted some positive attributes describing him as “strong and stubborn”. Langdon said Jackson “is regarded as sincere by his associates, who believe he will grumble and criticize but eventually go along with and not gum up elections.”<sup>53</sup> Langdon’s tone also hinted at some grudging respect for Jackson, which was perhaps tacit acknowledgement of Australia’s impact on US officials. Jackson had clearly annoyed Hodge, Jacobs and Langdon but they emerged from the crisis with hesitant praise for Jackson and clarity on Australia’s stance while wishing to avoid a more intransigent attitude.

However, the US and Australia were still pursuing different Korean objectives. On March 25, Robert Lovett, US Assistant Secretary of State, was informed that Australia’s “attitude” regarding UNTCOK’s role originates “in part from the desire of the Australian Government to keep the US militarily involved in Korea and elsewhere in the Far East until such time as a Japanese peace settlement has been concluded, and in part from the unsympathetic attitude” of Jackson.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the evidence does suggest that Australia regarded the resolution of the status of Korea as intertwined with the Japanese peace settlement. In contrast, the US perceived the Korean impasse and the Japanese peace settlement as separate issues. Whereas, the US objective in Korea was to contain the Soviets, Australia sought a free and united Korea as a bulwark against Japan. The American understanding of Australian concerns helped shape a willingness to adopt a flexible approach in their diplomacy with their junior ally.

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Indeed, Lovett was advised “there would seem to be little chance of achieving a fundamental reversal of the Australian position through diplomatic pressure” and “although it would be desirable to have” Jackson “replaced with a more sympathetic representative, it is feared that direct pressure on our part to that end would be counterproductive.”<sup>55</sup> The Americans were thinking they could not push the Australians too hard without risking alienating them further. Although the US could have acted unilaterally in Korea, it sought UN endorsement because the international recognition this would bestow on the new South Korean government would strengthen its stability and security. Hence, allies like Australia with a perceived interest in the status of Korea became valuable to the US. Nevertheless, as Lovett told Kenneth Royall, US Secretary of the Army, on March 30, the US would “take every appropriate opportunity to bring about a more favourable attitude” from Australia and Canada regarding UNTCOK and “what we consider to be its responsibilities.”<sup>56</sup>

The American awareness of Australia’s perspective was reciprocated by Australian recognition of the difficulty of the Korean impasse for the US. Evatt and External Affairs never questioned American motives; their differences were over policies not objectives. Accepting there was virtually “no possibility that the election will be held in such a free atmosphere”, Burton told McIntyre on March 24, that UNTCOK’s decision to observe the election left it two options. It could “declare that the elections cannot be held in a free atmosphere, and thus accuse the United States of supporting a reactionary regime elected by undemocratic methods.” Burton rejected this, emphasising that US “authorities have probably done their best in a very difficult position” and there were “not many” UN member states “whose electoral systems and/or governments could stand up to such close scrutiny.”<sup>57</sup>

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Burton told McIntyre Australia's "best course would be to abstain from voting on any question" declaring the elections would be free and fair. Burton said UNTCOK should remain in southern Korea to "observe and consult if it so desires" but "should be discouraged" from either "giving its official approval to/or being identified in any way with what will obviously be an only partly free election" or "preventing any election from taking place, which would make the position" of the US Military Government "almost impossible."<sup>58</sup>

Despite its March 12 vote, UNTCOK's role in the approaching election remained ambiguous. Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo, told Jacobs that if elections were held in southern Korea, the result would be a government "entirely dominated by Syngman Rhee and his extreme Rightists." Shaw said having an authoritarian right wing government in southern Korea to oppose the Communist one in northern Korea would not "seem to be helping the Korean people much". Jacobs replied he "would stand behind anybody, no matter what his political creed or record, so long as he fought the Communists." Jacobs said Rhee "controlled the most popular party" and "if others did not care to vote that was their concern. The south Koreans must have a government."<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps to justify American policy and to allay Australian concerns, Jacobs then made some statements that would haunt him two years later. He said the US

was interested in holding every possible bastion against Russian aggression ... [but] that Korea would never be a major battlefield. Neither the Russians nor the Americans would bog themselves down in such a cul de sac. American interest was however to see that the south Koreans had sufficient military strength to defend themselves against the north and this

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they would do. In the event of a major conflict the American forces would probably be withdrawn.<sup>60</sup>

Jacobs's prediction was wrong but his remarks emphasised the consistency in US Korean policy from 1945. The Americans went to Korea to prevent the Soviets gaining control of the entire peninsula and from 1945 to the 1948 South Korean election, this remained their primary objective.

The American emphasis was squarely on containing communism. They were less concerned about the nature of a new South Korean government. In contrast, the Australians argued that perceptions mattered and challenged the ideological consistency of US policy which vehemently opposed one form of authoritarian rule (communism) but supported the autocratic Rhee. Jackson was particularly concerned with the "deliberate interference" and arrest of Koreans who either made contact, or even attempted to make contact, with UN officials. Equally alarming to Jackson was the apparent "lack of interest in such incidents" by US military authorities. Under these circumstances, Jackson acknowledged "no Korean parties opposing" Rhee "would dare approach the Commission", and there "was a general hardening of feeling among Koreans that the Commission should go."<sup>61</sup>

Jackson threatened "that with such an unsatisfactory situation" as existed in southern Korea, "certain [UNTCOK] delegates such as himself" and Canada's George Patterson "might have to consider whether they should participate at all in the supervision of the elections." Surprised, Jacobs suggested that despite their doubts, UNTCOK members "should first observe the elections and then report on whatever breaches they felt had been noticed." Jacobs also acknowledged "many of the charges listed by Jackson" but said "the all-important thing was to help the south Koreans set

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up an opposition government to the north.” Shaw told Canberra the Americans believed that “all Koreans” who opposed the election were Communists or had Communist links. As Shaw noted, a number of Koreans who opposed holding the election were “Rightists or Nationalist leaders.” Hodge, Jacobs and “quite a number of Americans like” them, wrote Shaw, have the “view that all those not for their policy in all its manifestations are against them and are ‘Reds’”. Such people are thinking in terms of a conflict only and not of any compromise.”<sup>62</sup>

Shaw sent Canberra an appraisal of American power and capacity to impose its will:

It seems clear also that the United States will see that the elections are held.... [But] from our point of view, what was important from Jacob’s attitude was the significance which he still apparently attached to having the United Nations Commission if possible unanimously endorse these elections.... The abstention of Australia and perhaps Canada, Syria and even India might do nothing to change the course of events but it would leave the record rather cleaner.<sup>63</sup>

American concerns regarding Jackson had not abated. Jacobs noted that before departing for Tokyo, Jackson “showed at least one” UNTCOK “delegate a telegram from his government commending him on [the] stand which he had taken” in Commission “deliberation(s).” He added that it was “unfortunate” that during the “critical election and post election period”, the UNTCOK chairmanship would be occupied by Syria and Australia (Jackson).<sup>64</sup> The US sought UN endorsement for its Korean policy because it reasoned that international recognition would more likely facilitate the stability and security of a new South Korea than if it was perceived as solely an American client state. The US was sensitive to Australian intransigence because the support of its allies was essential for a newly elected South Korean government to receive UN endorsement.

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However, despite all of the threats, on April 10, UNTCOK announced it was “satisfied ... as a result of extensive field observations” that the conditions “existed” in southern Korea that would enable a democratic election to take place, and “it would accordingly observe the elections to be held on 10th May.”<sup>65</sup> Jackson informed Canberra the levels of violence and intimidation, as well as the refusal of the “majority of parties” to participate in the election, were particularly troublesome. Yet Jackson noted that approximately 85-90 per cent of eligible voters had registered to vote, which surprised the UNTCOK inspectors, given the prevalent social and political tensions in southern Korea. It emerged the registration process was “well organised”, reflecting the combined efforts and co-operation of the US Military Government and the Korean Nationalisation Committee. Nevertheless, Jackson reported that some “firm methods ... used to secure registration ... may ... cause voters to doubt the promises of freedom of atmosphere on election day.”<sup>66</sup>

Jackson informed Canberra that UNTCOK inspectors could only “carry out ... a few independent enquiries” because they were closely monitored by Korean election committee officials. According to Jackson, both the Americans and Koreans understood the “importance of securing a free atmosphere” for the election, but whereas the Koreans were unwilling to give UNTCOK observers any latitude, “American officers were genuinely anxious that members should be free to go wherever they wished.” Regarding the nomination of candidates, Jackson told Canberra that aside from a few centrists, the other candidates were rightists, and no leftists were contesting the ballot. Only three rightist parties were participating in the election.<sup>67</sup>



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Jacobs's scorn for Jackson may have partially explained why his assessment of the Australian's stance was inconsistent with Jackson's reports to Canberra. On April 22, Jacobs informed Lovett, Acting US Secretary of State, that Jackson, Patterson and Milner, the other Australian UNTCOK delegate, had encouraged centrist and leftist Korean leaders to attend the Pyongyang conference, and suggesting that if "reasonable terms were accepted", the Commission "might postpone" the May 10 election.<sup>68</sup> Jacobs surmised Jackson, Patterson and Milner had acted "without consulting" the other UNTCOK members, and that "Australia and Canada [are] still attempting [to] sabotage the election". Jacobs said he used the "word 'sabotage' advisedly because anyone possessing a little knowledge of Soviet policy and tactics and good horse sense, must realize that nothing" would result from the Pyongyang conference "for Koreans or non-Soviet nations except [a] fools paradise."<sup>69</sup>

Ever wary of Jackson, Jacobs cautioned Lovett that although he had "no strong objection" to Lovett's consideration of "informal representations" to the Australian and Canadian governments regarding UNTCOK observation of the election, he was concerned the "representations will be repeated" to Jackson and Patterson and "further embitter them toward" the US. Jacobs said "little good can be accomplished by such representations unless" those southern Korean leaders who went to Pyongyang returned as "Soviet stooges for [the] purpose of agitating against" the May 10 election. The State Department could then "well make representations" to the Australian and Canadian governments in the "hope of preventing Jackson and Patterson from giving" anti election Koreans "comfort and support." Jacobs's concerns would have been heightened upon learning from Brigadier-General John

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Weckerling, US Liaison Officer to UNTCOK, that Jackson had “somewhat unburdened himself, ... saying in rather cheerful mood (unusual for Jackson) that he had now received instructions” from Canberra which “practically enabled him to use his judgment in making any decisions concerning elections” in southern Korea and that Evatt would “follow his recommendations implicitly.”<sup>70</sup>

Jackson irritated Hodge and Weckerling by saying he wanted to “do what was best” for the US while also considering the “susceptibilities” of the Russians. Asked by Jackson what the US “specifically ... wanted”, Hodge said “we hope” UNTCOK would “proceed actively with” observing the election and “cease doing anything that will give comfort to those” who are not “participating” in or “boycotting” the election. Hodge also said that following the election, the US wanted UNTCOK to “assist” with the formation of a South Korean government, oversee the withdrawal of US and Soviet forces and continue facilitating the unification of Korea, as stipulated in the November 1947 resolution which created the Commission.<sup>71</sup>

Jacobs said Jackson’s “views continue to be incoherent and inconsistent with his actions” and many of his utterances “do not make sense.” Jacobs reasoned Jackson “must have received some new instructions,” the “exact nature of which he has not revealed, and it appears he is definitely trying to ingratiate himself with us without” substantially altering the views he “has been holding all along.” Indeed, Jackson had told a *New York Times* reporter he “could find nothing wrong” with preparations for the election, “because both Koreans and Americans have been too well rehearsed” and that he “was sure “plainclothes police were around the corner to take care of anyone

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who spilled the beans.” Asked if he had “checked on these police”, Jacobs ridiculed Jackson’s response that it “would be impolite to do so.”<sup>72</sup>

On May 1, External Affairs instructed Jackson to argue forcefully that UNTCOK’s decision to observe the election needed to be based on three key factors: the “existence of satisfactory conditions”, an assessment of whether an election would be a “true reflection” of the “people’s will”, and the Commission’s freedom to observe the election unhindered.<sup>73</sup> The majority of the Commission members supported the position of the US Military Government that an election be held in southern Korea. Australia, Canada and Syria opposed proceeding with the election because “satisfactory conditions, including participation by Leftists”, had not materialised. Jackson “urged” his fellow UNTCOK delegates to request postponing the election but his effort was to no avail, and the Commission even rejected a “short delay suggested by Hodge”. Also, UNTCOK did not believe the Pyongyang conference would produce any proposals that would warrant altering the planned election in southern Korea.<sup>74</sup>

American frustration with the refusal of Jackson and Patterson to wholly endorse US Korean policy was reflected in an exchange between William Draper, US Under Secretary of the Army, and Lovett, US Under Secretary of State, in May 1948. Draper was highly critical of the “marked inclination” of UNTCOK “to misjudge the realities of the situation” in Korea “in considering an idealistic application” of the November 1947 UN resolution. UNTCOK, said Draper, had no “understanding of Soviet motives and intentions” and lacked an “appreciation of the difficulties faced” by US occupation authorities “in maintaining law and order during this critical time.”

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Draper said most UNTCOK members were “obviously anxious to divest themselves of any further responsibility after supervising the elections.” Draper told Lovett that Jackson and Patterson “have made continuing attempts to impede the progress of the Commission, including covert interference with scheduled elections” and he supported raising “this question with their respective governments”.<sup>75</sup> Draper’s harsh view of Jackson’s conduct again reflected the contrasting US and Australian outlook regarding the nature of the Soviet threat.

The US wished to replace its military government with an elected Korean government, thereby enabling the withdrawal of its forces from Korea. Although the US wanted the UN involved in Korea, it did not want the UN doing tasks that could only be carried out by American personnel, thereby making it difficult for the US to remove its forces. Lovett told Draper a continued UN presence in Korea would not jeopardise US plans to withdraw their forces. Rather, Lovett said the UN presence in Korea was essential because the “extent to which we may be successful in minimising the possible ill effects of our withdrawal will depend in large measure upon the extent to which the authority of the UN is associated with the program of which that withdrawal is a part.” Lovett said US policy was consistent with the November 1947 resolution which stipulated an ongoing UN presence in Korea and the eventual withdrawal of US and Soviet forces.<sup>76</sup>

The divergent US and Australian views of the Soviet threat and the nature of the Cold War remained the biggest obstacle between them. Whereas the US no longer intended pursuing unification, Australia wanted to prevent the indefinite division of Korea. The American objective was to prevent the fall of southern Korea to the

Communists to be achieved by forming a UN recognised government that would be sufficiently stable and secure for the US to leave Korea.

### **Australia aligns itself with the US and UNTCOK**

Despite his reservations, Jackson reported that according to “observation groups” in southern Korea, “election plans were satisfactory” and that while “acknowledging” the election would “be for Rightists only”, American officials had fully co-operated with UNTCOK observers.<sup>77</sup> On May 4, UNTCOK voted to observe the election, 5 votes to 0 with France, Canada and Syria abstaining, and with Australia now supporting the majority. Allan Millett says, the “shift of Australia and India to a pro-election position was decisive.”<sup>78</sup> Jackson informed Shaw he supported observing the election because “there exists a reasonable degree of free atmosphere in which Democratic rights of freedom of speech, press and Assembly are recognised and respected.”<sup>79</sup> Evatt and External Affairs supported UNTCOK’s decision and accepted Jackson’s view that the “success of Rightists was inevitable.” UNTCOK inspectors reported that although American authorities “appeared to have control” of the election “machinery”, there were questions “regarding the actions” of southern Korean security forces who were closely aligned with Rightist political groups. Jackson informed Canberra that although UNTCOK voted to observe the election, it had “stressed” its opposition to the “creation” of a national government.<sup>80</sup>

The Americans prevailed. An election sanctioned by UNTCOK would take place in southern Korea. Australia, although unable to influence US policy, nevertheless at the last moment aligned itself with the UNTCOK majority. Jackson’s vote supporting UNTCOK observation of the election kept Australia actively involved in Korea. Despite their concerns about US policy, Evatt and External Affairs chose

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engagement over disengagement. Still, given Jackson's reports to EA that conditions in southern Korea (the refusal of a "majority of political parties ... to participate in the elections", the level of "violence and intimidation", the inability of "observation groups" to conduct "more than a few independent inquiries") made it highly improbable that a free and fair election could be held, EA expressed some surprise that Jackson supported UNTCOK observing the election.<sup>81</sup>

External Affairs understood that although a "free atmosphere" for the election was remote, there "seemed little possibility" of the US "agreeing to a postponement of the elections." North Korea had since held its own, albeit tainted, election which placed further political pressure on American authorities to allow southern Koreans a vote. There was also the risk that "extreme rightists" in southern Korea would "hold their own elections and stage a coup d'etat, which, in view of the weak American forces in South Korea, might have been very embarrassing for the United States." These factors made it "politically impossible" for the US "to delay" an election in southern Korea "much longer."<sup>82</sup>

Australia's support of UNTCOK observation of the election signalled its adherence to US Korean policy. On May 7, 1948, External Affairs sent Keith Shann, Head of the Australian Mission at the UN, a memorandum stating: "In these circumstances the Commission was in the position of having either to approve the elections as being democratic (which would obviously not be the case) or to condemn the United States for supporting a reactionary regime elected by undemocratic methods." Jackson, said the memorandum, should have "urged" UNTCOK to announce it was unable to supervise the election and would "withdraw from Korea",

and “abstained from voting” on the election supervision question. Given Australia’s expressed opposition to the holding of elections only in southern Korea, and its view that conditions for a genuinely democratic election were not apparent, this EA memorandum cautioned that “Jackson’s action has possibly made it appear in Asia that although” Australia was “prepared to criticise America at times, we are in fact one of the ‘running dogs of American Imperialism’ who, when the whips crack over an important issue, abandon our principles and jump on the bandwagon.” This memorandum concluded by advising that Jackson “should, while not making any direct attack on the United States Military Government, be careful not to approve an obviously undemocratic election.”<sup>83</sup>

However, Evatt and External Affairs had decided to support UNTCOK observation of the election and thereby endorse US policy after some realistic deliberation. EA rationalised that although UNTCOK had voted 5-0 to observe the election, Jackson could have abstained but a negative vote was not “warranted.” Jackson claimed he was “reasonably satisfied with arrangements for the election” and EA accepted the intended boycott by “leftist parties” did not, in itself, “mean that the elections will be undemocratic.” EA reasoned it could “hardly be expected that the proceedings will be democratic in the fullest sense”, and noted Jackson’s belief that the “Americans are anxious” the election “should be conducted as freely and as openly as possible.” Jackson’s reports, EA noted, did not “confirm that intimidation is the order of the day.”<sup>84</sup> Evatt, EA and Jackson had policy differences with the US but they never questioned American motives, whereas the Americans certainly questioned Australian motives. After realistically assessing the Korean situation, Evatt and EA chose to continue Australia’s direct engagement with its American

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allies and, through UNTCOK, worked to ensure the coming election would be conducted under the best possible circumstances.

Australia trod cautiously, fully aware of the implications of acceding to US wishes to have UNTCOK observe the election. EA considered the potential repercussions of the conduct of the election and indicated it would not simply rubber stamp US actions. EA noted that although Jackson could not “alter” his vote in favour of UNTCOK observing the election, he could

let it be known that his affirmative vote was given solely on the basis of conditions as they appeared to him before the election took place and without prejudice to any different view he might reach regarding the actual conditions in which the voting takes place. This would allow us [Australia] subsequently, *if we thought it would achieve any purpose*, to express dissatisfaction with the way the elections were conducted, and with the result.<sup>85</sup>

On May 10, election day, EA instructed Jackson to “consider very carefully the form of the report to be made by the Committee to the General Assembly after the elections have been held, as it may, of course, be necessary, in the light of conditions prevailing on election day itself, for the United Nations to disassociate itself from the results.” The election took place with relatively few incidents and EA accepted the outcome, albeit with some reservations.<sup>86</sup>

## Conclusion

Policy differences, acrimony and suspicion defined the first period of the US-Australian Korean engagement from January to May 1948. The US and Australia pursued divergent policies and had different viewpoints on the purpose of UNTCOK, on the viability and legitimacy of holding an election only in southern Korea, on Korean unification, on US support for Syngman Rhee, and on perceptions of the USSR and its regime in Pyongyang. These policy differences underlined and



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exacerbated the personal tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, and had a detrimental impact on US and Australian perceptions of each other.

Although American and Australian security interests converged in Korea, they saw the Korean situation entirely differently. In this formative period of the Cold War, the US perception of the nature of the Soviet threat had become considerably more implacable than Australia's. The American objective in southern Korea was to create a sufficiently strong and stable bulwark against Soviet expansion in North East Asia using minimal resources. Australia too was concerned about Soviet designs and the Cold War but far more feared a resurgent Japan which would pose a much greater threat to its security than communism. Hence, while Australia believed a free and united Korea would help contain Japanese ambitions, the US no longer saw Japan as a threat. Rather, the Truman Administration recognised Japan was now crucial to thwarting Soviet ambitions in the Asia-Pacific. Thus, US involvement in Korea was about containing communism whereas for Australia it was about containing Japan.

Given the state of US-Soviet relations in 1947-48, the US concluded Korean unification was improbable in the prevailing circumstances. Hence, the US was determined to ensure southern Korea did not fall to the Communists. Thus, the US prioritised the creation of a stable Korean government with UN support and legitimacy in its zone of occupation knowing this would likely mean the ongoing division of the peninsula. As long as the new Korean government was anti-Communist, the US was not overly concerned with its nature. Hence, it supported the authoritarian Korean nationalist, Syngman Rhee. Conversely, Australia opposed an election only in southern Korea, arguing it would keep the peninsula indefinitely divided. Australia believed a free and united Korea would aid in curbing a possible resurgence of Japanese power and was therefore much more critical to its security

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interests than the US policy of creating an anti Soviet bulwark in southern Korea. Hence, Australia prioritised Korean unification whereas the US was intent on denying southern Korea to the Communists.

The respective personalities of Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs undoubtedly contributed to the tensions between them. Their belligerent characters did not endear them to each other whatever the merits of their respective positions and arguments. However, these personal tensions were exacerbated by the Korean policy differences between the US and Australia. The personal tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, together with the divergent Korean policies of the Truman Administration and Chifley government and their different perspectives of the significance of Korea, created a level of suspicion and mistrust between the US and Australia.

Nevertheless, despite these personal and policy differences, the regular contact between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, led to a familiarity among them. That they maintained contact despite the breach between them at least ensured ongoing direct communication between US and Australian officials. This, together with the level of public civility in the dealings between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, offered hope for prospects for improved personal relations between US and Australian officials in future circumstances.

Despite the tension and mistrust between them, Jackson's forceful nature made an impact. Hodge and Jacobs could not simply dismiss him and they acknowledged his tenacity. Jackson made Hodge and Jacobs aware of Australian concerns and although Australian opposition did not influence US policy, the Americans could not totally ignore the Australians. The US did not push the Australians too far because they needed their support if the new South Korean government was to have UN endorsement.

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Although Australia was unable to directly influence US Korean policy in the lead up to the 1948 election, the Americans were nevertheless sensitive to Jackson's criticisms, realising his concerns and attitude could influence other UN allies whose support they needed. Moreover, despite their differences with the US over the nature of the Soviet threat and perceptions of Japanese power, Evatt and External Affairs demonstrated a high level awareness of the complexity of the Korean impasse that enabled them to recognise why the US wanted an election only in southern Korea.

Evatt and External Affairs decided it remained in Australia's best interests to continue their Korean engagement. They reasoned it was better to participate even at the risk of having minimal influence rather than withdraw from UNTCOK and have no voice at all. The Australians may have thought they could not opt back in if they withdrew.

Circumstances would change and Evatt and External Affairs would have realised that despite being unable to influence the US on the consequences of an election only in southern Korea and on UNTCOK's role in the poll, by remaining a member of the Commission, Australia could perhaps have some influence in the future. No one could know how events would unfold and what possibilities would arise. Opportunities to engage the US and strengthen its security could be lost if Australia withdrew from UNTCOK. Nevertheless, Australia's assent to an election only in southern Korea and support for UNTCOK observation of the voting did not signal it would endorse future US Korean policy. Evatt and EA would indeed be vindicated because, unbeknown and as improbable as it would have seemed throughout the lead up to the 1948 South Korean election, the aftermath of the poll would see a new realignment and convergence of American and Australian interests in Korea.

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### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson had a successful accounting career in the inter war years. See Inclosure 10: Biographic Note on S.H. Jackson, UNTCOK Report, Book Number 2, 14 November 1947-1948, US National Archives II, College Park, Maryland (hereafter USNAII), RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 3.

<sup>2</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) p 438, and Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2005) p 114.

<sup>3</sup> Notable American studies of the period of the 1948 South Korean election include Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* Chapter 5; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990) Chapters 1-3; James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade: American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985); Charles Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950* (Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1981); Leland Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of US Policy in the United Nations* (Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1956); E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (King's Crown Press, New York, 1951); Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (Norton, New York, 2013) Chapters 1-2; William Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: US Policy Towards China and Korea* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1981); William Stueck and Boram Yi, "An Alliance Forged in Blood": The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US-South Korean Alliance", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 177-209. These scholars have each provided a critique of US policy and UNTCOK's presence in South Korea. Amongst Australian scholars, the significance of the US-Australian engagement in the lead up to the 1948 South Korean election has received scant attention. The first chapter of Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* only briefly refers to Australia's role as a member of UNTCOK. However, O'Neill's focus is on the war years, not the machinations of Korean and great power politics from 1945-1950. Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) Chapters 1-3, examines Australia's membership of UNTCOK in some detail but his argument that Australia ended up playing a subservient role to the US overlooks the disagreements and tensions between American and Australian officials. David Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 43, 2, 1997, pp 153-167, examines the place of Korea in Australian foreign policy during this period in the context of Australia's relations with the US, its view of the role of the UN, and its outlook regarding Asia. Although Dutton includes some analysis on the 1948 election, he is not concerned specifically with this event or its impact on the evolving US-Australian relationship. Leon Gordenker, *The United Nations and the Peaceful Unification of Korea: The Politics of Field Operations* (Marinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1959), especially chapters 3-4, and Leon Gordenker, "The United Nations, the United States Occupation and the 1948 Election in Korea", *Political Science Quarterly*, 73, September 1958, pp 426-450, remain the most comprehensive scholarly analysis of the work of the Commission.

<sup>4</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, Korea—Foreign Policy—Relations with Australia, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", pp 154-55.

<sup>5</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", p 155.

<sup>6</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", p 155.

<sup>7</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", p 155.

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum, Langdon to Marshall, December 26, 1947, United States National Archives II (hereafter USNAII), RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 2.

<sup>9</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", p 156.

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<sup>10</sup> “Australian Policy Towards the Far East”, 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, p 156; Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>11</sup> Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974) pp 9 and 18. For biographical details of Menon, see Chapter 7, page 354 of this thesis.

<sup>12</sup> “Australian Policy Towards the Far East”, 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, p 156; Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>13</sup> “Australian Policy Towards the Far East”, 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, p 156; Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>14</sup> “Australian Policy Towards the Far East”, 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, pp 156-57; Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>15</sup> “Australian Policy Towards the Far East”, 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, “An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950”, pp 156-57; Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>16</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 8, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>17</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 5, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>18</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>19</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>20</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>22</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 13, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>23</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 3.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram, Butler, US Embassy, Canberra, to Marshall, February 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>26</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>27</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>28</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>29</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>30</sup> Telegram, MacArthur to Marshall, Hodge and Jacobs, February 18, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>31</sup> Telegram, Butler, US Embassy, Canberra, to Marshall, February 18, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>32</sup> Telegram, Marshall to US UN delegation in New York, February 19, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>33</sup> Telegram, Marshall to US Diplomatic Officers, February 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

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<sup>34</sup> Cable from Australian UN Delegation to EA, February 20, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4/II, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~138](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~138), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Memorandum to McIntyre, "Conference of Political Leaders from North and South Korea" External Affairs (EA), 16 April 1948, United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also Cable from Australian UN Delegation to EA, February 20, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4/II, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~138](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~138), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, p 149.

<sup>37</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 22, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>38</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 26, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>39</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, February 26, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>40</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>41</sup> Cable from Australian UN Delegation to EA, February 24, 1948, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/6, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~139](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~139), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1. Emphasis mine. Ralph Harry, Australia's delegate to the UN, supported Canadian Lester Pearson, in opposing the US proposal to have an election only in southern Korea. See Leon Gordenker, *The United Nations and the Peaceful Unification of Korea*, p 74. In February 1951, Harry was one of the principal assistants to Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs 1949-51, in his negotiations with the American delegation led by John Foster Dulles that resulted in the ANZUS Treaty. Pearson would later serve as Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs and Prime Minister.

<sup>43</sup> Telegram, Austin to Marshall, February 27, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4. On February 28, Langdon informed Marshall that Milner, the Australian delegate deputising for Jackson who was in Tokyo, believed Australia would remain on UNTCOK but he "had no idea what orders would come from Canberra." Langdon said Milner "admits there may be more behind Australia's action" in voting against the US proposal than the "question of legality". Milner, said Langdon, "believes" Australia's vote is a "reflection of view of Evatt, whom he knows personally", that the Interim Committee "should not arrogate power to give orders which is what in effect it has done". See Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, February 28, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 4.

<sup>44</sup> Memorandum, Jackson to Shaw, 27 February 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>45</sup> Statement by US Secretary of State, George Marshall, 10 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum, Burton to Jackson, March 5, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Cable, EA to Australian Embassy in Washington, March 6, 1948, NAA A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> First Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5. See also Third Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948.

<sup>49</sup> First Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5. See also Third Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948.

<sup>50</sup> Third Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5.

<sup>51</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1. See also Second Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5, and Cable, Shaw to EA, March 13, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010, and "Present Situation in Korea", March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838,

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3123/4/5, Part 2. Australia and Canada concurred with most South Korean political parties in questioning the integrity of the 15 member Korean National Elections Committee which was approved by the US Military Government. 12 of the committee members belonged to the rightist Hankook Party which supported Rhee who was the leader of the Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence group.

<sup>52</sup> Memorandum, Burton to Jackson, March 12, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Telegram, Langdon to Marshall, March 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5.

<sup>54</sup> Memorandum, Saltzman to Lovett, March 25, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5.

<sup>55</sup> Memorandum, Saltzman to Lovett, March 25, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5.

<sup>56</sup> Letter, Lovett to Royall, March 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5.

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum, Burton to McIntyre, "Australian Policy in Korea", 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>58</sup> McIntyre agreed and also said he thought UNTCOK should "withdraw from Korea while the election takes place rather than be placed in the undignified position of having to wash its hands publicly of the election." Memorandum, Burton to McIntyre, "Australian Policy in Korea", 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Shaw to EA, 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>60</sup> Shaw to EA, 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>61</sup> Shaw to EA, 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>62</sup> Shaw to EA, 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>63</sup> Shaw to EA, 24 March 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>64</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, March 25, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2100, Folder 5. Following Menon's term as UNTCOK Chairman, the Commission decided its chairmanship would subsequently be rotated fortnightly in alphabetical order of member countries. The Syrian delegate was scheduled to be Chairman from May 1-15, followed by Jackson, May 16-31.

<sup>65</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>66</sup> S.H. Jackson to EA, 19 April 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. Jackson indicated the Americans too were concerned, especially about the mechanics and logistics, let alone the process of holding an election. Jackson said Hodge had raised with UNTCOK the possibility of postponing the election to at least until the end of May, but the Commission decided to fix May 10 as the election date, arguing it was not "desirable that any further postponement should be made."

<sup>67</sup> Jackson also noted "3,140 political prisoners" in southern Korea had been released due to UNTCOK "representations". Jackson to EA, 19 April 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>68</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 22, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 1.

Jackson was very sceptical of the North Korean proposal for a conference in Pyongyang on April 21 of Korean leaders and representatives opposed to the UN decision to proceed with elections only in southern Korea, saying there did not "appear to be any prospect of using this conference as a means of bringing North and South Korea together." See Memorandum to McIntyre, "Conference of Political Leaders from North and South Korea", 15 April 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>69</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 22, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 1.

<sup>70</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 26, 1948, and Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 27, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 1.

<sup>71</sup> Jackson said he was "satisfied" with the efforts of US officials to ensure "conditions conducive to holding" a fair election but also said the situation in southern Korea appeared "too perfect" and he would seek to ensure that UNTCOK's report on the feasibility of a free election reflected the "true light". Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 27, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 1.

<sup>72</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Lovett, April 27, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 1.

<sup>73</sup> EA to Jackson, 1 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

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<sup>74</sup> Jackson to EA, 4 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>75</sup> Letter, Draper to Lovett, May 3, 1948, Papers of Harry S Truman, Harry S Truman Library (hereafter HSTL), Independence, Missouri, SMOF: Selected Records ... Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Background File Subseries: Checklist of Documents to Department of State: Chronology File Subseries, Dec 1950-Feb 1951, Box 1, Folder: Documents on the withdrawal of US troops from Korea.

<sup>76</sup> Letter, Lovett to Draper, May 12, 1948, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL, SMOF: Selected Records ... Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Background File Subseries: Checklist of Documents to Department of State: Chronology File Subseries, Dec 1950-Feb 1951, Box 1, Folder: Documents on the withdrawal of US troops from Korea.

<sup>77</sup> Jackson to EA, 4 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>78</sup> Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, p 150.

<sup>79</sup> Shaw to EA, 4 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>80</sup> Jackson to EA, 4 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>81</sup> EA to Jackson, 10 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also EA note to Laurence McIntyre, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>82</sup> EA to Keith Shann, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>83</sup> EA to Shann, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>84</sup> McIntyre to Shann, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also EA note to McIntyre, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>85</sup> EA to Shann, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. Emphasis in original. See also EA note to McIntyre, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>86</sup> EA to Jackson, 10 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. Gordenker, *The United Nations and the Peaceful Unification of Korea*, pp 106-107.

The Election Results were: 196 Electorates

Independence Rapid Realisation Party (Syngman Rhee)	56
Hankuk Democratic Party	28
Dai Dong Youth	13
No Party	83
National Youth	6
Miscellaneous	10

These results are from Cable from Jackson to EA, 17 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Opposition, Convergence and Collaboration: US and Australian Korean Policy, 1948-49**

#### **Introduction**

From May 1948 to October 1949, the American-Australian Korean engagement underwent three periods of gestation. This chapter argues that in the aftermath of the 1948 South Korean election, although Australia and the US disagreed over the status of the new South Korean Assembly, a convergence of their strategic and security interests led to their policy collaboration over Korea. Coinciding with a significant improvement in the relationships between US and Australian officials involved with Korea, this all helped strengthen the broader evolving relationship between the two nations. However, this chapter also argues that despite the convergence of their interests and their Korean collaboration, the US and Australia maintained similar rather than identical strategic and security interests throughout 1948-49.

The significance of the diplomacy that resolved the Korean policy tensions between the US and Australia and enabled their collaboration is not reflected in the existing scholarly literature.<sup>1</sup> The following analysis evaluates Australia's opposition to the American push to recognise the new South Korean Assembly as the Korean national government following the May 1948 election. It notes the continuing acrimony between Samuel Jackson, Australia's representative on the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), Lieutenant-General John Hodge, Commander of the US Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), and Joseph Jacobs, Hodge's political advisor, right to the end of Jackson's service in June 1948. It examines criticisms of US policy by Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Tokyo

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Mission until December 1948 and Australian representative on the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK) from January 1949, and Norman Makin, Australian Ambassador to the US, 1946-1951. It analyses the marked improvement in relations between US and Australian officials when Jackson was replaced by Arthur Jamieson, Australia's representative on UNTCOK from June 1948 and UNCOK from December 1948. It evaluates the collaboration between James Plimsoll, Australia's UN delegate, and his US counterparts, John Foster Dulles, Jacobs and Harold Noble, that produced the December 1948 joint UN resolution on Korea. The chapter also analyses Shaw's persistent advice throughout 1949 to Dr Herbert Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, that with the impending Chinese Communist victory, Australia ought to prioritise its relationship with the US without committing too deeply in Korea.

Following the May 1948 election, the Truman Administration wanted the newly elected South Korean Assembly recognised as the national government of Korea with jurisdiction over the entire Korean peninsula. Australia refused to support this, arguing the Soviets would reciprocate by similarly recognising the North Korean regime, thereby indefinitely prolonging the division of Korea. Australia reasoned the US could not ignore that a Soviet sponsored regime controlled North Korea. Whereas Washington had realised Cold War politics made Korean unification unlikely, Canberra still hoped the US and Soviets would resolve the division of Korea. The US countered that Korea would remain divided because the Soviets would claim the Pyongyang regime was the Korean national government regardless of the status the US accorded the South Korean Assembly.

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The Truman Administration had no intention of remaining in southern Korea indefinitely and was determined to withdraw the US Military Government as soon as practicable after the May 1948 election. However, the Americans did not want an unstable and isolated Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) that was vulnerable to North Korean incursion. Therefore, it sought to hand over power to the newly elected ROK Assembly but wanted this new government sanctioned by the UN, believing international recognition would strengthen the security and stability of the ROK. Hence, because the US wanted the UN to recognise the ROK Assembly as the national government of Korea, it could not ignore opposition to its policy from allies like Australia. Indeed, Australia was able to persuade the US to accept limited recognition of the ROK government's jurisdiction. The US also wanted the UN to maintain its presence in the ROK to facilitate its stability and security. The Americans therefore strongly urged UNTCOK and its successor, UNCOK, to remain in Korea. However, requiring the support of its UN allies to achieve this, the US needed to accommodate the different Australian and other allied views of the role of the UN and its two Commissions in Korea.

It was the alignment of US and Australian Cold War policies that enabled their collaboration on Korea which was facilitated by the significant improvement in relations between American and Australian officials involved with Korea from May 1948 to October 1949. In the month after the May 1948 election, the continuing tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs exacerbated the differences between the US and Australia over the status of the new South Korean government. That Jackson was an impediment to improved US-Australian relations was immediately evident when Jamieson replaced him on UNTCOK. Jamieson, Shaw, Hodge and Jacobs soon

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developed a cordial but reticent, though effective rapport that would have been unthinkable with Jackson. Indeed, both Shaw and Jamieson quickly earned praise and respect from their US interlocutors. This was followed by the collaboration at the UN between Plimsoll, Dulles, Jacobs and Noble on the joint resolution on Korea in November and December 1948. Seeking UN support and cognizant of the geopolitical reality on the Korean peninsula, the US accepted Australia's proposal limiting the jurisdiction of the South Korean government to the area of the ROK.

The shifting dynamics of the US-Australian Korean engagement from May 1948 to October 1949 were also the result of Australia's alignment with the American view of the Soviet threat. The Soviet blockade of Berlin and the airlift convinced the Chifley government that communism posed an implacable danger. This was further reinforced by the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the Communist ascendancy in the Chinese civil war. The US and Australia came to an alignment on the nature of the Soviet threat, continued to disagree over the possibility of a Japanese resurgence, but perceived the Communist ascendancy in China as a mutual danger. Throughout 1949, Shaw was especially vocal in arguing that the impending Chinese Communist victory meant Australia needed to prioritise its relationship with the US. Washington and Canberra already regarded the status of Korea as intertwined with their security interests. The Chinese Communist triumph increased Korea's geopolitical importance for the US and Australia and thus drew the two allies closer.

### **Cross purposes: Australian opposition to US Korean policy**

On May 19, Patrick Shaw sent Evatt and External Affairs (EA) his assessment of the Korean situation following the May 10 election. Shaw was a Japanese expert whose presence signalled Australia's intention to have a voice in determining the

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outcome of the Japanese peace settlement. Shaw joined External Affairs in 1939 and was Third Secretary at the Australian Legation in Tokyo from 1940-42. He was then Official Secretary at the Australian High Commission in Wellington from 1943-45. Shaw served as First Secretary at the Australian Legation in China from 1945-47. He served as Head of the Australian Mission in Japan from 1947-49 and was Australia's representative on UNCOK (and Chairman) in 1949.<sup>2</sup> Shaw noted that "most members" of UNTCOK "took the view that the American Military Government had enforced on the Koreans their specific requirements for carrying out a relatively free election." Shaw questioned the scope of the election and Hodge's claim that "well over 90%" of South Koreans voted. Based on information from George Patterson, the Canadian UNTCOK representative, Shaw told Canberra it was more accurate to say 92% of registered voters voted which "represented about 70% of the eligible population", an assessment that concurred with the State Department.<sup>3</sup> On the question of voter turnout, the US and Australia were in agreement.

Shaw was quite critical of the election shortcomings. He informed Evatt and External Affairs that despite the relatively "calm atmosphere on polling day" due to the US military presence and the efforts of the Korean authorities, Jackson, Patterson and Bahadur Singh, the Indian UNTCOK representative, each reported stories of arrests and torture by Korean authorities. These were tacitly acknowledged by Kenneth Royall, US Army Secretary, who in congratulating Hodge and his command for making the election possible, "cited the comparatively low number of violent incidents during the voting despite the Communist efforts to disrupt the balloting." Also, although Secretary of State George Marshall claimed the election was "a clear revelation that the Korean people are determined to form their own government by

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democratic means”, Shaw questioned the legitimacy of the election, noting the domination of “candidates with rightist affiliations”, and that “no member of the Commission whom I have seen believes that any serious opposition candidates had been elected.”<sup>4</sup> The voter turnout enabled the US to claim the election was legitimate but, as Shaw reported, it was not a democratic or representative process.

Australia now opposed US policy regarding the status of the newly elected South Korean Assembly. Shaw informed Canberra the issue was whether the Assembly would be an “interim government of south Korea” or, as the US wanted, “a national government of Korea.” Australia had consistently and vociferously opposed US Korean policy it believed would perpetuate the division of Korea. Evatt and External Affairs were adamant that recognition of the Assembly as a national government would make Korean unification improbable. Although unification was unlikely irrespective of the status of the Assembly, Evatt and EA had not abandoned hope the US and Soviets would resolve this impasse. Evatt announced Australia would steadfastly adhere to UNTCOK’s purpose to “assist the establishment of a national government for Korea”, and would therefore oppose any move to declare the new Assembly a national government. Australia argued the Assembly was not a national government because the election was confined to the US occupation zone; it was not a national poll.<sup>5</sup>

On May 7, Jackson had alerted Evatt and External Affairs to the “possibility” that UNTCOK would argue the South Korean government should be a “Provincial Government” with jurisdiction over southern Korea rather than a “National Government” claiming to represent the entire Korean peninsula. Jackson advised

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Evatt and EA that if the US and South Koreans declared the Assembly to be a “National Government”, Australia “should oppose the move and withdraw” from UNTCOK and Korea.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to American wishes, Australia sided with the majority in UNTCOK opposed to recognising the Assembly as the Korean “National Government”.<sup>7</sup> The Australians shared the view of the UN Interim Committee that the election of a National Assembly “would be a stage in the formation of a Korean government, the form of which is to be determined by the Korean people themselves.” Aware of American designs to recognise the Assembly as the Korean national government, Canberra considered withdrawing from UNTCOK if the US “forced” this “matter”.<sup>8</sup>

Syngman Rhee, the incoming ROK president, had declared the Assembly the legitimate Korean national government. Shaw advised Evatt and External Affairs that Rhee would seek to have the US, UNTCOK and the UN recognise “his government as the government of Korea.” Although Shaw “assumed” US policy was to support Rhee, he told Canberra George Patterson had indicated to him that “American political and military officials ... in Seoul gave him the impression that they would move cautiously” and Patterson “believed” that Rhee “would see the necessity for this.” Describing American policy in Korea as “fluctuating”, Shaw wrote:

A few months ago the aim was to withdraw as soon as possible from an untenable position. Then the decision seemed to be reached that Korea, like all outposts in the struggle against Communism, must be maintained even though in the event of a conflict, it would be overrun. Now feeling is again running in the direction of withdrawal after the training of a South Korean Army.... I should guess, however, that a firm decision on the retention of United States forces in Korea has not yet been made.<sup>9</sup>

Shaw identified the dilemma and contradiction in America’s Korean policy. The Truman Administration did not want to remain in Korea. It had reluctantly

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occupied southern Korea in 1945 to prevent the Soviets taking the entire peninsula. By 1948, the US no longer wanted to expend resources in Korea and was determined to withdraw from the peninsula at the earliest opportunity. The Americans organised the May 10 election to ensure they could hand power to a friendly and “legitimate” Korean government, enabling them to withdraw from the peninsula. However, the Truman Administration also did not want a fractured South Korea exposed to a North Korean incursion. Hence, although the Truman Administration had no desire to remain in Korea, it was fully cognizant that US aid was essential for the security and stability of South Korea.

Shaw welcomed Canberra’s instructions to Jackson to “oppose any move for the formation of a [Korean] national government” and agreed that if the Assembly declared itself the “national government” of Korea, Australia “should have to consider our withdrawal” from UNCTOC. Shaw also advised Canberra that Jackson “be instructed to resist pressure” from the South Koreans and the Americans for the “recognition of Syngman Rhee as President of a national government for Korea.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite Australian and other allied opposition, the Truman Administration nevertheless sought UN endorsement of the South Korean Assembly as the legitimate Korean national government. Although the Americans expected allied support irrespective of their reservations, Australia and a majority of UNCTOC opposed recognising the Assembly as a national government, believing it would prolong the division of Korea indefinitely. UNCTOC accepted the results of the May 10 election but avoided referring to the new South Korean Assembly as the “National Assembly”. Despite internal divisions over this issue, the Commission was determined to avoid



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any official impression it was sanctioning American and South Korean claims the Assembly constituted a Korean national government.<sup>11</sup>

On May 24, 1948, Norman Makin, Australia's Ambassador in Washington, advised Canberra the State Department regarded the May 10 election as "a major step towards the attainment of United States objectives in Korea." However, Makin warned the Americans failed to consider "the general political and strategic situation" on the Korean peninsula, and possible Soviet and North Korean "action". Makin said US policies "must also be co-ordinated with, and to some extent be executed through the decisions" of the UN.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the geopolitical reality on the Korean peninsula, the Truman Administration was attempting to lay the groundwork for the recognition of the new South Korean Assembly as the Korean national government. The Americans, determined to end their occupation of southern Korea and withdraw their Military Government, needed a plausible exit strategy. Hence, the post election statements from the Truman Administration were a calculated signalling of the US intent to withdraw from Korea as soon as practicable. The US intended to transfer power to the new Korean government and then withdraw from the peninsula. Australia opposed declaring the Assembly the Korean national government, arguing it would indefinitely prolong the division of Korea and that the Assembly was not a national government because the May election had been limited to southern Korea.

Herein lay the key point of divergence between American and Australian Korean policy. The US was determined to withdraw from Korea. The geo-strategic

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priority for the US was defending Western Europe from the Soviet threat. Hence, despite the importance of Japan and the deteriorating position of the Chinese Nationalists in the civil war against the Communists, the Truman Administration did not consider Korea to be of sufficient strategic importance to warrant a continuing US presence on the peninsula. The US accepted the geopolitical reality in Korea meant the likely indefinite division of the peninsula. Conversely, Australia was determined to keep pursuing Korean unification through the UN and UNTCOK because it wanted a united Korea that would help prevent a Japanese resurgence. However, while US and Australian Korean policies were at cross purposes, the Korean dilemma remained for the Americans. The US was attempting to navigate the problematic reality between wanting to withdraw from Korea and actually doing so.

Makin, cognizant of the American Korean dilemma, informed External Affairs the US would continue its economic support of South Korea with the twin goals of thwarting Communist attempts to undermine the new nation, and enabling South Korea to develop a self sustaining economy and cease being “an adjunct of the Japanese economy” and become “an integral part of the Far Eastern economic system.”<sup>13</sup> This US objective aligned with Australian security interests which sought a free and united Korea that would help contain Japan. However, a critical point of divergence remained between Australian and US Korean policy. The Americans hoped a stable and free South Korea would become a bulwark against Communist expansion in North East Asia. Unlike Australia, US policy regarded communism rather than Japan as the real security threat in the Asia-Pacific.

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Makin identified other ambiguities in US Korean policy. While mindful of the Pyongyang regime's designs, the "size and strength" of the North Korean Army, and US difficulties with the Soviet authorities, Makin noted the State Department was "confident" UNTCOK would recognise the legitimacy of the South Korean National Assembly. Makin said, John Allison, Head of the North East Asia section of the State Department, "spoke vaguely of a possible recommendation by the [UN General] Assembly for recognition of the new Korean state." However, the US knew an application to admit South Korea to the UN "would be vetoed and would not be advisable" in the immediate term. Given Australian opposition to US Korean policy, Allison's remark that "any suggestions by Australia would be welcomed" may have indicated either an American willingness to co-operate with allies to try and resolve the Korean issue or a challenge to Australia to present alternative proposals.<sup>14</sup>

Ambiguities in Australia's Korean policy were now also appearing. The reality of the geopolitical situation in Korea caused Shaw to challenge the practicality of Australia's continued pursuit of Korean unification. From Tokyo, Shaw sought advice from External Affairs on May 26 about "what basis, if any, existed for further talks to bring the two parts of Korea together" given that UNTCOK'S "prime purpose" was to facilitate the formation of a national government for a unified Korea.<sup>15</sup> On May 25, Jackson, still Australia's UNTCOK representative, informed Canberra the Commission would "probably counsel [the] formation of a provisional [South Korean] Government until the [Korean] question" could again "be brought before the [UN] General Assembly."<sup>16</sup>

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Evatt and External Affairs believed Korean unification was still plausible and on May 28, instructed Jackson that UNTCOK ought to continue pursuing this. EA was adamant the South Korean Assembly elected on May 10 “cannot constitute [a] National Government”. Canberra deemed the newly elected body was a “Provisional Assembly” and “should be considered a purely consultative body for the purposes” of working towards the unification of Korea.<sup>17</sup> Australia continued to pursue Korean unification long after the Truman Administration had recognised the Cold War political reality on the Korean peninsula rendered it unlikely. For the Americans, the May 10 election was the endgame, enabling South Korean self government and US withdrawal from southern Korea, whereas for Australia it was a step along the dead end road to Korean unification.

Australia steadfastly maintained its opposition against recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national government. On June 4, Marshall informed Jacobs that Ralph Harry, First Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Washington, had advised the Truman Administration that Canberra would support UNTCOK declaring the Korean “elections were only provincial and not national in scope”.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the following day, Jackson informed External Affairs that UNTCOK would recommend the South Korean Assembly form a “provisional ... Government” and collaborate with the Commission on pursuing Korean unification.<sup>19</sup>

The Truman Administration sought allied support in South Korea believing international recognition would legitimise and strengthen the new nation following the US withdrawal. Despite Australian opposition to US Korean policy, the Americans hoped Evatt and EA would continue supporting UNTCOK’s presence in

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Korea. Although wary of the Australians, on June 7, Marshall notified the US Embassy in Canberra that “if in your opinion useful purpose would be served by making ... representations” to the Australian government regarding their support for UNTCOK, “you are authorized to do so.” However, Marshall cautioned the Embassy: “You will of course bear in mind [the] negative attitude” which the Australian government “has demonstrated in [the] past and continues to demonstrate with respect to [the] implantation” of UN General Assembly resolutions “under circumstances presently existing in Korea, as well as [the] extraordinary conduct displayed thus far by” Jackson on UNTCOK.<sup>20</sup>

Following consultations with Rhee and the South Korean Assembly, UNTCOK resolved on June 10 that it was ready to continue its duties as stipulated in the November 14, 1947 UN Resolution. Jacobs welcomed this but reminded Marshall that Jackson and Patterson had “strongly opposed” labelling the Assembly as “national” and the assemblymen as “representatives” of the “Korean people.” Indeed, the Commission’s resolution “contained no” such references. Jacobs saw this as “another instance” of how the “strong minority” in UNTCOK of Jackson, Patterson and Singh, the Indian delegate, “can impose its will on [the] less strong majority ... all of whom appeared to be willing to state” that the Assembly “is national.” Jacobs referred to the “attitude adopted” by the “minority” Jackson, Patterson and Singh faction as “like that of an ostrich”, and advised Marshall the US “may expect” this group to oppose “any use” of the term “national” in “connection” with the “government or regime which may be established” in South Korea.<sup>21</sup>

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Jacobs's sentiments indicated that Australian opposition to US Korean policy aside, Jackson remained an obstacle to a more collaborative US-Australian approach. Jacobs's implacable attitude was indicative of the manifest American mistrust of Jackson, and this made a US-Australian Korean policy accommodation seem remote. The tension between Jacobs and Jackson was personal. Jacobs's dislike of Jackson was stronger than his annoyance with Australian opposition to US Korean policy. Yet Jacobs was not the sole American voice expressing frustration with the Australian attitude. Hodge too disliked Jackson but offered a different and more nuanced perspective of the Australians than did Jacobs although his wariness of Australia was equally strong.

Hodge reported to Marshall on June 11 that within UNTCOK, Singh had allied himself with Jackson, Patterson and Mughir, the Syrian representative, "against carrying through the UN resolution on Korea according to American interpretation." Labelling Australia, Canada, India and Syria as the "anti" bloc, Hodge differed from Jacobs in naming Patterson and Milner, not Jackson, as the "arch instigators" of this faction. Indeed, Hodge said that meeting with Patterson and Milner, "it was patent that Milner, whom he branded as one of the UNTCOK secretariat "pinks", "took the lead and prompted" Patterson "frequently." Hodge said these members would "definitely" oppose declaring the Korean representatives as the "National Assembly", and noted the other UNTCOK delegates appeared to support the "national" label but "will not fight for it as hard as the 'anti' [faction] will fight against it."<sup>22</sup>

Also on June 11, Rhee formally notified UNTCOK of the "establishment of a Korean National Assembly". Luna, the Philippine UNTCOK delegate, then

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introduced a draft resolution recognising the new South Korean government.<sup>23</sup> UNTCOK remained divided over whether to recognise the Assembly as representative of all Koreans and those members opposed were determined the Commission avoid dealing with the South Korean government as a “national” entity. Of those UNTCOK members who opposed the American and South Korean push to recognise the newly elected representatives as the Korean National Assembly, Jacobs advised Marshall on June 13, that Jackson and Milner “seem to be real recalcitrants”. Jacobs and Hodge would likely have been delighted to learn the Australian government was about to replace Jackson and Milner on UNTCOK.<sup>24</sup>

UNTCOK members returned to Seoul on June 17 to consider their future role in Korea. Two days later, Jacobs informed Marshall that Jackson and Milner felt the Commission ought to continue facilitating Korean unification. Jacobs said this indicated Jackson and a majority of UNTCOK delegates would “not approve” the “formation” of a Korean “national government” and would seek to have the newly elected representatives declared a “provisional government.” Jacobs reported Liu, the Chinese delegate, had informed him Jackson and other Commission members “felt so strongly” about this issue “they might even desert” UNTCOK if it “decided to agree” to recognise the Assembly as a “national” government. Wang, the other Chinese delegate, claimed Jackson and Patterson were the “real leaders” of the “provisional” government “idea.” While some UNTCOK members supported the US wish to recognise the Assembly as a national government, they were unwilling to risk splintering the Commission.<sup>25</sup>

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Despite the palpable tensions between Jacobs and Jackson, Jacobs's report to Marshall included Liu's praise of Jackson. Liu had told Jacobs that although not sharing their views, Jackson and Patterson were at least "dependable and consistent." Describing Jackson as "sincere", Liu said the Australian was a "good friend" of Evatt's and could "do what he pleases" due to Evatt's "confidence" in him. Liu did surmise that Jackson's "attitude" seemed to be "motivated somewhat" by an "exhibitionist complex" determined to "let the world know" that Australia would "act independently of anybody at all costs." Jacobs noted that Liu's assessment differed from Luna's, who made unsubstantiated claims that Jackson and Patterson sought to "delay" recognising the new South Korean government and wanted to appease the Russians.<sup>26</sup>

UNTCOK was divided over recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national or provisional government and on whether it should continue facilitating Korean unification. Jackson, Patterson, Singh and Paul Boncour, the French delegate, argued that if UNTCOK recognised the Assembly as the national Korean government and not pursue unification, the Commission would be unable to discharge its duties as instructed in the UN resolutions of November 14, 1947 and February 26, 1948. These four UNTCOK members argued that if such circumstances eventuated, the Commission should withdraw from the peninsula, leaving the US and UN General Assembly to deal with the Korean issue. Despite US differences with these UNTCOK delegates, Jacobs informed Marshall on June 20, that he and Hodge remained hopeful Jackson, Patterson and Boncour could be persuaded to support UNTCOK's continued presence in Korea even if they could not accept recognising the Assembly as the sole government of Korea.<sup>27</sup>



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The US, recognising that UNTCOK would not necessarily support its policy, nevertheless desired allied support in Korea. Although having resolved to leave Korea irrespective of the status of the South Korean Assembly, the Truman Administration did not want a weak and unstable South Korea that was vulnerable to Communist incursions. Hence, the Americans concentrated on persuading the UN and UNTCOK to remain in South Korea, having calculated an international presence would help strengthen its security and stability. This was a greater priority for the US than the status of the Assembly. The Truman Administration accepted that Australia and other allies would not recognise the Assembly as a national government. Indeed, from different trajectories – the US wanting a UN presence in Korea, Australia pursuing Korean unification and refusing to recognise the Assembly as a national government – American and Australian Korean policies now began to converge. The US and Australia agreed on the need to maintain a UN presence in Korea. This, together with Australia's replacement of Jackson on UNTCOK, created an opportunity to recalibrate the US-Australian Korean engagement.

### **Convergence: Shaw, Jamieson and the US**

On June 22, 1948, UNTCOK announced Jackson would return to Australia on June 24 for consultations with the Australian government and that he would be replaced by Arthur B. Jamieson as Australia's representative on the Commission. Jamieson was a member of the Australian Mission in Tokyo and the Commonwealth representative on the Allied Control Council for Japan. A Japanese expert, Jamieson studied and taught in Japan before World War II. He worked for newspapers in Japan and Australia and was a Naval Intelligence Officer during the Second World War. Jamieson joined External Affairs in 1947 as a Japanese specialist and was posted to

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the Australian Mission in Tokyo.<sup>28</sup> His posting to UNTCOK was a strong reminder that Australia saw the resolution of Korea's status as part of the Japanese peace settlement.

Exactly why Jackson was recalled remains unclear. Although he had been ill since returning to Seoul from Shanghai, Jacobs inferred Jackson had been ordered back to Canberra to help prepare Australia's case in anticipation of a UN General Assembly debate on Korea. Jacobs advised Marshall there was no "indication" Jackson's and Australia's "attitude" regarding the Korean "problem" had altered. Australia, said Jacobs, "opposed" the "establishment" of a "national government" in South Korea and although as a member of UNTCOK it was willing "to consult", it was "not particularly interested in rendering assistance" to help the new South Korean government establish its authority in its jurisdiction as stipulated in the November 1947 UN resolution.<sup>29</sup> Alternatively, Jackson may have been replaced because Evatt and External Affairs recognised he was a liability in the US-Australian relationship.

Irrespective of why he was recalled, Jackson maintained his strong presence on UNTCOK to the very end of his tenure and the Americans, notably Jacobs, remained wary of him. At UNTCOK's June 22 meeting, Jackson was critical of the US Military Government's failure to work with the Soviets and North Koreans in facilitating Korean reunification. However, Jackson did say the May 10 elections "were very efficiently controlled and that no grave attempts at coercion were brought to our notice." Jackson irritated the Americans by saying that without US and Soviet cooperation, the unification of Korea "cannot be considered seriously."<sup>30</sup>

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Although Jackson was correct in saying Korean unification could only be achieved by US-Soviet co-operation, his statement perhaps signalled a shift in Australia's perception of the Soviet Union and its stance on Korean unification. The US concluded in 1947 that the Soviets would only accept Korean unification on their terms. Whereas Australia considered that Japan still posed a security threat, the US regarded the Soviets as the real danger in Europe and the Asia-Pacific. Australia was wary of the USSR but had thought the Russians and Americans could resolve their differences, including over Korea, through negotiation. The beginning of the Berlin Blockade in June 1948 was the catalyst for a reevaluation of Australian thinking. Evatt and External Affairs concluded the Berlin crisis indeed showed the Russians were not interested in diffusing Cold War tensions. Australia joined the US and Allied airlift supplying Berlin and also aligned itself with the Americans in Korea, recognising that the deepening Cold War tensions meant Korean unification was unlikely.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, the tensions between Jackson and the Americans continued as did Australian opposition to recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national government. Following criticism from UNTCOK members, especially Paul Boncour, of his June 22 remarks, Jackson was more conciliatory at the Commission's meeting the next day. Jackson emphasised Australia had opposed an election only in South Korea and would not recognise the Assembly as a "national" government because these actions were obstacles to Korean unification. Indeed, Jackson reminded his fellow delegates that UNTCOK was created to facilitate Korean unification because of the US and Soviet failure to achieve it. Jackson did acknowledge the May 10 election was "probably the best" outcome "under the circumstances" and said

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UNTCOK should “mark our appreciation of the work done by” the American Military Government and its “cooperative attitude ... towards” the Commission.<sup>32</sup>

Jacobs welcomed that Jackson “practically repudiated most” of his June 22 statements, and noted his June 23 submission was “more conciliatory and somewhat apologetic” in “character”. However, Jacobs cautioned Marshall on June 24, that Jackson “has [a] habit of coming back to his” original “position” and advised that as he “may appear” at a UN General Assembly debate on Korea, it would be “helpful” for State Department officials to have copies of Jackson’s “position in his own words.”<sup>33</sup> Jacobs’s wariness of Jackson had not abated.

On July 3, two days after his arrival in Seoul, Jamieson notified External Affairs that UNTCOK had “deferred ... action” on Rhee’s June 11 letter regarding the formation of a Korean National Government “to avoid raising an issue that might call for a vote resulting in an open split.” Jamieson said the Philippine resolution recognising the South Korean Government was introduced by Luna “on firm instructions from the Philippine Government after pressure had been brought to bear on it by the U.S. Government.” Jamieson noted the Canadian and Indian governments “resisted” “similar pressure” to “instruct their delegates not to vote against the resolution”. A vote on the Philippine resolution was postponed after UNTCOK failed to agree on the resolution at its June 22 meeting. At the last UNTCOK meeting Jackson attended on June 24, Luna, seeking consensus, introduced a new resolution. A draft reply to this resolution by El Salvador was accepted by UNTCOK with “slight modifications.” Jamieson noted the “desire” among UNTCOK members for a

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“unanimous reply” but informed Canberra of his “doubt as to whether Australia should have voted in favour of this reply”.<sup>34</sup>

The US was unable to persuade UNTCOK to recognise the South Korean Assembly as a national government. Australia remained resolute in its opposition but UNTCOK reached a consensus despite contrary views among its members. The Commission accepted the legitimacy of the Assembly but did not recognise it as a national government. UNTCOK’s June 25 resolution stated “the results of the ballot of 10th May, 1948, are a valid expression of the free will of the electorate in those parts of Korea which were accessible to the Commission, and in which the inhabitants constituted approximately two-thirds of the people of all Korea.”<sup>35</sup>

On June 28, Hodge conveyed to Marshall that UNTCOK’s conciliatory recognition of the Korean National Assembly and legitimacy of the May 10 election could be attributed to Jackson’s departure from the Commission. A wary Hodge told Marshall, Jackson’s recall “came as a surprise to him and he does not actually know what it means, although he intimates strongly that he will go to Paris to advise the Australian delegate” in the General Assembly. Jackson never went to Paris. His diplomatic career ended upon his return to Australia. Hodge noted Jackson had not altered his opposition to UN recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national government, and speculated his replacement by Jamieson “would indicate that possibly Jackson may not be in too high favour” in Canberra for continuing “his stubborn recalcitrate” of US Korean policy despite all he witnessed in Korea. Hodge surmised Jackson was determined to “justify” his opposition to the election having being held only in the US zone of occupation.<sup>36</sup>

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Among America's close allies, Australia was not the sole opponent of US Korean policy. Without notifying Washington, London informed Canberra it had indicated to the US it would not recognise the South Korean Assembly as a national government. The British argued the Assembly had no legitimacy or representation in North Korea. Britain feared if the government in Seoul was given sanction to proclaim its authority over the whole of Korea, the Communist regime in Pyongyang would do likewise, and this would have implications beyond Korea. London's concerns to External Affairs would prove prophetic:

There would result a situation in which different groups in the United Nations, by recognising different Governments as sovereign in the same area, would be getting dangerously near to incitement to civil war. The outlook in Korea is, in any case, gloomy but such a development would finally destroy remaining hopes of settlement.

London also sought EA's thinking on whether it "would be desirable to accord some form of recognition to the Seoul Government if it limited its claims to sovereignty of South Korea." British communication with Australia on the recognition question was confidential and London asked Canberra to maintain this secrecy in its consultations with Washington.<sup>37</sup>

Australia stood firm in its opposition to the American push to recognise the South Korean Assembly as the Korean national government. Now Britain's suggestion to recognise the Assembly's jurisdiction only over South Korea presented an opportunity for the US and Australia to resolve their differences on this issue. The US could ignore opposition from a minor ally like Australia but could not readily dismiss British or French concerns. To secure international backing for the South Korean government, the US could not maintain its insistence on recognising the Assembly as a national government in the face of strong allied opposition. British

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opposition to this US policy meant the Truman Administration had to consider Australian concerns because it needed the support of these allies when the Korean issue came to be debated at the UN. Australia's presence in Korea therefore presented Evatt and External Affairs with an opportunity to directly engage the Americans to seek a resolution to the recognition question.

Jamieson met with Hodge on July 3, reporting to External Affairs that Hodge spent most of their meeting attacking communism generally, rather than offering his views on Korea which Jamieson sought. The Russians, said Hodge, would exploit inaction and indecision, hence the need to recognise the Korean National Assembly. Hodge told Jamieson although UNTCOK "had not recognised and approved the Assembly as it might have done, the fact that it had taken note of the fact that a National Assembly had been constituted was a forward step." Hodge made it clear to Jamieson that he expected UNTCOK's full support for the South Korean Assembly "to form a National Government". However, Jamieson noted Hodge "implied that it might be too much to hope for UNTCOK approval, but that the position would be greatly improved were UNTCOK merely to take note of the fact that a National Government had been established." Hodge told Jamieson the formation of a Korean national government would provide a "spiritual rallying point" for the population in North Korea, while also undermining the propaganda and political position of the Russians and the Pyongyang regime.<sup>38</sup>

Jamieson noted Hodge intimated he viewed the Soviet presence in North Korea as a stabilising force, expressing serious concerns that a Russian withdrawal could be followed by "aggressive moves" by Pyongyang towards South Korea.

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Hodge said this was “the worst thing that could happen”. Australia had consistently argued the Korean impasse could only be resolved by the US and Soviets. Now Hodge was saying the Soviet presence in North Korea was crucial to maintaining stability on the peninsula. Hodge was “non-committal” on any US “reduction” or “withdrawal” of forces from Korea, but said strengthening South Korea’s defences “alone would be ineffective” without the formation of a South Korean government. Jamieson’s “attempts to bring the conversation back to the question of the unification of Korea were not successful.”<sup>39</sup>

This meeting between Hodge and Jamieson did not alter the respective US and Australian positions on the status of the South Korean Assembly. However, despite Hodge’s frustrations with UNTCOK and Australian opposition to recognition of the Assembly as a national Korean government, Jackson’s departure eased the tensions between American and Australian officials. The US and Australia had both signalled a willingness to adopt a more flexible policy approach. On a personal level, Hodge and Jamieson disagreed over policy but did not mistrust each other. With Jamieson now a member of UNTCOK, this increased the possibility of a resolution of US and Australian differences and a policy alignment. Indeed, this meeting between Hodge and Jamieson signalled that Jackson’s departure had altered the tone, if not the substance of the US-Australian Korean engagement.

Australia steadfastly refused to recognise the South Korean Assembly as a national government. On July 6, Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Tokyo Mission, alerted External Affairs to Jamieson’s request about Australia’s response to the question of the “formation [and recognition] of a Korean national government”



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when it went before the UN. Shaw relayed Jamieson's reasoning that the Indian and Canadian governments would "presumably" argue against "recognition of a national government" and so too should Australia.<sup>40</sup>

The US too awaited Jamieson's official declaration of Australia's stance. Jacobs informed Marshall on July 8 that Jamieson's "views are not yet known as he has been very reticent about talking since he came."<sup>41</sup> Jacobs informed Marshall that Jamieson was a "very taciturn person who could not be coaxed to say anything about his views or those of his government" about the Korean "problem."<sup>42</sup> Despite their policy differences, Jacobs's assessment of Jamieson indicated a changing tone in the US-Australian Korean engagement.

The US Embassy in Canberra was able to ascertain the stance of the Chifley government towards the new South Korean Assembly. Embassy officials met with John Burton, Secretary of External Affairs, and notified Marshall on July 14 that Evatt would not recognise the South Korean Assembly as a national government. Australia also rejected a State Department request to support unilateral US recognition of the Assembly as the South Korean government. However, the door to a Korean policy alignment between the US and Australia was opening. Burton told the Americans that although Australia accepted the election results, the "circumstances" in which the poll was held meant the South Korean government was "not constituted on a broad enough basis to be truly representative" of the Korean people. Evatt and EA were concerned the South Korean government would "resort to extensive executions and other harsh measures in order [to] remain in power."<sup>43</sup>

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Although the “special position” of the US meant it could unilaterally declare its “support” for the South Korean government, Burton suggested to his American interlocutors that South Korea could be admitted to UN membership “thereby making possible [its] recognition by all members with [the] weight” of the General Assembly’s “approval” behind them. Burton warned the US Embassy a “number” of UN “powers” would “refuse” to recognise the South Korean government should the State Department act unilaterally.<sup>44</sup> While the US could not expect allied endorsement for any unilateral action, Burton made it clear the Americans would have strong support if they acted through the UN. Gradually, American and Australian Korean policies were aligning.

On July 16, External Affairs notified Jamieson that UNTCOK should oppose any claim the new South Korean “government represents [the] whole” Korean peninsula. Indeed, the Commission “itself observed [the] election held only in [the] South.”<sup>45</sup> Hodge and Jacobs countered Australia’s argument against recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national government because this would indefinitely divide Korea, by noting the likely Soviet recognition of the North Korean regime’s authority over Korea would ensure the peninsula remained divided, irrespective of the status the US and its UN allies accorded South Korea.<sup>46</sup>

However, while Hodge and Jacobs urged the State Department to act unilaterally and ignore the UN, Philip Jessup, the US UN representative, was more considered in his advice to Marshall. Noting the concerns of US allies like Australia and other Commonwealth and UNTCOK member states, Jessup said under the November 1947 UN resolution, the US was obliged to deal with Korea through the

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UN. Jessup argued if the US acted unilaterally, it would undermine its valid criticism of Soviet behaviour in North Korea in contravention of this same resolution, thereby weakening the American position at the UN. The US believed Australia and other nations opposed US Korean policy because they deemed it was in their respective security interests for the Americans to maintain a presence in Korea. Jessup argued unilateral US recognition of the South Korean Assembly as the Korean national government, would leave the US isolated from its allies and having to remain in Korea longer than it intended. Jessup's advice to Marshall was supported by his fellow UN delegate, John Foster Dulles. Burton sought to persuade the US to act in Korea with UN authority, and Jessup and Dulles concluded it was indeed in America's best interest to do that.<sup>47</sup> From different perspectives, the US and Australian viewpoints converged on the value of acting with UN endorsement.

Nevertheless, Hodge and Jacobs urged Marshall to immediately recognise the South Korean Assembly as the only legitimate Korean government and begin the transfer of power from the US Military Government to the South Korean government led by Syngman Rhee. Jacobs was confident the creation of the Soviet sponsored regime in North Korea would enable the US to persuade all UNTCOK members and other UN allies, except Australia, to support American policy in South Korea. Jacobs maintained his acerbic view of Australia, telling Marshall, "I am afraid it will remain recalcitrant to the end." Jacobs also told Marshall he was "not unmindful of [the] dangers inherent in proceeding" with recognising the Assembly without UN authorisation. Although this would attract criticism from US allies and entrench the division of Korea, Jacobs told Marshall he and Hodge believed the impending Soviet

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transfer of power to Kim Il-sung in Pyongyang required immediate US action and any vacillation “will render our position here untenable.”<sup>48</sup>

The US was determined to transfer power from its Military Government to the South Korean government in Seoul by August 15, 1948. On August 1, Jamieson informed Canberra the US appeared to “attach importance to participation” of UNTCOK “in consultations regarding” this “transfer” of power. Although UNTCOK remained divided over whether to support the formation of the new South Korean government, the majority supported the US stance. But Australia and Canada opposed the Americans. Jamieson informed External Affairs that if UNTCOK approved the US proposal, Canada might withdraw from the Commission because its purpose to facilitate Korean unification would be rendered redundant. Jamieson advised Canberra that Australia should adopt the Canadian position.<sup>49</sup>

The Truman Administration sought international recognition of the new South Korean government for two reasons. UN backing would make South Korea more stable and secure whereas unilateral American recognition would potentially leave it isolated and more vulnerable to North Korean designs. The US was intent on withdrawing from South Korea and international support for the fledging nation would help facilitate this. Conversely, unilateral recognition would likely mean the US would have to maintain an indefinite presence in Korea. Allies like Australia had asserted they would not recognise the South Korean Assembly as a national government nor accept it had any jurisdiction without UN authorisation. The State Department therefore recommended the “prompt recognition” of the South Korean government but, acknowledging the UN role in its creation, it advised Marshall that

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American “recognition should not be extended on a full *de jure* basis” without UN support. Allied and UNTCOK opposition to the recognition of the South Korean Assembly as a national government impacted on American policymakers to the extent that the US was now considering how to recognise the South Korean government without “alienating” its UN allies.<sup>50</sup>

On August 4, External Affairs once again told Jamieson UNTCOK should unequivocally reject Rhee’s claim the new South Korean government represented all of Korea. EA instructed Jamieson that American recognition of the Rhee government’s authority over either South Korea or the entire peninsula, “should be a matter entirely” for the US and UNTCOK “should not be identified with any such transfer of authority.” Canberra emphasised the Commission’s task was to facilitate the formation of a “true national” Korean government, not the “devolution of limited administrative authority over part of Korea.”<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, responding to Rhee’s August 5 announcement of the impending formation of a Korean government and request for consultations with UNTCOK to help facilitate this, Jamieson reiterated Australia’s policy that it would “consult only with [a] unified Korean Government” and hence, he could not participate in any such consultations.<sup>52</sup>

Four days later, Marshall notified the American Embassy in Canberra that although the US regarded the South Korean Assembly as the “government of Korea” as “envisaged” in the November 1947 UN resolution, it would not recognise this government until the UN accepted UNTCOK’s report on the May 10 election and recognised the legitimacy of the new Korean government. However, American officials would conduct negotiations with the Rhee government over the transfer of

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power from the US Military Government to the South Koreans, pending UN recognition of the new Korean government. The US, said Marshall, would act through the UN “to accord more closely with [the] views of [the] Australian Government”, and other UNTCOK members and allies, and “it is therefore hoped that [the] Australian Government will now be able to support [the] US position.”<sup>53</sup> On August 14, UNTCOK voted 4-2 in favour of consultations to help facilitate the transfer of power from the USAMGIK to the Rhee government. China, France, the Philippines and El Salvador voted in favour, Australia and India were against, and Canada abstained. The steadfast opposition to US policy by Evatt and External Affairs and the American need for allied support, resulted in the US modifying its policy to the extent that it would work with the UN rather than act unilaterally.<sup>54</sup>

On August 15, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was duly proclaimed in Seoul and Syngman Rhee was inaugurated as its first President.<sup>55</sup> The Truman Administration transferred power to Rhee’s government and South Korea was recognised by the US, China and the Philippines. Jamieson once again reiterated Australia’s opposition to UNTCOK recognition of the ROK Assembly and Rhee’s government as the “National Assembly” and “National Government”, respectively, because the Commission “had observed elections held only in South Korea.” The Australian Government argued UNTCOK “should not be connected in any way with the transfer of administrative authority” from the US Military Government to Rhee’s government.<sup>56</sup> External Affairs informed the US Embassy in Canberra it considered the appointment of John Muccio as US Ambassador to South Korea to be solely a US matter and should not involve UNTCOK whose role was to “deal only” with a Korean national government “if it were possible for one to be elected.” EA also notified the

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US Embassy the Australian government would defer considering recognition of the ROK government until its status was determined by the UN following the submission of UNTCOK's May 10 election report.<sup>57</sup> The US Embassy notified Marshall it was "clear" Australia "will not support" the American "position."<sup>58</sup>

The ROK government's ascension to power made UNTCOK's purpose uncertain and its continued presence in Korea doubtful. The US wanted the Commission to remain in South Korea in the lead up to the consideration of the status of Korea by the UN General Assembly, telling member nations it would have a "stabilizing influence" on Rhee's government and help facilitate the forthcoming UN Korean deliberations. The US also wanted UNTCOK in Korea because it believed visible UN support would enhance the legitimacy and security of the ROK whereas the perception it was solely an American client state could leave it isolated. Marshall instructed US diplomats in UNTCOK member nations to "urge upon their representatives" on the Commission to reconsider or delay the termination of their activities in South Korea. Marshall specifically reminded the US Embassies in Canberra and New Delhi of the "negative attitude ... demonstrated" by the Australian and Indian governments by their August 14 vote opposing UNTCOK consultations with the Rhee government.<sup>59</sup>

Although Australia opposed US Korean policy from February to August 1948, it had steadfastly maintained its Korean engagement. The US was concerned Australia would withdraw from UNTCOK but Evatt and External Affairs had no intention of doing so. Laurence McIntyre, Head of the Pacific Division in EA, told Myron Cowen, US Ambassador to Australia, it was "desirable to have" an "Australian

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representative in Korea at least until” the UN General Assembly meeting on the status of Korea. UNTCOK had agreed to send some delegates to the UN to complete the report on the May 10 election for the General Assembly while some officials remained in the ROK. McIntyre told Cowen he preferred Jamieson, Australia’s only UNTCOK official, to be in New York. Cowen said the US hoped Australia “would continue [to] be represented” in South Korea but was not convinced by McIntyre’s response that Australia had “no thought of withdrawing from UNTCOK at present” and “would regard itself as being identified with” the Commission “at least until” the UN General Assembly meeting. Cowen told Marshall he believed it “probable” that if the UNTCOK report was “completed outside” Korea, Jamieson would go with the “drafting group” and the Australians would not send a replacement to South Korea.<sup>60</sup>

Despite its opposition to US policy, Australia maintained its Korean engagement because Evatt and External Affairs were fully aware Australia could only hope to influence the Americans by continuing their direct engagement with them. Evatt and EA were never going to close that access avenue. The Australians accepted their policies would not always prevail but maintained their Korean engagement knowing the possibility of garnering some influence was better than leaving Korea and having no input. Evatt and EA wanted a united and free Korea that would help prevent a resurgent Japan again threatening Australia’s security. From Canberra’s perspective, American power was critical to containing Japan and determining the status of Korea, and therefore, influencing US Korean policy was crucial to Australia’s security interests. Throughout 1948, the US-Australian Korean engagement provided direct access to American officials that Canberra would not arbitrarily abandon. Indeed, Evatt was elected President of the UN General Assembly



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in 1948 with US support despite his notable clashes with US officials. Overall, Australia's Korean policy was consistent with the internationalist foreign policy crafted by Evatt and EA.<sup>61</sup>

### **Collaboration: Plimsoll, Shaw, Jamieson and the US**

Evatt and External Affairs hoped changing circumstances would provide Australia with opportunities to influence US policy to benefit its strategic and security interests such as guarding against a resurgent Japan. This is what happened in November 1948 when the US and Australian UN delegations collaborated on drafting a Korean resolution to determine the status of South Korea and the jurisdiction of its government, and the future UN role in Korea. In the five months from May to November 1948, the US-Australian Korean engagement had gone from the antagonism between Hodge, Jacobs and Jackson, to the cordial but reticent relationship between Jamieson and his US interlocutors, to the collaboration at the UN between US diplomats John Foster Dulles, Jacobs, Harold Noble, an Asian expert, and Australia's James Plimsoll. This evolution of the US-Australian Korean engagement demonstrated that personal relations between American and Australian officials did indeed shape the nature of their relationship.

The idea of US-Australian collaboration in drafting the Korean resolution was broached by Plimsoll in November 1948.<sup>62</sup> This was perhaps the clearest illustration of the impact of individual relationships on the US-Australian Korean engagement preceding the Korean War. Plimsoll, a Japanese expert, was already well known to the Americans. He spent time in the US in 1945 and then served with distinction as Australia's representative on the Far Eastern Commission, created to co-ordinate Allied policy towards post war Japan, from 1945-47. Plimsoll's early diplomatic

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career again demonstrates Australia's determination to have a voice in the post war Japanese settlement. Plimsoll was appointed to the Australian UN delegation in 1948 by Evatt who was elected President of the UN General Assembly the same year. At the UN, Plimsoll developed a personal rapport with John Foster Dulles, then a member of the US UN delegation, and this laid the foundation for their collaboration on the joint resolution on Korea.<sup>63</sup>

Australia's opposition to US Korean policy meant the Americans were initially wary of Plimsoll's overtures. Nevertheless, Plimsoll was "persistent" and his "insistence" he had Evatt's "approval" to "try to work out" with the Americans a "mutually agreeable draft resolution" and his belief "such a resolution could be prepared" endeared him to his US counterparts. The collaborative efforts of Dulles, Jacobs, Noble and Plimsoll produced an agreed draft Korean resolution in November 1948. Plimsoll assured his US interlocutors the Korean resolution had Evatt's "full approval" and proposed its introduction as a "joint US-Australian draft and possibly" with Nationalist China too. The Americans approved the draft and recognised the presentation of a "mutually acceptable joint draft ... would avoid much controversy among non-Soviet bloc [UN] delegates." This American-Australian co-operation produced a more flexible Korean policy. However, still wary of the Australians, the Americans agreed to introduce the Korean resolution as a "joint proposal provided Evatt gives [his] aforementioned commitment."<sup>64</sup>

The joint US-Australian Korean resolution contained three elements. It addressed US and Australian differences over the status of Korea and the recognition and area of authority of the ROK government. The US acknowledged Australian

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concerns about recognition of the ROK Assembly as the Korean national government and the indefinite division of Korea. There was agreement on the need for a continuing UN presence in Korea, through UNTCOK or a successor commission consisting of as many UNTCOK member nations as were willing to participate. The Americans accepted Australia's view that the role of UNTCOK or a new commission would be to continue to facilitate Korean unification as stipulated in the November 1947 UN resolution.<sup>65</sup>

On November 19, the Americans approved the content of the joint Korean resolution and the "tactic" of introducing it as a "joint US-Australia-China proposal". Although welcoming Australian support, the still wary Americans wanted to introduce the resolution as soon as possible "to minimize" the "possibility" of a "shift" in the "Australian position."<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, on November 20, Robert Lovett, Acting US Secretary of State, acknowledging the Australian effort, told his diplomats the State Department "appreciates" the "desirability" of the US-Australian "endeavour" to "work out joint sponsorship" of the UN General Assembly "resolution on Korea and to that end", was "receptive" to the Australian "points [of] view".<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Dulles now regarded the US and Australia as a team. He advised Marshall that time was "short" and the American and Australian UN delegations were "under increasing pressure" to make "unnecessary" changes that would "weaken" the joint Korean resolution. Dulles urged the State Department to "approve" the resolution so it could "be introduced immediately" and the Americans and Australians could then concentrate on gaining "as many supporting delegations as possible."<sup>68</sup>

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Largely due to the efforts of Plimsoll and Dulles, Australia was indeed able to influence aspects of US Korean policy in November 1948 despite its strong opposition in the preceding months to the American wish to recognise the ROK Assembly as the Korean national government. The joint resolution drafted by Dulles and Plimsoll, together with Nationalist China, and presented to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly on December 6, 1948, declared:

there has been established a lawful government having control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea where the Commission was able to observe and consult ... and that this Government is based on elections which were [a] valid expression of the free will of the electorate of that part of Korea and which were observed by the Temporary Commission.<sup>69</sup>

The US acknowledged Australia's argument that indeed, UNTCOK's activities were limited to American controlled southern Korea, and therefore the results of the May 10 election could not be applicable to the entire peninsula. Australia, in turn, accepted the US position that the ROK Assembly was legitimately elected.

This resolution also recommended that the US and Soviet Union withdraw their forces from Korea "as early as practicable", and authorised the replacement of UNTCOK with the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK). Removing the "Temporary" was tacit acknowledgement that the division of Korea would likely be indefinite. UNCOK would seek to unify the peninsula by facilitating the removal of economic and social barriers "caused by the division of Korea" and the "further development of representative government of Korea based on the freely expressed will of the people", and observe and verify the withdrawal of American and Soviet forces from Korea. In drafting this resolution, the Australians were able to extract two notable concessions from the Americans. The resolution stipulated that the South

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Korean Government was “not declared to be [the] Government of the whole of Korea” and it did “not recommend [UN] recognition” of the ROK Government.<sup>70</sup>

In his statement to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly on December 7, Plimsoll said the joint US-Australian-Nationalist Chinese resolution kept “open the door for the unification of Korea.”<sup>71</sup> Plimsoll’s explanation of the strategic significance of Korea by emphasising the importance of the Asia-Pacific in the global effort against communism reflected the US and Australian alignment on Korean policy and the Communist threat. Indeed, Korea was important to US and Australian strategic and security interests. The US wanted a stable and free ROK to help contain communism in the Asia-Pacific, whereas Australia wanted a free and unified Korea that would help constrain Japan. Plimsoll praised the work of UNTCOK and noted the US military government’s “co-operation” with the Commission. Plimsoll said Australia’s Korean policy reflected the substance of the joint resolution.<sup>72</sup> On December 8, the UN First Committee voted 41-6 (the Soviet bloc) with two abstentions, to approve the joint resolution. The Soviet counter resolution was defeated 42-6, with three abstentions.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the adoption of the joint US-Australian-Nationalist Chinese resolution by the UN General Assembly on December 12, the ambiguity over the status of the two Koreas remained. UNTCOK was now replaced by UNCOK whose members were Australia, Nationalist China, El Salvador, France, India, the Philippines and Syria.<sup>74</sup> The General Assembly voted 48-6 (the Soviet bloc) and one abstention to approve the joint resolution. UNCOKs membership was endorsed 42 votes to zero with three abstentions.<sup>75</sup> Australia was determined to continue pursuing Korean

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unification despite acknowledging the geopolitics of the Cold War made this highly unlikely or extremely difficult.

Jacobs, still wary from his clashes with Jackson, was now hopeful the passage of the joint resolution and the creation of UNCOK would usher a more amicable relationship with Australia. On December 15, Jacobs wrote to Niles Bond, Assistant Chief, North East Asian Affairs, informing him that Plimsoll had said Jamieson, “is a good man” and “will probably be” the Australian representative on UNCOK. Plimsoll also said Jackson “would not, and he emphasized the not, return.” Jacobs’s delight was palpable. He told Bond that “with the elimination of Mr. Jackson, we shall not be plagued any longer with his ‘pinko’ ideas and approach to the subject. I think even Dr. Evatt, and certainly Mr. Plimsoll, got fed up with the devil quoting Jackson as the scripture on Korea.”<sup>76</sup> In January 1949, Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo, was appointed Australia’s representative on UNCOK with Jamieson as the alternate delegate.

With Australia now considering whether it should recognise the new ROK government, in January 1949, McIntyre noted we “would be reducing the hopes of a united Korea if we recognised the Seoul Government as the Government of *all* Korea.” McIntyre said if South Korea was “recognised as a state, and its Government as a lawful Government, ... limited recognition” could also be accorded to North Korea “by recognising the de facto authority of the Pyongyang regime”.<sup>77</sup> On January 31, External Affairs instructed Shaw, to attend the UNCOK meeting in Seoul that day and to take Jamieson with him. Shaw was told that “with China in a weakened position, there are greater responsibilities on Australia working with the United States

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to make the Commission effective” and that “you should accept the chairmanship” of UNCOK “if that is possible.”<sup>78</sup>

With the Communists in the ascendancy in the Chinese civil war, Australia was now much more concerned with the security threat posed by the Chinese Communists than it had been with potential Soviet expansion. Australia now regarded an active American presence in the Asia-Pacific as increasingly critical to its security. Hence, Australia saw its membership of UNCOK as an avenue to maintain its direct engagement with the US; Evatt and External Affairs were explicit on this point. The US was now, more than ever, the great power whom Australia hoped would guarantee its security.

Shaw advised Evatt and External Affairs on February 1, 1949, that Australia should prioritise strengthening US-Australian ties. While Shaw believed Australia should remain involved in Korea, he cautioned Canberra against committing too strongly. Shaw said he and Jamieson would attend the UNCOK meeting in Seoul “most unwillingly” because it coincided with the visit to Tokyo of a high powered US delegation. Believing the US was evaluating its Japanese policy, Shaw had arranged two meetings with the American delegation which he would not be able to attend if he went to Korea. Shaw was clear about where Australia’s priority should be, asking Evatt and EA that he be immediately notified if they “consider(ed)” the meetings with the Americans “sufficiently important to warrant” his “remaining in Tokyo”. Shaw was much more concerned with US Japanese policy than with the UNCOK meeting. If the US, whose presence in the Asia-Pacific was crucial to Australia’s security, was indeed evaluating its policy towards Japan whom Australia believed could again

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threaten its security, Shaw argued he needed to meet with the US delegation. Indeed, EA accepted Shaw's request that Jamieson go to Korea alone.<sup>79</sup>

Shaw was ambivalent about Australian involvement in Korea. Requesting specific instructions from Canberra on whether Australia intended to recognise the new South Korean government, Shaw advised he had "strong misgivings about committing ourselves" to the ROK government "which may find itself in a few years time in a similar position" to the crumbling Nationalist regime in China. Nevertheless, Shaw advised Canberra that having accepted the legitimacy of the ROK government, Australia should upgrade its diplomatic contact with South Korea and suggested that Jamieson, as Australia's representative on UNCOK, be accredited as Australia's Consul-General or Charge d'Affaires in Seoul.<sup>80</sup>

On February 2, External Affairs informed Shaw that although Evatt was "considering" the "question of recognition" of the ROK Government, this would not encompass the "appointment of [a] diplomatic or consular representative in Seoul." Regarding Shaw's doubts about Australia's sponsorship of the joint US-Australian-Nationalist Chinese resolution on Korea passed by the General Assembly on December 12, EA told Shaw Australia "succeeded in ensuring the presentation and acceptance of a resolution which placed greater limitation on the terms of recognition" of the South Korean Government "than was originally intended by the United States."<sup>81</sup> Whereas Shaw was concerned Australia could become too deeply involved in Korea, EA, buoyed by the success of the joint Korean resolution, was determined to pursue Australia's interests through engaging the US in Korea and maximising opportunities to influence American policy.



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Although the US and Australia differed over the role of UNCOK, the Americans were impressed with Shaw. On February 9, the US Mission in South Korea informed the State Department that Graham Lucas, Assistant Secretary of UNCOK, described Shaw as the “sparkplug” of the Commission and “his projected return to Japan within three weeks has caused” him “some concern as he feels that there is no one else among the delegates who possesses as much intelligence and vigour as does Mr. Shaw.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the Americans were pleased the UNCOK meeting on February 10 elected Australia Chairman of the Commission for its first month of operation.<sup>83</sup>

Australia regarded UNCOK’s role as a continuation of UNTCOK’s which was to “foster... democratic institutions” in Korea and facilitate the peaceful unification of the peninsula. In contrast, as Shaw advised External Affairs on February 17, the Americans “regard the purpose” of UNCOK as being a “deterrent to aggression from the North and a stabilising factor in the South.” The US believed UN support of the ROK would strengthen its stability and provide security against Communist designs. Shaw reported that most US military officials “apparently believe civil war [is] likely within a couple of months and opinion is evenly divided as to whether the balance of armed strength lies with the North or the South.” Shaw told EA he believed Royall, the US Army Secretary, had “instructed American forces not to become involved” if civil war broke out between the two Koreas. Questioning UNCOK’s role, Shaw advised EA that “member states may have to decide whether support” for the ROK Government and “being a stabilising influence are sufficient reasons” for the

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Commission's "continued presence" in Korea.<sup>84</sup> Shaw was asking Evatt and EA to consider how important Korea really was to Australia's security interests.

Shaw's cable to External Affairs on February 24 reflected the dilemma with Australia's Korean policy. Australia sought to achieve what appeared unlikely: reconciling its view of UNCOK's role with that of the US. Australia envisaged an expansive role for UNCOK whereas the US specifically wanted the Commission's visible presence as a deterrent to North Korean designs against the fledgling ROK. Shaw questioned Australia's understanding of UNCOK's purpose, given the political situation in Korea meant it was highly improbable the Commission would be able to facilitate Korean unification. Yet Shaw recognised that if Australia chose to continue supporting the US, it would have to acquiesce to UNCOK's continuing presence in Korea on US terms. Shaw observed the May 1948 election and the passage of the December 12 UN resolution recognising the South Korean Government, meant the "division" between the two Koreas "has hardened and the problem of unity is much more difficult than last year."<sup>85</sup> Shaw advised that unless UNCOK could facilitate Korean unification, its presence in the ROK was redundant.

Shaw noted Rhee wanted to unify Korea by force but was "being discouraged from such a course by the Americans." He reported that US support for the ROK was part of its international "programme to bolster anti-Communist regimes" and said the "Americans in Seoul stress the importance" of UNCOK's "presence there as a 'stabilising' influence." The Americans reasoned UN support of the ROK would bolster its security and stability, thereby enabling it to help contain communism in North East Asia. Shaw advised that in the circumstances, it was "unlikely" UNCOK

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would “accomplish much, if anything, in the tasks of breaking down the barrier between” the two Koreas, “assisting in the development” of the ROK, or “ultimately bringing about the independence and unity of Korea.” If UNCOK could not carry out its function, Shaw said “it may have to be determined whether the Commission should remain” in Seoul “or whether it should ... leave.” Shaw cautioned that UNCOK and Australia needed to consider “political factors such as ... support for the anti-Communist regime in South Korea and for ... American policy which must be weighed against [the] probable absence of positive achievement.”<sup>86</sup>

Several months later on July 12, Shaw sent External Affairs a sobering appraisal of the Korean situation and UNCOK’s ineffectiveness. Shaw said although the US and Soviet Union had no “wish to make Korea an issue of war or of serious risk of war,” neither was willing to take action that would actively reduce tensions on the peninsula. He attributed the “original responsibility for the division of Korea” to the US and Soviets and said both powers needed to “continually ... promote unification.” Australia had consistently argued that only the US and Soviets could resolve the Korean impasse. The Soviets and Americans withdrew their forces from Korea in December 1948 and June 1949, respectively, but they retained advisors in the ROK and North Korea. Nevertheless, Shaw observed that even without the US or Soviet presence, “the basis of conflict among the Koreans” would “still remain.” Shaw reported UNCOK “has failed to progress in its tasks of unification or even reduction of barriers” between the two Koreas.<sup>87</sup>

Although Shaw said UNCOK could not “indefinitely ... remain” in limbo in Seoul, withdrawal of the Commission following the departure of US troops would be

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an “acknowledgement of defeat” and “might be interpreted as abandonment” of the ROK and “have unsettling effects.” Shaw reasoned “it may be best to recognise the hardening of the division in Korea and to concentrate on reducing barriers and on maintaining peace”, and said “unification might have to await the general easing of tension.” UNCOK’s ineffectiveness frustrated Shaw, hence his recommendation the Commission be withdrawn from Korea and replaced “by a less pretentious body” such as a Good Offices Committee or a single Commissioner.<sup>88</sup> However, Evatt and External Affairs were emphatic in informing Shaw that UNCOK “must remain in Seoul until and unless” the UN General Assembly “takes [a] contrary decision.”<sup>89</sup>

There was never any question that Evatt and External Affairs would keep Australia engaged in Korea. EA alone could not determine what UNCOK would do but it resolved that Australia would remain in Korea. EA accepted its policies would not always prevail but also knew an Australian withdrawal from Korea would end the US-Australian Korean engagement. From Canberra’s vantage point, the status of the Korean peninsula, seen as intertwined with that of post war Japan, made staying important to Australia’s security interests. Canberra, knowing Australia’s security was predicated on an active US presence in the Asia-Pacific, was never going to terminate its avenue of direct access to US officials in Korea and reduce its capacity to influence American policy. Indeed, the ascendancy of the Communists in the Chinese civil war prompted Shaw to argue Australia’s primary foreign policy goal should be to strengthen ties with the US and, concerned Australia was committing itself too deeply in Korea, he may have thought withdrawing from UNCOK would not be detrimental to the US-Australian relationship. Evatt and EA disagreed.

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Indeed, Australia strengthened its link with South Korea, recognising it as a nation on August 15, 1949, one year after its creation.<sup>90</sup> The US-Australian Korean engagement remained the focal point of the evolving relationship between the two nations, signalled by Canberra's acceptance of Washington's September 16 proposal for a joint US-Australian UN resolution affirming UNCOK "shall continue in being". This joint resolution said that UNCOK's functions included authority to "observe and report any developments which might lead to, or otherwise involve, military conflict in Korea." This proved to be extremely significant for the next phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement. And of course, UNCOK would also continue facilitating "bringing about the unification of Korea in accordance" with the UN General Assembly resolution of November 14, 1947.<sup>91</sup> Although the US and Australia unsuccessfully "attempted to secure" China's withdrawal from UNCOK following the Chinese Communist victory, their joint resolution was adopted in the plenary session of the UN General Assembly on October 21.<sup>92</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Three periods of evolution defined the US-Australian Korean engagement from May 1948 to October 1949: Australian opposition to the American push to declare the ROK Assembly the Korean national government, the Australian convergence with the US on the Soviet and Chinese Communist threat to their strategic and security interests, and their Korean policy alignment. Relations between US and Australian officials in this period began with the ongoing tension and mistrust between Hodge, Jacobs and Jackson, but were significantly improved by the cordiality between Jamieson, Shaw, Hodge and Jacobs, and with the collaboration between Plimsoll and Dulles at the UN. Nevertheless, despite the alignment of US and

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Australian strategic and security interests and their Korean collaboration, the two nations maintained similar rather than identical interests.

This period of the US-Australian relationship was much more problematic and nuanced than is commonly perceived. Although Shaw and Makin were critical of the May 1948 election process, Australia accepted the legitimacy of the new South Korean Assembly. However, Australia opposed the US move to declare the Assembly the Korean national government, arguing it would divide the peninsula indefinitely. The Truman Administration had concluded Soviet intransigence meant Korean unification was unlikely, whereas Australia still believed the Americans and Russians could resolve the impasse. Washington and Canberra also differed over the role of UNTCOK and its successor, UNCOK. The Americans wanted the two Commissions to help facilitate the security and stability of South Korea, whereas Australia wanted them to continue pursuing Korean unification.

The Soviet blockade of Berlin resulted in the Chifley government's recognition of the Communist threat and Australia's convergence with the US on the implacability of this danger to their strategic and security interests. This, together with the ascendancy of the Communists in the Chinese civil war and the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb, increased the geopolitical significance of Korea for the US and Australia and led to their Korean policy collaboration.<sup>93</sup> American and Australian strategic and security interests were intertwined in Korea and were inextricably linked to Australia's security dependence on the US. This was why Canberra prioritised Australia's relationship with the US.

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Although the Truman Administration had decided to withdraw its forces from South Korea, it did not want to leave the fledgling nation vulnerable to North Korean aggression. Hence, the US sought UN backing for the ROK, reasoning this would strengthen its stability and security. To generate international support for the ROK, the US needed to consider Australian and other allied perspectives and so it relented on its push to recognise the ROK Assembly as the Korean national government. This facilitated the collaboration between Plimsoll and Dulles that produced the US-Australian-Chinese joint UN resolution on Korea in December 1948. In this instance, Australia was able to influence US policy. The resolution recognised the Assembly as the government of South Korea and did not require the UN to recognise the ROK.

Nevertheless, despite the US-Australian collaboration on the joint UN resolution on Korea and their convergence on the Communist threat, policy differences remained. Australia's interest in the status of Korea was inextricably linked to its resolute belief that Japan remained the primary threat to its security. Australia wanted a free and unified Korea that would help prevent a Japanese resurgence. That Evatt and External Affairs appointed Shaw, Jamieson and Plimsoll to their diplomatic posts because they were Japanese experts, signalled that Australia regarded the resolution of the Korean impasse would be part of the post war peace settlement with Japan. This contrasted with the Truman Administration's recognition that post war Japan no longer posed a security threat. Rather, the US calculated a rehabilitated Japan and a stable and secure South Korea were crucial to the containment of communism in the Asia-Pacific.

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The Communist ascendancy in the Chinese civil war throughout 1949 created some tension in Australian Korean policy. Shaw was ambivalent about Australia's continuing membership of UNCOK, warning External Affairs against committing Australia too deeply in the ROK, but he urged Canberra to align itself much more closely with the US. The American-Australian Korean engagement was crucial to Canberra's objective to ensure an active US presence in the region to safeguard Australia's security. Australia's involvement in Korea gave its officials direct access to their American counterparts and an opportunity to influence US policy to benefit Australia's strategic and security interests. This was why despite their ambivalence over Australia's membership of UNCOK and its commitment to the ROK, Evatt and EA always prioritised Australian engagement with the US.

The trajectory of the US-Australian Korean engagement throughout 1948-49 also demonstrated the impact of the relationships between American and Australian officials involved with Korea on the evolution of the relationship between the two nations. Tensions created by Australian criticisms of the May 1948 election process and its opposition to the American push to declare the ROK Assembly the Korean national government, were exacerbated by the suspicion and belligerence between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs. Such was Hodge's and Jacobs's mistrust of Jackson that no substantive improvement in the US-Australian Korean engagement was likely while Jackson remained on UNTCOK.

Jackson's departure was clearly a turning point. The reduced tensions between Jamieson, Shaw Hodge and Jacobs resulted in a noticeable improvement to the tone of the US-Australian Korean engagement. While the US and Australia



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continued to disagree over the status of the South Korean Assembly and the role of UNCOK, Jamieson's reticent approach and Shaw's considered deliberations struck a chord with Hodge and Jacobs. The Americans quickly realised they were dealing with two people very different to Jackson. Relations improved further with the collaboration between Plimsoll and Dulles in drafting and securing the passage of the US-Australian-Chinese joint resolution on Korea. The personal rapport Plimsoll and Dulles had developed while serving at the UN fostered a collegial relationship unimaginable between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs.

The opening phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement from 1947-49 was a significant catalyst in the evolution of their diplomatic relationship in the formative years of the Cold War. From November 1947, Korea was at the epicentre of the evolving US-Australian relationship. The US, Soviet Union and Australia, were the only three nations that maintained a continuous presence in Korea throughout 1947-49. Australian officials served uninterrupted on UNTCOK and UNCOK through to the commencement of the Korean conflict in June 1950.<sup>94</sup> The 1947-49 American-Australian diplomatic engagement over Korea laid the foundation for their co-operation during the Korean War, 1950-53. The Korean War collaboration between the US and Australia reflected the alignment of their strategic and security interests and further strengthened their already evolving relationship.

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### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The scholarship on the US-Australian Korean engagement from May 1948 to October 1949 has been negligible. US Korean policy in 1948-49 has been examined by the American historians Allan Millet, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2005) Chapters 5-8; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990) Chapters 4-8 and 11-12; James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade: American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985); Charles Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950* (Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1981); Leland Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of US Policy in the United Nations* (Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1956); E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (King's Crown Press, New York, 1951); Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (Norton, New York, 2013) Chapters 2-3; William Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: US Policy Towards China and Korea* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1981); William Stueck and Boram Yi, "An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US-South Korean Alliance", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 177-209; John Lewis Gaddis, "Korea in American Politics, Strategy, and Diplomacy, 1945-50", in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye (eds), *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1977) pp 277-298.

Chapter one in Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) outlines Australia's membership of UNTCOK and its successor UNCOK. However, O'Neill's focus is on Australian policy and diplomacy during the Korean War, not its pre war Korean involvement. Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) Chapters 1-3, also discusses Australia's membership of UNTCOK and UNCOK in some detail but his argument that Australia played a subservient role to the US contrasts with the evidence in this chapter. David Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 43, 2, 1997, pp 153-167, examines Australian involvement in Korea from 1943-1950, in the context of Australia's relations with the US, the UN, and its engagement in the Asia-Pacific. Dutton notes Australian membership of UNTCOK and UNCOK but is not concerned with the impact of the US-Australian Korean engagement on the evolution of their relationship.

Leon Gordenker, *The United Nations and the Peaceful Unification of Korea: The Politics of Field Operations* (Marinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1959) remains the most comprehensive account of the work of UNTCOK and UNCOK.

<sup>2</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 454.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw to External Affairs (hereafter EA), 19 May 1948, UNTCOK, National Archives of Australia, (hereafter NAA), A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2; News report from New York on the Korean elections, 15 May 1948; and US Department of State, Statement by Secretary of State Marshall on the Korean Elections, 12 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>4</sup> Shaw to EA, 19 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2; News report from New York on the Korean elections, 15 May 1948; and US Department of State, Statement by Secretary of State Marshall on the Korean Elections, 12 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also cables from Jackson to EA, 13 and 17 May 1948, News item from Singapore Radio, 13 May 1948, News item from New York, 13 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>5</sup> Shaw to EA, 19 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jackson to EA, 7 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson to EA, 13 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>8</sup> EA to Jackson, 11 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>9</sup> Shaw to EA, 19 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>10</sup> Shaw said that "should the Americans sponsor recognition in the United Nations Assembly we should oppose it. As things stand, Australia, Canada, India, Syria and probably France oppose recommending Syngman Rhee as President of a national government. The Commission in the meantime could be instructed to continue to explore means of obtaining their prime purpose which was to facilitate the formation of a national assembly for all Korea." Shaw to EA, 19 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>11</sup> Reuters report on UNTCOK's endorsement of the 10 May Korean elections, 11 June 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also News item on the new South Korean Government from New York, 1 June 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

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<sup>12</sup> American objectives were: “(1) Establishment of an independent government in Southern Korea, friendly to the United States. (2) Prevention of Communist infiltration from northern Korea or the growth of communism in the south. (3) Prevention of an ‘anschluss’ directed by the U.S.S.R. for the creation of a ‘people’s republic’ under Soviet influence. (4) Union of north and south Korea into a united state friendly to the United States. (5) Assistance in the building up of a Korean State which can be strong enough militarily to defend itself, so that United States forces can be withdrawn. (6) Continued United States influence in Korea through the provision of economic aid, technical assistance and political advice.” Ambassador Norman Makin to EA, “United States Policy in Korea”, 24 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>13</sup> Makin to EA, 24 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>14</sup> Makin to EA, 24 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>15</sup> Shaw relayed the view amongst some UNTCOK members and UN officials, that given their dominant position in the South Korean Assembly, Syngman Rhee and his allies would firmly resist any efforts to expand the Assembly to include North Koreans, and would oppose “further talks with the North.” Shaw reported to Canberra that: “Syngman Rhee’s strength derives from his uncompromising attitude to the U.S.S.R. and the Communists, even at a time when it was American policy to endeavour to make the Joint Soviet-American Commission work. Syngman Rhee’s popularity has risen as hopes of cooperation through the Joint Commission fell and he now feels himself in an unassailable position as the political leader of South Korea.” Shaw to EA, 26 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson to EA, 25 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>17</sup> External Affairs’s instructions to Jackson were clear about UNTCOK’s post election role: “Initiate consultations with [the] elected [South Korean] representatives regarding attainment of freedom and independence of Korean people. In particular such consultations should endeavour to find means acceptable to both North and South [Korea] of arranging for the unification of all Korea.” EA to Jackson, 28 May 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>18</sup> Telegram, Marshall to Jacobs, June 4, 1948, US National Archives II (hereafter USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>19</sup> Jackson also told External Affairs the US wanted UNTCOK to recognise the Korean Assembly’s authority throughout all of Korea, but the Commission was presently “against any form of resolution” regarding the status of the South Korean government. Jackson to EA, 5 June 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also Jackson to EA, 1 June 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>20</sup> Telegram, Marshall to US Embassy, Canberra, June 7, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 11, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>22</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, June 11, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>23</sup> A.B. Jamieson to EA, 3 July 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also Cable, Jackson to EA, June 26, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/LookupVolNoNumber/16~151](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/LookupVolNoNumber/16~151), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 19, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>26</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 19, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>27</sup> Telegram, Part 1, Jacobs to Marshall, June 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

<sup>28</sup> Priscilla Roberts, “Jamieson, Arthur B.”, in Spencer Tucker, (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) p 284 and Inclosure 182: Biographic Note on A.B. Jamieson, UNTCOK Report, Book Number 3, November 14, 1947-1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2109, Folder 2.

<sup>29</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 23, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2.

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<sup>30</sup> Memorandum, Jackson to UNTCOK Chairman, June 21, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2. See also, Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>31</sup> Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 38, 3, 1992, pp 327-29; James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2015) pp 30-31.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum, Jackson to UNTCOK Chairman, June 22, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2. See also Memorandum, Jackson to UNTCOK Chairman, June 21, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2, and Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>33</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2. See also Memorandum, Jacobs to Marshall, June 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2107, Folder 2, and Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>34</sup> A.B. Jamieson to EA, 3 July 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2. See also Cable, Jackson to EA, June 26, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, III, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~151](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~151), accessed March 31, 2010; Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, June 28, 1948, Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 28, 1948, Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1. See also Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, June 28, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>36</sup> Telegram, Hodge to Marshall, June 28, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1. See also Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 26, 1948 and Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, June 30, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>37</sup> United Kingdom High Commissioner to Australia to EA, 28 June 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>38</sup> Jamieson's report to EA of his meeting with Hodge, 4 July 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>39</sup> Jamieson's report to EA of his meeting with Hodge, 4 July 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>40</sup> Shaw to EA, 6 July 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>41</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, July 8, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>42</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, July 9, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 1.

<sup>43</sup> Telegram, Nielsen (US Embassy, Canberra) to Marshall, July 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2.

<sup>44</sup> Telegram, Nielsen (US Embassy, Canberra) to Marshall, July 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2.

<sup>45</sup> Cable, EA to Jamieson, July 16, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, IV, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Telegram, Jessup to Marshall, July 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2.

<sup>47</sup> Telegram, Jessup to Marshall, July 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2. See also Memorandum, Bond to Butterworth, July 29, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2.

<sup>48</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, July 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2108, Folder 2.

<sup>49</sup> Cable from Jamieson to EA, 1 August 1948, UNTCOK, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, Part 2.

<sup>50</sup> Memorandum, Butterworth to Marshall, August 2, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2109, Folder 3. Emphasis in original.

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- <sup>51</sup> Cable, EA to Jamieson, August 4, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, IV, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>52</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, August 11, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2109, Folder 3.
- <sup>53</sup> Telegram, Marshall to US Embassy, Canberra, August 9, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2109, Folder 3.
- <sup>54</sup> Telegram, Jacobs to Marshall, August 14, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2110, Folder 1.
- <sup>55</sup> Under the ROK constitution, the President was elected by the Assembly to a four year term. Rhee was elected 180-16. Rhee provoked a political crisis when he changed the constitution in 1952 to have the President popularly elected. See chapter 6 of this thesis. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was proclaimed on September 9, 1948, with Kim Il-sung as premier.
- <sup>56</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1.
- <sup>57</sup> Note, EA to US Embassy in Canberra, August 16, 1948, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, IV, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>58</sup> Telegram, Nielsen (US Embassy, Canberra) to Marshall, August 18, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2110, Folder 1.
- <sup>59</sup> Telegram, Marshall to US Embassies, Canberra and New Delhi, August 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2110, Folder 1.
- <sup>60</sup> Telegram, Cowen to Marshall, August 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2110, Folder 1. See also Telegram, Cowen to Marshall, August 31, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2110, Folder 1.
- <sup>61</sup> Peter Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans", *Historical Studies*, 18, 1979, pp 546-60; Neville Meaney, "Dr HV Evatt and the United Nations: The problem of collective security and liberal internationalism", in James Cotton and David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations* (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012) pp 34-65; Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 38, 3, 1992, pp 316-33; Peter Crockett, *Evatt: A Life* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993) Chapters 13-14; John Murphy, *Evatt: A Life* (NewSouth Publishing, Sydney, 2016) Chapters 10-11.
- <sup>62</sup> Telegram, US UN Delegation to Marshall, November 16, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>63</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsole* (Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat, 2015) pp 39-40 and 56-57.
- <sup>64</sup> Telegram, US UN Delegation to Marshall, November 16, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1. See also proposed text of joint Korean resolution, Telegram, US UN Delegation to Marshall, November 16, 1948, and Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, November 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>65</sup> Telegram, US UN Delegation to Marshall, November 16, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1. See also proposed text of joint Korean resolution, Telegram, US UN Delegation to Marshall, November 16, 1948; Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, November 24, 1948; Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, November 25, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>66</sup> Telegram, US Embassy, Paris, to Marshall, November 19, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>67</sup> Telegram, Lovett to US Embassy, Paris, November 20, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>68</sup> Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, November 24, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>69</sup> Cable from Australian UN Delegation to EA, December 1, 1948, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/7, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~157](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~157), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>70</sup> Cable from Australian UN Delegation to EA, December 1, 1948, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/7, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~157](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~157), accessed March 31, 2010.

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- <sup>71</sup> Statement by Plimsoll, December 7, 1948, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/7, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>72</sup> Cable from Australian delegation to UN to EA, December 7, 1948, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.
- <sup>73</sup> Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, December 9, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>74</sup> Cable from Australian delegation to UN to EA, December 12, 1948, NAA, A1838, 3123/4/5, IV, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~159](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~159), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>75</sup> Telegram, Dulles to Marshall, December 12, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>76</sup> Letter, Jacobs to Bond, December 15, 1948, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 1.
- <sup>77</sup> Statement by McIntyre, “Korea – Applications for Children’s Fund”, January 22, 1949, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.
- <sup>78</sup> Cable, EA to Shaw, January 31, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~160](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~160), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>79</sup> Shaw to Evatt and EA, 1 February 1949, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1. The US delegation included the Army Secretary, Royall, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, General Wedemeyer, the Head of the State Department’s North East Asian Division, Bishop, and the Assistant Secretary of Labour.
- <sup>80</sup> Shaw to Evatt and EA, 1 February 1949, Korea – Foreign Policy – Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1 Part 1.
- <sup>81</sup> Cable, EA to Shaw, February 2, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>82</sup> Letter, American Mission, Seoul, to State Department, February 9, 1949, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 2. See also Memorandum of Conversation, Shaw, Jamieson, Muccio and Gardiner, on role of UNCOK, February 7, 1949, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 2.
- <sup>83</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, February 10, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>84</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, February 17, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010. See also Memorandum of Conversation, Shaw, Jamieson, Muccio and Gardiner, on role of UNCOK, February 7, 1949, and Telegram, Drumright, American Mission, Seoul to Acheson, February 12, 1949, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 2.
- <sup>85</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, February 24, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>86</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, February 24, 1949, NAA, A1838, 852/20/4, V, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010. See also Telegram, Drumright, American Mission, Seoul to Acheson, February 12, 1949, USNAII, RG 59, Department of State, Decimal File 1945-1949, Box 2111, Folder 2.
- <sup>87</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, July 12, 1949, NAA, A1838, 3123/12, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>88</sup> Cable, Shaw to EA, July 12, 1949, NAA, A1838, 3123/12, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>89</sup> Cable, EA to Shaw, July 19, 1949, SFU: Evatt Collection, Cables – Tokyo – 1946-49, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.
- <sup>90</sup> This was facilitated by John Myon Chang, the ROK Ambassador to the US, who conveyed South Korea’s wish for Australian recognition through Norman Makin, the Australian Ambassador to the US. Cable, Makin to Evatt, August 9, 1949, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1/1,

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[www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Cable, from Australian delegation to UN to EA, September 25, 1949, NAA, A1838, 250/8/3/4, I, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/d30d79e4ab5621f9ca256c86001...), accessed March 31, 2010.

<sup>92</sup> Cable, from Australian delegation to UN to EA, October 3, 1949, NAA, A1838, 250/8/3/4, I, [www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/16~174](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/16~174), accessed March 31, 2010. There was one change to UNCOK's membership with Turkey replacing Syria.

<sup>93</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War*, pp 31-33. The Chifley government also dealt with Communists at home. In August 1949, Chifley ordered troops to work the coal mines to break the coalminers strike instigated by Communist union leaders in June. Some of these Communist leaders were jailed. See David Day, *Chifley* (Harper Collins, Sydney, 2001) pp 487-492.

<sup>94</sup> "Australian Policy Towards the Far East", 21 October 1948, Korea—Foreign Policy—Relations with Australia, NAA, A1838, 3127/10/1, Part 1; McCormack, Chapters 1-2; Dutton, "An Alternate Course in Australian Foreign Policy: Korea 1943-1950", pp 153-167.

## **PART II:**

### **Formalising the American- Australian Alliance: 1950-51**



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Korea 1950: America's Search for Allies and Australia's Pursuit of a Security Relationship with the US**

#### **Introduction**

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 further strengthened the evolving American-Australian Korean engagement as it now became intertwined with the UN/US effort to defend South Korea from the North Korean invasion. America and Australia became diplomatic partners and allies at war in Korea as they had been in the Pacific during World War Two. From 1947-49, Korea was the focal point of the evolving US-Australian relationship which was much more nuanced and problematic than commonly perceived. Australia's opposition to some US Korean policies had exacerbated the tensions between some US and Australian officials. However, there was also a Korean policy convergence and collaboration between the two nations. This chapter argues that throughout 1950, although differences between American and Australian Korean policies remained, the two nations strengthened their collaboration over Korea. The chapter also argues that America's search for allies in Korea and Australia's simultaneous pursuit of a security agreement with the US strengthened the relationship between the two nations.<sup>1</sup>

What follows is an evaluation of three elements of US and Australian Korean policies throughout 1950 showing that while Korea remained central to the strengthening relationship between the two nations, their strategic and security interests were similar rather than identical. The chapter begins with an analysis of the beginning of the Australian-Republic of Korea (ROK/South Korea) relationship. The US encouraged a cautious Australia to form official diplomatic relations with the

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ROK from early 1950. Following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the US was determined to have Australia and other allies involved in the UN effort to defend South Korea. The Menzies government initially offered only limited assistance, and was reluctant to make a stronger commitment. The lone government voice urging a larger Australian presence in the Korean conflict was Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs. Spender was stubbornly pursuing a security treaty with the US and argued a visible Australian military commitment to the UN/US defence of South Korea would greatly facilitate this objective.

The American recognition of the Australian commitment to the UN/US effort in Korea significantly increased Australia's visibility in Washington. Nevertheless, the US and Australia differed over policy regarding Communist China. Whereas the Truman Administration adopted a confrontationist approach to the Chinese, Australia, although wary of China, urged the Americans to utilise diplomacy to reduce tensions over Formosa and, with other US allies, opposed the American push to bomb China following its full scale intervention in the Korean War in November 1950. Australia was also critical of General Douglas MacArthur's performance as Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command (CinC UNC) following the Chinese intervention.

Australia wanted a free and united Korea that would help thwart a resurgence of Japanese power. Although Canberra's recognition of the Communist danger was amplified by the Chinese Communist victory, it still perceived a resurgent Japan as the greater security threat. Australia regarded an active US presence in the Asia-Pacific as essential to safeguarding its security because only American power could act as a bulwark against Japan. This Korea-Japan-US security connection

underscored Australia's Korean policy as it pursued a defence agreement with the Americans by directly engaging them in the Asia-Pacific region and making the US relationship the central pillar of its foreign policy.

The Chifley Labor government had regarded a resurgent Japan as the primary security threat to Australia whereas the Menzies government believed communism was the major danger. However, Chifley had been cognizant of the Communist threat to Australia's security. Australian participation in the Berlin airlift to counter the Soviet blockade of that city in 1948-49, demonstrated Chifley's recognition of the Communist threat which was solidified with the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the Communist victory in China in 1949. Chifley also acted decisively at home to break the Communist instigated coal miners strike in 1949. Thus, Australia's concern with the Communist threat began with Chifley and was strengthened under Menzies. Indeed, from its ascension to power in December 1949, the Menzies government was much more focussed on the Communist threat than the potential danger posed by a rearmed Japan. Menzies's strident anti-communism attracted significant domestic political support. Although Menzies indicated South East Asia was more important to Australia's security than Korea, his focus on communism enabled a closer alignment of Australian and US security policies.<sup>2</sup>

The Menzies Liberal-Country Party coalition altered the emphasis and tone of Australia's foreign policy but not its overarching strategic trajectory. Indeed, Percy Spender, who replaced Herbert Evatt as Minister for External Affairs, was even more determined to secure a security treaty with the Americans – a long term strategic goal in which the US had little if any interest. Spender thus prioritised Australia's

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relationship with the US. Evatt and Spender shared the same strategic goals but differed on the emphasis and implementation of foreign policy. Spender was a formidable individual and took every opportunity to advance Australia's best interests as he saw them and frequently challenged Menzies over the focus of Australia's foreign policy.

In early 1950, the US sought to persuade Australia to accept formal diplomatic relations with the ROK. Australia's reluctance to form too strong an association with South Korea indicated it regarded Korea to be of lesser strategic value than did the US. From Canberra's perspective, the recent Communist victory in China was a further threat to the already precarious stability of the ROK under its authoritarian leader, Syngman Rhee. The Department of External Affairs (EA) was reluctant to commit resources to a regime whose survival appeared problematic. Conversely, the US argued support from countries like Australia would strengthen the stability and security of the ROK, generate economic prosperity, and help counter Communist expansion and strengthen security in the Asia-Pacific region. Korea was a vital interest in stopping the spread of communism.

However, from Australia's perspective, Korean tensions only furthered regional instability. Still, the Truman Administration argued that by contributing to a stable and secure South Korea, Australia would strengthen its own security. Events throughout 1948-49 had demonstrated that Australia always chose engagement over withdrawal when faced with Korean policy dilemmas because it maintained direct access to US officials. Similarly, in early 1950, Australia relented to US wishes and agreed to open diplomatic and economic relations with South Korea.

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When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Australia immediately answered the US call through the UN for member nations to repel the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Two Australian officers attached to the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK), Major Francis Peach and Squadron Leader Ronald Rankin, fortuitously played a crucial role in enabling the US to secure UN authorisation for armed intervention to defend South Korea. Days before the outbreak of the Korean War, UNCOK had sent Peach and Rankin to observe the situation at the 38th Parallel amidst escalating tensions between North and South Korea and warnings of an imminent North Korean invasion. They confirmed the North Korean military build up and noted the South Koreans were on the defensive. Peach and Rankin became Australia's witnesses to North Korea's impending aggression on the eve of the start of the Korean War. Following the outbreak of war on June 25, 1950, the US used the Peach and Rankin report to brand North Korea the aggressor.

The US welcomed the immediate Australian offer of air and naval support not because of its military significance but because it wanted a large number of allied forces together under the UN banner in Korea. Australia was the second UN member after the US to commit forces to Korea and the circumstance of proximity meant it was immediately able to deploy its air and naval forces still stationed in Japan as part of its contribution to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF). Australia's military presence in Japan again illustrated the intertwining of its interest in Korea with its determination to prevent a Japanese resurgence.

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Despite its rapid response, the outbreak of the Korean War reflected the ambivalence and tension in Australia's Korean policy. The Menzies government's prompt response to the UN call showed Australia's willingness to be involved in Korea but also masked its reluctance to commit itself too deeply to the conflict. The notable exception within the Australian government was Spender, who was vigorously pursuing a security treaty with a then uninterested US. Whereas Menzies wanted a limited Australian involvement in the Korean conflict, Spender believed Australia should unequivocally and substantially support the US war effort, arguing such a show of solidarity with their ally would make the Americans more amenable to a security treaty. Spender saw Australian participation in the Korean War as a means to achieving that elusive treaty.

In late July 1950, Spender acted decisively during Menzies's absence to commit Australian troops to Korea. Menzies was at sea en route to the US from Britain when Spender learned Britain was about to announce it would send troops to Korea. Spender forced Arthur Fadden, the acting Prime Minister, to immediately announce a deployment of Australian troops to Korea despite knowing this was contrary to Menzies's thinking. Spender was determined that Australia must commit troops before Britain to show the US it acted independently from the Mother Country. Spender was a resourceful politician and advocate who understood the power of perception. He saw the Korean War as an opportunity for Australia to make a strong and positive impression on the Americans. Although Australian troops did not go into action until September, approximately 500 were stationed in Japan as part of the BCOF and were the closest Allied troops to Korea. As Spender had calculated, the

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presence of Australian troops in Japan gave added impetus to Australia's commitment of ground forces to Korea and made an indelible impression on the Americans.

Spender resolved to commit Australian troops to Korea before Britain, believing it would enhance his prospects of gaining a security treaty with the US which he was absolutely determined to achieve. However, Menzies was sceptical such an agreement could be achieved and questioned its necessity, believing the US would defend Australia without the need for a formal treaty between the two nations.

As Spender hoped, the US recognised Australia's commitment of its armed forces to Korea, despite differences in policy approaches between the two nations, especially regarding Communist China. Australia endorsed the US deployment of its 7th Fleet to prevent the Chinese Communists taking Formosa, but urged caution over Chiang Kai-shek's offer of Nationalist Chinese troops to fight in Korea. Australia consistently impressed upon the US to pursue a more flexible diplomatic approach in its efforts to diffuse the tensions over Formosa and in its attitude towards Communist China. The US and Australia both unequivocally condemned China's limited and full scale entries in the Korean War in October and November 1950, respectively. However, in the wake of the Chinese advance into Korea in November and December 1950, Australia together with other American allies, refused to support US designs to bomb mainland China. Australia urged the US to respond cautiously and diplomatically to the Chinese intervention, fearing aggression against China would lead to an expanded war.<sup>3</sup>

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This chapter demonstrates the uneven nature of the US-Australian Korean engagement throughout 1950. American and Australian Korean policies continued to converge regarding the growing Communist threat even as there were tensions and differences between them over diplomatic and economic ties to South Korea and policy towards Communist China. These policy divergences and Australia's ambivalence over its involvement in the Korean War, indicated the different US and Australian perceptions of their respective security and strategic interests. Although their relationship was evolving and growing closer, American and Australian strategic and security interests were similar rather than identical. The two nations continued to differ over their respective perceptions of security threats from Japan and communism. Australia feared a resurgent Japan and recognised the Communist danger. Conversely, the Americans saw communism as the major threat to regional security and perceived Japan as a vital ally in its strategy to contain communism.

### **The US and the Origins of Australian-ROK relations**

Following the creation of South Korea in August 1948, the US provided virtually all the economic aid the new nation received. The US did ask Australia to give economic support to the fledgling ROK, reasoning regional links would strengthen its stability and security. The Americans recognised South Korea needed foreign aid to become an economically and politically stable nation, reducing the possibility it would fall to the Communist North Koreans. Regional partnerships would provide a foundation for South Korea to prosper. The US was also keen for its allies to aid South Korea so it would not be perceived as an American client state. Greater international recognition and aid would strengthen South Korea's security.



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An economically viable ROK needed trading partners and the US saw Australia as a reliable economic ally for the newly formed nation. On July 4, 1949, Syngman Rhee, the South Korean President, met with Australian officials about “expanding Korean trade and asked whether Australia would explore the possibility of a commercial link.” Rhee proposed “to send a Korean goodwill representative to Australia as part of a wider programme to gain greater support and recognition for his country.” The equivocal Australian response signalled Canberra’s caution about closer links to the ROK. Australian officials told Rhee they “welcomed ... trade contacts and ... closer relations with all our Pacific neighbours.” Regarding “a goodwill visit”, the Australians “promised to obtain the reaction of the [Australian] Government”, and Rhee said “his suggestion should be regarded as personal and tentative.”<sup>4</sup>

In Washington on January 6, 1950, John Chang, the South Korean Ambassador to the US, approached Norman Makin, the Australian Ambassador to the US, to discuss “whether [the] Australian Government would be prepared to receive [a] Korean representative to deal with both diplomatic and trade matters.”<sup>5</sup> Makin informed Robert Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, that “Chang emphasised [the] admiration Korea held for Australia and the earnest desire of the Korean Government to have closer link(s) with our country.” Chang expressed his concerns about the Communist victory in China, and noted his fears regarding Japan’s future intentions. Chang told Makin “that anything in the nature of a lenient peace agreement would encourage Japan to revive her former aggression ... as soon as General MacArthur leaves.”<sup>6</sup> This exchange highlighted Australia’s and South Korea’s mutual security concerns: fear of a resurgent Japan and the Communist threat.

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Both depended upon an active US presence in the Asia-Pacific to safeguard their security. Hence, although Australia was cautious about stronger links with the ROK, mutual reliance on the US to protect their common security interests drew the two nations strategically closer.

Chang “also spoke of the need for some security pact in the Pacific” but said his views on this and on Japan were “purely his personal observations and did not convey [the] official viewpoint of his Government”. Regardless of whether Chang was acting under specific instructions, he very likely had clearance from Seoul to raise these issues.<sup>7</sup> On January 6, Keith Waller, the Australian Consul-General in Manila, informed Canberra that Chang was almost certainly acting in accordance with Seoul’s directives. At the inauguration dinner for Philippine President Quirino, on December 31, 1949, the Korean Special Ambassador, Professor Pyun Yung, spoke to Waller in “very friendly terms” about Australia, saying the “Korean Government wished to send a representative there.” Waller viewed Chang’s and Yung’s overtures as concerted efforts to persuade Australia to strengthen its links with South Korea. Yung’s disclosure to Waller that the South Koreans were “spending their resources ... in building up their country to be strong enough to take over the puppet state of North Korea”, was a reminder of the heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

Australia recognised the ROK on August 15, 1949, one year after its formation. However, a January 12, 1950, External Affairs (EA) assessment of South Korea’s request to establish diplomatic relations with Australia, noted that in February 1949, Patrick Shaw, the Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo and Australia’s representative on UNCOK, had described South Korea as “a young, not very efficient,

semi-totalitarian state”. Shaw also cautioned that Rhee “has wide powers which he endeavours to wield dictatorially.” EA was concerned about the nature of the ROK state and described its government as “extremely anti-Communist.” This unflattering assessment of the ROK was reflected in EA’s ambivalent response to South Korea’s request for the establishment of formal links between the two nations.<sup>9</sup>

In January 1950, Australia had “no representative accredited” to the South Korean Government and “Australian interests are at present in the hands of the British Minister in Seoul.” Australia’s only diplomatic connection to the ROK was through AB Jamieson, its representative on UNCOK. External Affairs deduced that “any strategic value” Korea “may have offered” to Australia in helping to contain a possible Japanese resurgence and the “expansion of Communism” in the region provided it “remains non-Communist”, was “offset” by the Chinese Communist victory. EA noted the Department of Commerce and Agriculture was examining “present trade relations and any possibility of future trade” with South Korea. “Australia’s interest in South Korea”, EA stated, “is not motivated by economic or strategic purposes. Our interest is rather to assist that country through UNCOK to attain unity and to prevent its being used again as a base for an aggressive power.”<sup>10</sup>

Australia wanted a stable South Korea as a bulwark against a resurgent Japan and Communist expansion. This was intertwined with EA’s perception that an active American presence in the Asia-Pacific region was critical to Australia’s security. Thus, EA determined Australia would best facilitate its security interests by utilising all opportunities to engage with the US, as it had been doing in Korea since 1948.

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Essentially, although EA saw Korea as an avenue for direct Australian engagement with the US, it was reluctant to form diplomatic relations with the ROK.

External Affairs deduced that if Australia accepted a ROK representative for “diplomatic and trade matters”, South Korea “would probably hope to gain ... added prestige and probably certain goods, like flour and wool, which presumably Australia could supply.” EA did not oppose ROK representation in Australia but advised that “Australian interests do not warrant” making a reciprocal Australian appointment to South Korea. Australian “interests could be adequately safeguarded through Tokyo and/or through the British Minister in Seoul as at present.” EA cautioned the Australian government that if an “exchange of diplomatic representatives” was accepted, Jamieson “should not be accredited” to South Korea “as well since he is a member” of UNCOK, “a body supposedly above” the ROK government. Opposed to more Australian representation in Seoul “where our interests are at present being adequately represented by Jamieson”, EA advised that “when UNCOK is withdrawn the matter could be reconsidered” but doubted “whether in the foreseeable future there would be sufficiently strong cause for having a diplomatic representative in Seoul.”<sup>11</sup>

Australia’s interests were indeed “being adequately represented” by Jamieson because as an UNCOK member, he had direct access to US officials.<sup>12</sup> Engagement with the US was Australia’s primary concern. Hence, Australian membership of UNCOK was infinitely more important to External Affairs than what it perceived to be the limited benefits of expanding a problematic relationship with South Korea.

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The ROK was certainly more eager than Australia to form diplomatic relations between the two nations. On February 11, 1950, Colonel BC Limb, the South Korean Foreign Minister, told Jamieson the ROK government wanted “to appoint a goodwill envoy who would visit Australia and New Zealand.... The purpose of the visit ... would be to exchange greetings and establish a further personal basis of contact on the governmental level” and also “perhaps ... discuss possibilities of trade.” Jamieson noted Limb “did not mention the subject of a Pacific Pact, but this may well have been at the back of his mind.”<sup>13</sup>

South Korea was determined to expand its relationship with Australia. On February 27, Makin informed Percy Spender that Chang again inquired “whether Australia would be willing to receive a good-will mission from Korea ... to enable Korea to express ... its appreciation of Australian action in the United Nations in relation to Korea.”<sup>14</sup> Canberra’s lukewarm response indicated that establishing diplomatic relations with the ROK was not a priority for Australia. On March 3, External Affairs notified William Hodgson, Head of the Australian Mission in Tokyo, and Jamieson, that Makin “has been informed that we would have no objection to [a Korean] official in [a] consular capacity to handle trade and other matters, but we would prefer to delay any question of ... diplomatic exchange” especially given “we have no such relations with other countries of more importance to Australia.” EA would not be distracted from its focus on the US and Japan. Makin was “instructed to inform” Chang Australia had “no objection to receiving [a] goodwill mission which we anticipate would concentrate largely on trade and [the] establishment of consular relations.”<sup>15</sup> Australia saw no urgent need to develop formal diplomatic relations with

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South Korea. Wary the volatile situation on the Korean peninsula could have repercussions for Australia, EA was cautious about forging closer ties to the ROK.

Australia's guarded response to the South Korean request for expanded relations led the Americans to urge Canberra to be more inclusive. On April 15, the Australian Tokyo Mission notified External Affairs it was approached by an American official "regarding the projected visit of joint Korean Government and businessmen to Australia in June." Indeed, the US Embassies in Seoul and Canberra helped facilitate the ROK diplomatic visit which received the "necessary approval" from the Australian government. Despite US encouragement, Australia made no commitments beyond agreeing to receive the ROK delegation. Australia would not alter its cautious approach to the South Korean diplomatic overtures. The Tokyo Mission, although appraised of the forthcoming ROK visit, nevertheless asked EA to "clarify the position regarding approval for [the Korean] party to visit Australia."<sup>16</sup>

The clarification query by the Tokyo Mission was symptomatic of Australia's ambivalence to the ROK request to open diplomatic relations. However, from the American perspective, Australia was an obvious diplomatic and economic regional partner for the ROK. By 1950, the US had invested economic aid and some of its international political prestige in South Korea because it wanted the fledging nation to be a bulwark against Communist expansion in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, the US knew South Korea would never really prosper and strengthen its security while it was perceived as an American client state. The ROK needed to forge links with regional allies like Australia to enhance its status. Ambassador Chang's visit to Australia from

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April 24 to May 1, reflected the US and ROK regard for Australia as a reliable ally in a volatile region amidst escalating Cold War tensions.<sup>17</sup>

There was an inherent tension in Australia's Korean policy which sought to limit involvement with the ROK but maintain access to US officials. Australia's ambivalence about the depth of its relationship with South Korea now also extended to its commitment to UNCOK. In April 1950, UNCOK was struggling to obtain the required number of commissioners. The Australian government said it was "most unlikely that Australia would supply more than three observers." External Affairs said "it might be desirable to approach other States if [the] required number [of representatives] cannot be obtained from Commission members."<sup>18</sup> Australia's prominence on UNCOK belied its limited involvement with the Commission.

By the eve of the Korean War, the status of South Korea had become increasingly intertwined with American and Australian security and strategic interests because of the ROK's geo-political position as a bulwark against Communist expansion and a resurgent Japan. Europe remained the focus of US foreign policy but the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the Communist victory in China in 1949, meant South Korea's fate was now perceived as being synonymous with America's international prestige. By June 1950, the US could not allow the ROK to fall to the Communists without risking serious damage to its authority as the leader and defender of the free world.

In contrast, Canberra was ambivalent about expanding diplomatic and economic relations with South Korea. External Affairs were wary of becoming too

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deeply involved with an unstable ROK whose survival in a volatile North East Asia was problematic. Nevertheless, Australia maintained its involvement in South Korea because of its security reliance on the US. Since 1945, Canberra sought to directly engage the US in quest of a commitment to defend Australia from a resurgent Japan and Communist expansion. UNCOK membership provided the avenue for continued Australian engagement with US officials in Korea. Despite its reservations about the viability of the ROK, Canberra would never close this access to US officials. Australia's two Ministers for External Affairs in 1949-50, HV Evatt and Percy Spender, prioritised the US relationship as a pillar of Australian foreign policy. It was Spender's determination to pursue a security treaty with the US and his resolve to embrace every opportunity to engage the Americans that drew Australia into the Korean War.

### **The US and Australia and the outbreak of the Korean War**

It was ironic and fortuitous that the report of two Australian UNCOK officials was used by the US to secure UN intervention to defend South Korea from the North Korean invasion on June 25, 1950. Indeed, the combined work of US and Australian officials laid the foundation for the UN authorisation of military force to defend the ROK. The irony was that by June 1950, Canberra was ambivalent about UNCOK's purpose in Korea. It had two representatives on the Commission, Major Francis Peach and Squadron Leader Ronald Rankin. Fortuitously, both had been sent by UNCOK to the 38th Parallel as observers amid increased reports of a North Korean military build up and impending invasion of the ROK. On the eve of the North Korean attack, Australia's two UNCOK representatives were present at the 38th Parallel and Warren Austin, US Ambassador to the UN, used their subsequent report to persuade the UN to sanction military intervention in South Korea.



Australia's response to the outbreak of the war reflected its ambivalence regarding Korea. The Menzies government sought to contribute to the UN/US effort but without overly committing Australian resources. This approach was almost wholly supported by the Menzies government with the crucial exception of Percy Spender who was focussed on strengthening Australia's relationship with the US. Spender perceived Australian participation in the Korean War as an opportunity to demonstrate Australia's independence in foreign policy and reliability as an ally and thus increase the possibility of gaining a security treaty with the US. Spender believed an unambiguous and meaningful Australian commitment to the UN/US effort in Korea would make the Truman Administration more amenable to a formal security treaty with Australia.<sup>19</sup>

Responding to increasingly frantic South Korean warnings that North Korea was about to invade the ROK, UNCOK sent Peach and Rankin, to the 38th Parallel to observe and report on the respective postures of the opposing forces deployed there. Peach and Rankin arrived in Korea on June 9. Their June 24 report on "developments likely to involve military conflict" was used by Ambassador Austin to successfully argue before the UN Security Council that North Korea was the aggressor and that the UN should authorise the use of military action to expel the North Koreans from the ROK. Peach and Rankin said their "principal impression" was "that [the] South Korea(n) Army is organized entirely for defense and is in no condition to carry out [an] attack on [a] large scale against [the] forces of North [Korea]." The Australians noted there was "no concentration of troops and no massing for attack visible at any point." In contrast, "at several points, North Korean forces" were "in effective

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possession of salients on [the] south side [of the] parallel, [with] occupation in at least one case being of fairly recent date.” Peach and Rankin stated that “in general, [the] attitude [of the] South Korean commanders is one of vigilant defense.”<sup>20</sup> Hence it was that Australia’s two UNCOK representatives fortuitously provided the detail used by US officials to argue for UN military intervention to defend South Korea.

In the wake of the North Korean invasion of South Korea, C.P. Noyes, a US UN Mission delegate, reported that Keith Shann, leader of the Australian UN delegation, “indicated ... that the Security Council action was vital but that it was obvious that no attention would be paid to the Council’s resolution by the North Koreans.” Quickly concluding only US military intervention would halt the North Koreans, Shann told Noyes he “wanted to know” what the Americans “could do in the way of meeting force with force.” Noyes noted Shann “thought perhaps the Australians were in a position to help if the United Nations decided to take strong action.” Shann anticipated an American led military intervention in Korea that would include Australia. Shann signalled to the Americans that Australia would support and contribute to a UN sanctioned US led effort to defend South Korea *before* the Australian government considered its response to the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>21</sup> Shann’s remarks strongly indicated Spender and External Affairs intended to maximise the opportunity presented by the Korean War to deepen Australia’s engagement with the US.

Like Shann, senior US officials also realised only US military intervention would halt the North Koreans. When the Korean War began, John Foster Dulles, personal representative to Truman and US Ambassador-at-Large, and John Allison,

State Department Director of Northeast Asian Affairs, were in Japan and sent Dean Acheson, US Secretary of State, and Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, a telegram mirroring Shann's observations. Dulles and Allison wrote:

It is possible that [the] South Koreans may themselves contain and repulse [the North Korean] attack and, if so, this is [the] best way. If, however, 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 [a] disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war. We suggest that [the] Security Council might call for action on behalf of the organisation ... by the five [permanent] powers or such of them as are willing to respond.<sup>22</sup>

From different perspectives, Dulles and Allison and Shann recognised the military reality and concluded that only US armed forces could defeat the North Koreans and prevent a Communist conquest of South Korea. Shann also perceived Australian support for an American intervention in South Korea could provide an opportunity for Australia to strengthen its security relationship with the US. This again shows that American and Australian strategic interests finally converged in Korea. However, whereas the Americans concentrated on defeating the Communists, the Australians were focussed on strengthening their relationship with the US.

The resolve of Spender and External Affairs to prioritise the US relationship had thus far not lessened Australian ambivalence towards Korea as demonstrated by the Menzies government response to the conflict. On June 27, 1950, the Menzies Cabinet concluded the outbreak of the Korean War "represented only one phase of Russian aggression and that Australia's primary" efforts in combating communism were focussed "in Malaya." Shann was informed the Korean situation "required concerted action and that he would be given further advice after consultation" with the

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UK and US Governments.<sup>23</sup> Menzies said the “Korean incident cannot be looked at in isolation, nor can we in Australia regard it as remote from our own interests and safety.” Linking the Korean conflict to the Communist campaigns in Indo-China and Malaya, Menzies cited these as “evidence of Communist aggression in Asia, an aggression which is full of menace for ... [Australia].” Menzies said the “immediate problem of Korea must ... be dealt with by the Great Powers.” He explained Australia’s efforts in resisting communism would be concentrated on aiding the British in Malaya. Two days after the outbreak of the Korean War, Menzies did not yet envisage Australian involvement in the conflict.<sup>24</sup>

On June 27, President Harry Truman, with UN Security Council backing, ordered US air and naval forces to aid South Korea. The following day, Acheson informed US diplomatic officials in American embassies and missions including Australia, that the “importance [of the] Korean situation [was] not great from [a] strategic standpoint but as [a] symbol [of the] strength and determination of [the] West it is vital ... [and the] confidence of peoples in countries adjacent to the Soviet orbit *would* have been greatly affected ... if we failed to take action to protect a country established under our auspices.” The Truman Administration argued it was “important to [the] maintenance [of the] prestige [of the] UN that firm and vigorous action including [the] use of force if necessary be taken to implement” the UN Security Council resolution of June 25 calling on the North Koreans to withdraw to the 38th Parallel.<sup>25</sup>

Acheson believed the Soviets had instigated the North Korean attack but did not think the Russians would directly involve themselves in Korea nor precipitate

attacks elsewhere, although “success in Korea would ... greatly encourage similar actions elsewhere.” Acheson said the Truman Administration did “not now intend to do more than assist [the] South Koreans to drive [the] North Koreans behind [the] 38th parallel.” The Communist aggression in Korea, said Acheson, required the US to increase efforts to thwart Communist assaults against Formosa, the Philippines and Indochina. Acheson argued Communist advances in these areas would threaten “US interests in [the] West Pacific generally.” Acheson noted “if [the] threat to South Korea is met firmly and successfully, it will add to [the] victories in [the] Iran, Berlin and Greece crises [as the] fourth major defeat of Soviet aggressive moves.”<sup>26</sup>

The June 27 UN Security Council resolution recommended members “furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel armed attack and restore international peace and security in the area.” On June 29, Trygve Lie, the UN Secretary General, was informed the Australian Government “has decided to place Australian naval vessels now in far eastern waters ... at the disposal of the United States authorities on behalf of the Security Council in support of the Republic of Korea.”<sup>27</sup>

On June 30, the US Office of Intelligence Research noted the “strong Commonwealth support” for the UN/US response to the North Korean invasion of South Korea. The US noted the “material aid ... offered by the UK, Australia, and New Zealand” and recorded the “earlier support for [the] US action, which won immediate approval in Britain, the Anzac countries and Canada.” Australia had a fighter squadron and a contingent of troops already stationed in Japan when the Korean War erupted. These forces had been there since 1945 as part of the British

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Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF). Menzies's June 30 announcement that Australia would make the squadron available to the UN/US for service in Korea and delay the withdrawal of the Australian troops, attracted American attention.<sup>28</sup>

This June 30 US intelligence summary reported the Australian press "almost unanimously supports the American decision" to intervene in Korea. It noted the *Sydney Mirror* suggestion the Australian Government "should offer the US bases and that an American military mission should come to Australia 'to look at our defenses and advise and guide us.'" The observation that "in most cases US decisions are held vital to Australian security", indicated American acknowledgement of the importance Australia placed on its relationship with the US.<sup>29</sup> The July 1 intelligence summary recorded Australia "offering armed forces in support of [the] Security Council resolution" requesting assistance in Korea. Menzies's commitment of Australian air and naval forces to the UN/US cause in Korea was indeed duly noted and welcomed by the Americans.<sup>30</sup>

The first week of the Korean War demonstrated that Korea was the focal point of the evolving US-Australian relationship. Nevertheless, although American and Australian security interests converged in Korea, the two nations had different perspectives and goals. The Truman Administration had sought UN authorisation to intervene in the conflict because Cold War politics had become intertwined with the perception the UN was ineffective and lacked authority. Thus the Americans were determined that the Korean intervention would be seen as a UN, not a US, operation. Although the UN/US forces in Korea were always overwhelmingly American, international support to defend South Korea enabled the US to refute Communist

claims it was defending an isolated client state. In this context, although Australia had been engaged with the US in Korea since 1947, its commitment of armed forces to the conflict via the UN was important to the Americans.

However, Australia's focus was its relationship with the US rather than the fate of South Korea or the prestige of the UN. The Menzies government continued Australian support for the UN which had been a defining pillar of the Chifley government's foreign policy. Nevertheless, unlike Evatt who regarded the UN as the primary institution for resolving international disputes, the Cold War reality meant Spender was much more realistic about the limits of the UN. Spender and External Affairs always saw the Australian commitment to the Korean War as an opportunity to solidify the relationship with the US.

Like the presence of Peach and Rankin at the 38th Parallel on the eve of the war and Ambassador Austin's reliance on their report to argue for UN intervention in Korea, the proximity of the Australian ships and fighter squadron in Japan enabled their immediate deployment once Australia announced its support for the UN effort. These fortuitous circumstances made Australia visible to the US when it was seeking allies. Among the Americans, Australia's profile and action generated an indelibly positive impression of their junior ally which could potentially be worth substantial dividends for Australia. The Australians did not just promise support, they promptly committed their available forces in the vicinity to the Korean conflict.

The US welcomed the Australian commitment to the Korean conflict and, seeking more allies to join the US/UN effort, the Americans wantonly used the

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Australian example as leverage. On July 3, Acheson met with Gerhardus Jooste, the South African Ambassador to the US, and emphasised the “very welcome” Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand contributions in Korea to pressure South Africa into providing military support for the UN effort. Acheson said “material assistance at this time would be helpful”.<sup>31</sup> Acheson acknowledged South African support for the June 25 and 27 UN resolutions but “explained” to Jooste “why the aid so quickly sent by Australia, the British, and New Zealand was helpful.” Although Acheson did not directly ask for a similar contribution from South Africa, he told Jooste “any assistance offered even if this were only a battalion or some fighters would be very useful to the nations actually supporting” the UN in Korea. While the Americans were quite willing to use the examples of these three Commonwealth countries to sway other nations to make commitments to the UN effort in Korea, they also demonstrated they valued the support from Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.<sup>32</sup>

On July 5, the State Department again acknowledged the Australian provision of “two naval vessels” and the “RAAF fighter squadron ... stationed in Japan”, for service in Korea. Following the official announcement “that British and Australian units were in combat”, a State Department official was asked if there were any indications of possible contributions from other nations, and if, “in case the United Nations acted in connection with the Americans, British and Australians, there would be a United Nations force.” The spokesman said British and Australian assistance was all the US had at present but a UN force “was possible” if other nations made contributions.<sup>33</sup> Australia’s swift commitment of its armed forces to Korea situated it



at the forefront of the international response to the Korean conflict and earned the gratitude of the Americans.

Trygve Lie's July 14 request to UN member nations to provide ground forces for Korea, and Menzies' absence from Australia, provided Spender with another opportunity to further solidify the US-Australian relationship. Before his departure for London, Menzies affirmed his opposition to sending troops to Korea whereas Spender wanted an immediate commitment of Australian ground forces. On July 17, Spender advised Menzies: "from Australia's long-term point of view any additional aid we can give to the US now, small though it may be, will repay us in the future one hundred fold." Menzies was not persuaded and before departing London for the US, reminded Spender that Malaya and the Middle East remained Australia's defence priorities.<sup>34</sup> Three days later, Clement Attlee, the British Prime Minister, informed Arthur Fadden, the Australian Acting Prime Minister, that Britain would not decide on sending ground troops to Korea until it had "discussed the matter" with the US. Fadden was assured the British would keep the Australian Government apprised of its intentions.<sup>35</sup>

On July 24, Pete Jarman, the US Ambassador to Australia, informed Acheson that Australia's response to Lie's appeal was "still under consideration" by External Affairs but a reply was imminent. Jarman noted the "final decision" rested with Menzies whose absence was making the "problem [more] complicated." Australian officials sought to "ensure certain political and military factors" were "considered" by Menzies but he was "incommunicado" aboard the *Queen Mary* on his way to the US, and they were "not fully informed" about his talks in London. Jarman reported

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Menzies had “taken over [the] conduct [of] foreign affairs” which was “particularly trying for Spender who not only has [his] heart in his job but who, over tired and unwell, has been ordered by doctor(s) to rest.” Spender’s unequivocal support for the Americans was noted by the Truman Administration and he was convinced committing Australian troops to Korea would advance his goal of achieving a security treaty between the US and Australia.<sup>36</sup>

Jarman notified Acheson that Evatt, now Deputy Leader of the Labor Opposition, said the Menzies government “must give unqualified support” to the UN and “complete assurance” to President Truman that Australia was “an unfailing ally” of the US. Jarman observed Evatt’s criticism had “embarrassed” the government but Menzies’s absence meant no Australian official was “in [a] position at present [to] make [a] statement [of] any significance.” Although the Australian government, opposition, and people stood “squarely behind” the UN/US, Jarman cautioned Australia would have “considerable difficulty ... in furnishing ground troops at present” based on the “current strength” of the regular army. “Only about” 800 of the 3,000 Australian BCOF troops in Japan were “combat troops.” In May 1950, the Australian government had decided, with American consent, to bring these troops “home to serve as [a] cadre for [an] expanded army based on conscription.” Jarman noted Australia’s defence act stipulated “enlistment ... [was] for service only in Australia”, and given amending the act was extremely unlikely, “only volunteers could be sent [to] Korea” if the Australian government decided to commit ground troops.<sup>37</sup>

The Truman Administration clearly wanted multi national forces deployed in Korea. US recognition of the Australian commitment was again evident in Acheson's July 24 remarks to Jooste affirming that "aid from the United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, Australia and Pakistan was most welcome."<sup>38</sup> On July 25, Attlee informed Fadden that Britain would commit ground forces to Korea.<sup>39</sup> Attlee acknowledged to Fadden "the question of a United Kingdom contribution to the main forces in Korea is at least in part if not mainly political." Attlee said "from the military point of view", it was "extremely hard" for the British "to provide even a token force but having regard to the wider political considerations, ... it would be desirable ... to make an offer of ground forces." Fadden was notified the British government would publicly announce its decision in the House of Commons on July 26 in reply to the July 14 request by Trygve Lie for UN member states to provide forces for Korea. Attlee told Fadden he would inform Menzies, who was on his way to Washington.<sup>40</sup>

The British also sent the Australian government the assessment by Oliver Franks, British Ambassador to the US, of the American attitude regarding the British commitment of ground forces to Korea. Franks noted the US would "attach ... great importance to a British offer of ground troops for Korea" for military and political reasons. Franks said the Americans "regard the United Nations character of the Korean operations as fundamental." The Truman Administration viewed the UN "character" of the American action as "essential to their relations with the new nations of Asia and as a refutation of imperialism." The Americans knew it was "essential for the United Nations character of the Korean operations that they should not be carried out solely by United States forces." Franks said the US believed if Britain committed ground forces to Korea, many other nations would follow, and so the US regarded the

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British “as the key to the situation and hence await our decision as more important to them and their purposes than any other.”<sup>41</sup>

Franks noted the Americans viewed Britain as their “only dependable ally and partner.”<sup>42</sup> He said the “important consideration” was

the effect our decision will have on the basic relationship of the two countries. I believe that because of the rational and irrational elements in the American mind about this for them unparalleled undertaking to act as a policeman in the world a negative decision would seriously impair the long term relationship. This is so partly because of the significance our decision would acquire as giving a lead which they expect to be followed by other countries.<sup>43</sup>

On July 25, Attlee, informed Menzies that Britain would send ground forces to Korea. Aware of Menzies’s ambivalence about involving Australian forces in Korea, Attlee acknowledged the “considerations” Menzies had outlined in their July 17 meeting, which “weigh(ed) against sending Australian reinforcements to Korea”. Attlee told Menzies the British would “be sorry to see you undertake any commitment in Korea that might hamper your preparations to send forces to the Middle East in a real emergency.”<sup>44</sup> Although Australia’s focus on Malaya and the Middle East suited Britain’s strategic interests, Attlee nevertheless attempted to pressure Menzies into increasing Australia’s Korean contribution, informing him that Britain had decided to send armed forces and that New Zealand was “considering ... providing additional forces” for Korea “on the assumption that it would work as part of another force preferably a Commonwealth one if it were formed.”<sup>45</sup>

This exchange highlighted both Australia’s ambivalence and its political dilemma in its Korean policy. The Menzies government regarded Communist incursions in Malaya and the Middle East as greater threats to Australia’s security

than the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Spender did not regard Korea as strategically important for Australia either, but he saw Korea as an opportunity for Australia to strengthen its US relationship. Australia was ambivalent about political and economic ties with South Korea. It was critical of the nature of Syngman Rhee's regime and uncertain about the stability and survival of the ROK.

When Spender was informed by Alan Watt, Secretary of External Affairs, of Britain's decision to send troops to Korea, he refused to allow Australia being perceived by the US to be following the British into Korea. Spender said: "Watt, it's not going to happen, it's not going to happen." Watt wrote Spender "was not going to allow the United Kingdom to cash in on American goodwill ahead of Australia."<sup>46</sup> On July 26, 1950, without contacting Menzies, a determined and forceful Spender persuaded a reluctant Fadden to announce Australia would send ground forces to Korea. "With an hour to spare", Australia made its announcement before Britain but, due to the time difference, not before New Zealand.<sup>47</sup> The New Zealanders sought Australia's reaction to their commitment of an artillery unit to Korea, and inquired about any "additional Australian contribution to the United Nations undertaking" in Korea.<sup>48</sup>

Spender notified Menzies of the Australian government's decision while he was en route to the US. Menzies, initially irritated Spender had forced a policy change contrary to his wishes, had accepted the *fait accompli* by the time he arrived in the US on July 27. Menzies and Makin met with Acheson, Harriman, Dulles and Jessup at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC.<sup>49</sup> The next day, Menzies met with Truman and Acheson and explained the reality masking Australia's decision to

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send ground forces to Korea. Menzies confided that although Australia would contribute troops, it currently had “no forces available” and “would have to increase its defense forces substantially.” Menzies said of the 2,000 Australian troops in Japan, “only about 500 were combat troops and these had been enlisted only for service in Japan.” Menzies informed Truman and Acheson he would introduce “a universal service bill” removing any restrictions upon where Australian troops could serve, but “it would not be immediately possible to provide the forces.” Truman “expressed the hope” Menzies “could make rapid progress both in regard to forces for Korea and the general expansion of the [Australian] defense program.”<sup>50</sup>

On August 1, Fadden reported to Cabinet the sequence of events that led to the July 26 decision to commit Australian ground forces to Korea. Australia would send an initial force of 1,000 troops. Cabinet “deferred” the “consideration” for the “provision of additional ground forces ... until there” was “further communication” from Menzies “or until his return to Australia.” Menzies had asked Fadden to “consult” with the Prime Minister of New Zealand “regarding the association” of Australian and New Zealand troops. The Cabinet agreed that depending on the New Zealand response, Menzies would “announce” these “decisions ... during his address to the United States Congress.”<sup>51</sup>

Spender’s judgment reaped immediate rewards for Australia. With US support, Australia secured a \$250 million World Bank loan and Menzies was invited to address a joint sitting of both houses of Congress, the first Australian PM to do so. Having opposed committing Australian troops to Korea, Menzies happily basked in the hospitality the Americans accorded him after Spender forced the issue.<sup>52</sup> From the

outbreak of the Korean War, the US-Australian relationship grew deeper and stronger. At a moment when the US was seeking allies to contribute to the defence of South Korea, Australia's military commitment to the conflict attracted the attention and earned the gratitude of the Americans. In turn, Australia, in pursuit of a security treaty with the US, deployed its armed forces to Korea believing this would advance the attainment of this goal.

### **The China Factor**

The American recognition of the Australian commitment to the Korean War made the relationship between Washington and Canberra stronger. Nevertheless, Spender's determination to pursue a security treaty with the US did not prevent Australian criticisms of the American response to the Chinese entry into the Korean War and MacArthur's conduct as commander of the UN/US forces. The US refused to recognise the Communist Chinese ascension to power in December 1949, and Australia too, decided against recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC), in part, because Spender believed it would be detrimental to Australia's pursuit of a security relationship with the US.<sup>53</sup> In the wake of the North Korean invasion of South Korea, Truman deployed the US 7th Fleet to deter a Communist Chinese attack on Formosa which was controlled by Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of the Nationalist Chinese regime. This raised the spectre of a larger and unwanted conflict between the US and the PRC. Despite the strong anti-Communist stance of the Menzies government and Spender's pursuit of a formal strategic relationship with the US, Australia urged caution in American PRC policy.

Chiang Kai-shek's offer of Nationalist Chinese troops to fight in Korea created a diplomatic dilemma for the US. Although the US sought military contributions

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from UN member states, the Americans could not accept the Nationalist Chinese offer because of the detrimental political and military impact it would have on the US effort in Korea. The collapse of the Nationalist regime on the Chinese mainland exposed the inadequacy and unreliability of these troops. Using these troops would also risk Communist China entering the war and the US and its allies fighting an expanded conflict with unknown repercussions. On July 1, 1950, Acheson rejected Chiang's offer, informing him it would be "desirable for representatives" from MacArthur's command to discuss the defence of Taiwan against invasion with Nationalist commanders "prior to any final decision on the wisdom of reducing the defense forces on Taiwan by transfer of troops to Korea."<sup>54</sup> Before informing the Nationalist Chinese, the Americans relayed their decision to David McNicol, Second Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Washington. McNicol anticipated the Truman Administration's response and reported it to Canberra. This exchange suggested some China policy collaboration between the US and Australia.<sup>55</sup>

Menzies met with Lewis Douglas, US Ambassador to Britain, on July 17 in London, and expressed concern about the repercussions of the deployment of the US 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. Douglas reported to Acheson he was "certain" the British "had not put" Menzies "up to making this remark" about Formosa. While the Americans believed Australia would likely support Britain's opposition to the Truman Administration's China and Formosa policy, Douglas said he discerned Menzies speaking independently of Britain. Indeed, Douglas told Acheson Menzies agreed "a clarification" of the US position on Formosa, "preferably through a Presidential statement" emphasising the deployment of the 7th Fleet was to prevent an escalation of the Korean conflict, "would be very persuasive."<sup>56</sup> Despite the Australian



questioning of their China policy, US officials acknowledged Menzies's independent stance.

Communist China's entry into the Korean War sparked fears of an expanded war and America's allies, including Australia, were determined to impress upon the US the need to avoid any action that would escalate the conflict. At the end of the first and limited Chinese intervention in Korea, October 25 to November 7, Austin informed Acheson, France and Australia advised the US it was "important that as soon as possible", MacArthur "issue a statement of assurance" that UN/US forces would "not damage or destroy [the] hydro-electric facilities on the Yalu River nor interfere with normal power uses of these facilities." The French and Australians reasoned "such an assurance would 'simplify and clarify' the issues presented" by the Chinese intervention in Korea. The Australians also suggested the Americans "might indicate that a neutral 'cordon sanitaire' could be set up along the [Korean-Chinese] frontier perhaps on a 20-mile stripe."<sup>57</sup>

In the aftermath of the limited PRC entry into the Korean War in October-November 1950, Keith Officer, Australian Ambassador to France, approached Austin to express Australia's concern about the conflict spreading to China. On November 10, Austin informed Acheson that Officer relayed Australia's apprehension the US would retaliate against attacks by "Manchurian based planes" by launching its own strikes on Chinese territory. Officer voiced Australia's anxiety about the prospect of American attacks against China, telling Austin he hoped if the US decided to strike, it "would advise in advance if at all possible at least those countries which, like Australia, have forces in action in Korea." Austin assured Officer that MacArthur

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was “under instructions not to engage in operations in Manchuria” but said “military exigencies” may dictate a necessity to act before it was possible to consult with allies. Austin stated that, “in principle”, the US would “want to consult first.” Officer stressed Canberra was “most anxious to get [an] assurance as soon as possible.”<sup>58</sup>

Deeply concerned the Chinese entry into the Korean conflict could lead to an expanded war, Australia urged the US to respond cautiously. On November 11, Menzies told Acheson the “new situation” in Korea resulting from the Chinese intervention, required “careful examination” and that “military caution is required.” Indeed, Menzies argued the “consequences” of violating the Chinese border “could be so grave” the US should “temporarily ignore” this “provocation to [the] extent possible.”<sup>59</sup>

When the Americans proposed they would seek UN authorization to pursue Communist aircraft into Manchurian airspace, Officer met with Ernest Gross, US UN Ambassador, on November 14 to explain that while he “could understand” the need for “tactical military requirements”, he “was concerned” the US reaction to the Chinese presence in Korea “might lead to [the] bombing [of] Manchurian targets.” Austin informed Acheson that Officer “expressed hope [that] ‘provocative actions’ could be avoided at least until [the] Chinese Communist delegation arrived [in] New York” and the US had a “further opportunity to ascertain their viewpoint.”<sup>60</sup>

The Americans were frustrated with allied criticism of their China policy but recognised they could not afford to antagonise allies whose support they needed in the UN. Officer was told the American Embassy in Canberra was “presumably fully

briefing [the] Australian Foreign Office” on the PRC issue. However, Austin informed Acheson “many [UN] delegations ... are genuinely concerned lest military actions be taken unilaterally” and that “many of these delegations are more easily led than driven”. Austin advised “it will better assure mobilization of UN sentiment behind any military action” by the UN Command “if there is ... at least selective consultations” with allies.<sup>61</sup>

On November 16, Acheson said the six-power UN draft resolution about the Chinese-Korean border co-sponsored by the US six days earlier, was consistent with the American demand that Communist China “withdraw [its] forces now in Korea”. Acheson resolved the US would stand firm, warning of the “grave danger which [the] continued intervention by Chinese forces would entail for [the] maintenance of this policy.” Acheson said the PRC could not “continue indefinitely to claim [the] protection afforded by one section of [this] resolution without accepting [the] corresponding obligations of other sections.”<sup>62</sup>

Australia now proposed the adoption of a UN declaration giving the US and PRC diplomatic flexibility to manoeuvre but making clear that ultimately, China needed to withdraw from Korea. Having urged caution, Spender and External Affairs availed themselves of the opportunity to work with the Americans to try and avert an expanded war. Spender and Watt met with Jarman who, on November 17, informed Acheson that although Australia’s position on the PRC intervention in Korea remained as expressed by Menzies on November 11, Canberra “recognizes” the current military situation “cannot be allowed [to] continue indefinitely.” Jarman

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outlined Australia's proposal to "avoid precipitate action while ... deterring" the PRC "from pursuing ... [their] present course" in Korea.<sup>63</sup>

Australia recommended MacArthur give the UN Security Council a thorough report on the "full military facts" on "Communist action over [the] Manchurian border." This report would be the basis for a Security Council "declaration" that included the following stipulations: Chinese cessation of breaches in international law and recognised borders; that although UN/US forces had "so far" acted with "great restraint", it would be "unreasonable" to expect this would "continue indefinitely"; if the PRC was "unwilling or unable" to "prevent" the "misuse" of "its territory", UN/US forces "may ... pursue for limited distances" into Manchuria, "any planes attacking them" in Korea; reiterate the Security Council "desire" to "limit" the "area of conflict" to the Korean peninsula and "respect" the "integrity" of the Manchurian border.<sup>64</sup>

Spender and Watt argued restraint would give the Americans and PRC the opportunity to explore diplomatic options and avoid an expanded war. Jarman sent Acheson the following clarifications of the Australian proposal from Watt: the "declaration" would not imply "diplomatic recognition" of the PRC; the purpose of the "declaration" was to prevent a "possible veto" of a formal resolution, and to give the PRC a "serious warning" that "might restrain present operations" from Manchuria without issuing an "ultimatum"; if the Chinese ignored the warning and persisted with their attacks, and UN/US strikes into Manchuria "became unavoidable, it would be clear" that "all peaceful efforts had been exhausted."<sup>65</sup>

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On November 21, Acheson informed George Marshall, US Defense Secretary, that Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, France and Australia *all* gave an “unfavourable reaction” to the American proposal to allow UN/US “aircraft to pursue attacking enemy aircraft into Manchuria.” The following day, New Zealand also cautioned against striking Manchuria.<sup>66</sup> The US was unable to secure allied support for military strikes in China but acknowledged Australia’s constructive appeal for restraint and its proposal to avoid an expanded war with the onus on the PRC to act.

Even the full scale Chinese entry into the Korean War on November 26, 1950, did not erase Australia’s cautious stance. On November 29, Makin told Livingston Merchant, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, the Australian government was “concerned over the apparent lack of coordination between political policy and military action” in Korea and “most anxious ... that no political commitment be entered into without consultation” with US allies. Makin informed Merchant of Canberra’s “apprehension over the possibility” that MacArthur “might involve” the Australians “by his actions.” Merchant accepted there were “grounds for apprehension in the situation” but said they “arose from massive and overt” PRC intervention and “not from any lack of coordination”. Merchant reminded Makin that MacArthur had exercised restraint by “not retaliating against aircraft operating from across the Manchurian border” and noted the “disciplinary action taken in isolated incidents where, contrary to orders, American pilots violated the border.”<sup>67</sup>

Nevertheless, there was no trust in MacArthur. Makin said Canberra expected MacArthur’s communiqués “should be factual” and conveyed the Australian

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government's concern with MacArthur's "implicit request" for "expanded authority." Merchant retorted that MacArthur's communiqués were "factual in character" and attributed the "gravity of the situation" to the Chinese intervention which MacArthur "properly characterized as a new factor." Makin requested Australia be "consulted before political decisions were made and, to the extent possible, be kept currently informed of developments". Merchant told Makin the Americans appreciated his frankness even though his "apprehensions" were "unjustified". The US, said Merchant, "recognized the special position Australia occupied as one of those nations supplying combat forces" in Korea and "would continue to consult closely" with its ally.<sup>68</sup> Australia was indeed attracting positive American attention despite expressing concerns with US China policy and leadership in Korea.

On November 30, Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, briefed diplomatic representatives of the nations contributing military forces in Korea, praising the efforts of the Australian, British and Turkish troops amidst the UN/US retreat precipitated by the Chinese offensive. He also emphasised the Americans would not "go beyond the Manchurian border" and they were "doing everything" in their "power to prevent" the entrance of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the Korean War "from touching off World War III." Rusk reiterated the "restraint with which the UN forces were operating" but warned "if the Chinese concentrate air power in Manchurian air fields and use it in Korea, it will be necessary for ... [the US] to bomb the bases in Manchuria." Rusk also said the US would "deal with the new problem of the Chinese Armies in Korea through the UN and not [act] unilaterally." The Americans would "continue consultation with members of the UN with forces in Korea."<sup>69</sup>

This American praise of its allies did not deter Makin from telling Rusk he “was puzzled by the disparity” between MacArthur’s communiqué accompanying the beginning of the November 24 UN offensive “indicating that this was the final phase of the fighting and the subsequent discovery that large Chinese forces were in North Korea.” The Australians were critical of MacArthur’s advance along the east and west coasts of Korea that allowed the Chinese to infiltrate the exposed flanks of the separated UN/US armies. When Makin questioned “what had happened to the UN intelligence”, Rusk acknowledged it was flawed but “pointed out ... the difficulties caused by the shortness of the distance between the Manchurian border (over which ... [the US] could not send reconnaissance planes) and the North Korean hills where the Chinese Communists are.” Makin and the other diplomats were unconvinced that US forces patrolled “during the day” but the Chinese “moved at night and hid during the day”.<sup>70</sup>

Australia urged the Americans to exercise caution in their response to the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in October and November 1950. Australia and other US allies impressed upon the Americans that caution and diplomatic flexibility were essential to avoid an expanded conflict. Australia’s pursuit of a security treaty with the US did not curtail its opposition to the American proposal to bomb Manchurian air bases or its criticism of MacArthur’s conduct as UN Commander. The Truman Administration’s unwillingness to act unilaterally against the PRC, meant that, in unison with other allies, Australia was able to have a moderating impact on the American reaction to the Chinese intervention in the Korean War.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout 1950, America's search for allies in Korea intertwined with Australia's pursuit of a security treaty with the US, resulted in a growing and stronger relationship between the two nations. However, Australia's ambivalence towards South Korea, its wariness of a resurgent Japan, the fortuitous circumstances in which it committed its armed forces to the Korean War, its opposition to the US proposal to strike Manchuria following the Chinese intervention in the conflict, and its suspicion of MacArthur, demonstrated the continuing problematic and nuanced trajectory of the American-Australian Korean engagement.

In early 1950, South Korea sought to open diplomatic and economic links with Australia. This presented Canberra with a dilemma. The Menzies government and External Affairs were willing to consider increased ties with the ROK but were reluctant to align Australia too deeply with a regime they perceived as unstable and whose survival in the wake of the Communist victory in China appeared problematic. However, Spender's core foreign policy objective was to attain a security treaty with the US. Spender and External Affairs were never going to willingly close any avenue of access to American officials. Encouraged by the US, Australia agreed to limited diplomatic and economic links with South Korea, reasoning it would benefit its engagement with the Americans.

The Truman Administration encouraged and facilitated stronger relations between Australia and South Korea because it wanted a secure and stable ROK to be a bulwark against the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific. The Americans reasoned South Korea's economic prospects, security and stability, and capacity to



contain communism, would be enhanced by the ROK forging regional links with nations like Australia. The US argued Australian aid to South Korea mutually benefited both nations because a stable and secure ROK containing communism also served Australia's security interests. However, whereas the Americans were intent on denying South Korea to the Communists, Spender's primary objective was to obtain a security treaty with the US.

When North Korea invaded South Korea, the US used the Peach and Rankin report to attain UN Security Council authorisation for military intervention to defend the ROK. The Truman Administration was determined to avoid having the US being seen as the sole defender of a client and isolated state and it sought to bolster the faltering prestige of the UN. Australia's immediate commitment of air and naval forces to the conflict drew American attention and gratitude. Canberra made itself visible to the US when Washington needed allies. Acheson publicly cited the Australian commitment in America's efforts to persuade other UN members to contribute to the defence of South Korea. However, Australia's rapid deployment of armed forces to Korea masked its ambivalence about involving itself too deeply in the Korean struggle. The Menzies government regarded Malaya, South East Asia and the Middle East as significantly more strategically important than Korea.

The notable exception was the determined and forceful Spender who saw the Korean War as an opportunity for Australia to strengthen its relationship with the US in pursuit of a security treaty. Spender argued for a strong Australian commitment to Korea and was adamant that the US see Australia as independent of Britain. Menzies opposed sending ground forces to Korea but during his absence, Spender forced the

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issue, committing Australian troops just prior to the British. Spender's boldness reaped immediate dividends for Australia. The Americans welcomed allied support and the proximity of Australian forces based in Japan gave Canberra's commitment to Korea an impetus that significantly enhanced Australia's status in Washington.

The US and Australia differed over the proposed American response to the Chinese entry in the Korean War in October and November 1950. Australia's pursuit of a security treaty with the US did not curtail its criticisms of the American response to the PRC intervention and MacArthur's performance as UN Commander. At the beginning of the conflict, Australia cautioned the Truman Administration over the deployment of the US 7th Fleet to protect Formosa from a Communist Chinese assault and opposed Chiang Kai-shek's offer of Nationalist Chinese troops for Korea (which the US rejected), warning both risked an expanded war with the PRC. When China entered the war, Australia, in unison with other US allies, opposed the American proposal to bomb Manchurian air bases, and urged the US to deal with the PRC via diplomatic means through the UN to avert an expanded war. Concerned the conflict could escalate and critical of MacArthur's leadership of UN/US forces, Australia pressed the Truman Administration to consult its allies regarding its response to China's involvement in Korea. The US reluctance to act unilaterally enabled Australia and other allies to dissuade the Americans from striking Manchuria in response to the PRC intervention in Korea.

Throughout 1950, America's search for allies in Korea and Australia's pursuit of a security treaty with the US strengthened the evolving relationship between the two nations. The alignment of American and Australian strategic and security

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interests meant that Percy Spender's goal was now closer to realisation. In February 1951, John Foster Dulles, Truman's Special Representative and US Ambassador at Large, led an American delegation to Australia to meet with an Australian delegation led by Spender. This meeting in Canberra resulted in the negotiation of the ANZUS Treaty between the US, Australia and New Zealand. It also marked the beginning of the personal friendship between Dulles and Spender that would substantially strengthen the American-Australian alliance.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis in this chapter expands and provides different perspectives and interpretations from the published literature. There is no substantive analysis of the origins of Australian-South Korean diplomatic and economic relations and the US urging Australia to forge connections with the ROK. Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Chapters 4-10, focuses on Australia's concern for its security. O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapters 4-10, and Richard Trembath, *A Different Sort of War: Australians in Korea 1950-53* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2005) Chapters 1-4, analyse Australia's Korean War commitment in the context of Australia's shifting strategic alliance from Britain to the US. This chapter challenges the polemical argument in Gavan McCormack, *Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) Chapters 5-8, that Australia simply endorsed US Korean policy. The tensions analysed in this chapter demonstrate the US-Australian Korean engagement was considerably more nuanced than McCormack suggests.

William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995) Chapters 1-4; Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War: Communism in the Far East and the American Struggle for Hegemony in the Cold War* (I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2014) Chapters 1-2; Robert Barnes, "Branding an Aggressor: The Commonwealth, the United Nations and Chinese Intervention in the Korean War, November 1950-January 1951", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 231-253; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War: The Case of Korea* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2004) Chapters 2-3, have analysed the importance of the UN and the efforts of US allies, including Australia, in urging the Americans to exercise restraint when they announced their intention to bomb Manchurian bases following China's intervention in the war. These scholars also argue US allies sent forces to Korea hoping to gain US strategic support and influence American policy. Citing Percy Spender as an example, Barnes and Mount and Laferriere argue each Commonwealth nation prioritised its relationship with the US over Commonwealth unity and were therefore willing to condone US policy. However, this chapter shows there were real tensions and differences between US and Australian Korean policies regarding diplomatic and economic relations with the ROK and US policy towards Communist China. Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974) and Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War, Vol 1, Politics and Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1992) refer to Australian contributions to UN and Commonwealth efforts to influence US Korean policy but their focus is on Canadian and New Zealand diplomacy, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> David Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle': Australia's Cold War 1948-1954* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1999)

<sup>3</sup> On China's entry into the Korean War, see Jian Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1994); Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China at War in Korea* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1989); Allen Whiting, *China Crosses The Yalu: The Decision To Enter the Korean War [1960]* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1968); Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited", *China Quarterly*, 121, 1990: 94-115.

<sup>4</sup> "Relations with Australia", July 4, undated but very likely to be 1949, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cable, External Affairs (hereafter EA) to Australian Mission in Tokyo and AB Jamieson on "Korean Goodwill Mission to Australia", March 3, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cable, Makin to Menzies, January 6, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>7</sup> Cable, Makin to Menzies, January 6, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum, Australian Consul-General in Manila to the Secretary of EA, January 6, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>9</sup> EA briefing "Korean Approach Re Accreditation of Korean Representative to Australia", January 12, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>10</sup> EA briefing "Korean Approach Re Accreditation of Korean Representative to Australia", January 12, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>11</sup> EA briefing "Korean Approach Re Accreditation of Korean Representative to Australia", January 12, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>12</sup> EA briefing "Korean Approach Re Accreditation of Korean Representative to Australia", January 12, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum, AB Jamieson to the Secretary of EA, February 14, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1. See also Cable, EA to Australian Embassy in Washington, “Korean Goodwill Mission to Australia”, March 2, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>14</sup> Cable, Makin to Spender, February 27, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>15</sup> Cable, EA to the Australian Mission in Tokyo and to AB Jamieson on “Korean Goodwill Mission to Australia”, March 3, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1. See also Cable EA to Australian Embassy in Washington, “Korean representation in Australia”, February 28, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1. Hodgson replaced Shaw as Head of the Tokyo Mission in November 1949.

<sup>16</sup> Cable, Australian Mission in Tokyo to EA in Canberra on possible business links between Australia and the ROK and also involving the US, April 15, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>17</sup> Cable, Australian Embassy in Washington to EA in Canberra on the coming visit of the ROK Ambassador to the US, April 5, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>18</sup> Cable, EA to the Australian Delegation to the UN General Assembly in New York on observers for UNCOK, April 13, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/278), 3127/10/1, Part 1.

<sup>19</sup> Robert O’Neill, “The Korean War and the Origins of ANZUS”, in Bridge, Carl, (ed), *Munich to Vietnam: Australia’s Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991) pp 99-113.

<sup>20</sup> Cable, UNCOK to the UN Security Council transmitting a report dated June 24, 1950, from the UN field observers, June 29, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [1 of 2: June, 1950], Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Missouri (hereafter HSTL). Inquiring about information on activities north of the 38th Parallel, Peach and Rankin were told “in some sectors ... civilians had recently been removed from areas adjoining [the] parallel to [the] north”, and “there was increased military activity in [a particular] vicinity.” However, the Australians were not convinced a North Korean invasion of the ROK was imminent. They noted “no reports ... have been received of any unusual activity on [the] part of [the] North Korean forces that would indicate any impending change in [the] general situation along [the] parallel.” The Americans were informed of the contents of the Peach and Rankin report four days before it was submitted to the UN Security Council by UNCOK on June 29, 1950.

See also Letter from Truman to Henry Wallace, August 10, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversations File: 1949-1953. Box 67: Folder: August 1950, HSTL.

<sup>21</sup> C.P. Noyes, US Mission to the UN, Memorandum of Conversation on Korea, June 26, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [1 of 2: June, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>22</sup> Department of State Telegram, Dulles and Allison from Tokyo to Acheson and Rusk in Washington DC, June 25, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [1 of 2: June, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>23</sup> Extract from Minutes of Cabinet Meeting held on June 27, 1950, NAA, A4940 (A4940/1), C248. See also Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia’s Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992) Chapters 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Statement by Menzies, “Invasion of Southern Korea”, June 27, 1950, NAA, A4940 (A4940/1), C248. See also Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia’s Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Chapters 5-6.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram, Acheson to US Diplomatic Posts around the world, including Canberra, June 28, 1950. Emphasis in original. Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [1 of 2: June, 1950], HSTL.

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<sup>26</sup> Telegram, Acheson to US Diplomatic Posts around the world, including Canberra, June 28, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [1 of 2: June, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>27</sup> Note from the Acting Head of the Australian Mission to the UN to the Secretary General transmitting a communication from the Australian Government concerning the Security Council Resolution of 27 June 1950, June 29, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>28</sup> World Reaction to Korean Developments – No 3, Prepared by the Office of Intelligence Research, June 30, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, Jan 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: World Reaction to Korean Developments [1 of 3: June 28-July 9, 1950], HSTL.

The BCOF originally consisted of forces from Australia, Britain, New Zealand and India. When the Korean War broke out, only the Australians remained.

<sup>29</sup> World Reaction to Korean Developments – No 3, Prepared by the Office of Intelligence Research, June 30, 1950. Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, Jan 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: World Reaction to Korean Developments [1 of 3: June 28-July 9, 1950], HSTL. In this document, the Australian newspaper, *Sydney Mirror*, is spelt Sidney Mirror. See also Cable from the Australian Department of External Affairs to the UN Secretary General in response to the UN request for member states to give support to the UN effort in Korea, June 30, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>30</sup> World Reaction to Korean Developments – No 4, Prepared by the Office of Intelligence Research, July 1, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, Jan 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: World Reaction to Korean Developments [1 of 3: June 28-July 9, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>31</sup> Department of State Memorandum, Perkins to Acheson, July 3, 1950. See also the copy of the text of the South African statement to the UN Secretary General, sent to Acheson on June 30, 1950, and attached to this memorandum, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>32</sup> Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson, Jooste and Satterthwaite, July 3, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL. In the Memorandum cited in the preceding Endnote, the countries mentioned are Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In the Memorandum of Conversation cited here, Acheson referred to Britain, Australia and New Zealand. South Africa ended up sending a squadron of fighters which saw active service in the Korean War.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum of Acheson's Press Conference on the Korean Situation, July 5, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: World Reaction to Korean Developments [3 of 3: July 29-Aug 31, 1950] to Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 3: Anglo-American policy discussions. Box 4: Folder: 1. North Korean aggression: Immediate evaluations and reaction [2 of 2: July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>34</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 65. See also Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Chapters 5-6.

<sup>35</sup> Text of Message, Attlee to Fadden on Korea, July 20, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.

- <sup>36</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, July 24, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.
- <sup>37</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, July 24, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.
- <sup>38</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson and Jooste, July 24, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversations File: 1949-1953. Box 67: Folder: July 1950, HSTL.
- <sup>39</sup> Fadden was told General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, “raised the question of United Nations representation by land forces in Korea” and “expressed the view that such reinforcement was of the utmost importance from the military as well as the political aspect.” Bradley understood it would take time for any additional forces to be deployed in Korea, but argued “an early public announcement of the intention to send such reinforcements would be of immense political value as showing unity of purpose in [the] United Nations, as a help to securing military aid appropriations and as a morale builder to all troops engaged.” Text of Message, Attlee to Fadden, July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>40</sup> Text of Message, Attlee to Fadden, July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12. See also Memorandum of Conversation with the President, “Visit of Australian Prime Minister”, July 10, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversations File: 1949-1953. Box 67: Folder: July 1950, HSTL.
- <sup>41</sup> Text of Message, Sir Oliver Franks on the attitude of US Administration to the question of UK ground forces for Korea, undated, but very likely around July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>42</sup> Text of Message, Sir Oliver Franks on the attitude of US Administration to the question of UK ground forces for Korea, undated, but very likely around July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>43</sup> Text of Message, Sir Oliver Franks on the attitude of US Administration to the question of UK ground forces for Korea, undated, but very likely around July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>44</sup> Text of Message, Attlee to Menzies, July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>45</sup> Text of Message, Attlee to Menzies, July 25, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12. See also Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia’s Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Chapters 5-6.
- <sup>46</sup> Alan Watt, *Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1972) pp 174-75.
- <sup>47</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 76.
- <sup>48</sup> Letter from the New Zealand Acting High Commissioner to Australia to Spender, July 27, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12. See also Statement by New Zealand Prime Minister Holland in the House of Representatives, July 26, 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12; Message from New Zealand PM Holland to British PM Attlee on New Zealand contribution of ground forces to Korea, undated but very likely to be late July 1950, NAA, A1838 (A1838/283), TS505/11/12.
- <sup>49</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Conversation with Australian Prime Minister, July 28, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversations File: 1949-1953. Box 67: Folder: July 1950, HSTL.
- <sup>50</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Aid to Korea”, Truman, Menzies and Acheson, July 28, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversations File: 1949-1953. Box 67: Folder: July 1950, HSTL. See also Memorandum of Conversation, Menzies, Acheson, Thorp, Rusk and Perkins, July 31, 1950.
- <sup>51</sup> Extract from Minutes of Cabinet Meeting held on August 1-2, 1950, NAA, A4940 (A4940/1), C248.
- <sup>52</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 80 and Percy Spender, *Politics and a Man* (Collins, Sydney, 1972) p 285.
- <sup>53</sup> Sandra Penrose, “Recognising the People’s Republic of China: A Reappraisal of Australian Foreign Policy During the First Menzies Ministry 1950-51”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 44, 2, 1998, pp 209-24.
- <sup>54</sup> Aide-Memoire, Acheson to Wellington Koo, Nationalist Chinese Ambassador to the US, July 1, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of

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State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>55</sup> US Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, Merchant and McNicol, July 1, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 4. Indian efforts to mediate and prevent the spread of hostilities to 6. Contributions to the UN effort. Box 5: Folder 6: Contributions to the UN effort [1 of 3: June-July, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>56</sup> Douglas notified Acheson that Menzies wanted to discuss the “situation in the Far East, Korea and Formosa” during his Washington visit. Menzies “indicated that ... while his Cabinet and the Australian people were very much concerned about Korea and were determined that aggression” there needed to be resisted, “they were not clear about Formosa.” Telegram, Douglas to Acheson, July 17, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 7. Policy re UN crossing of the 38th Parallel: Summer, 1950 to 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 1 of 2: July-Nov, 1950] Box 6: Folder 9: Neutralization of Formosa [1 of 2: July-August, 1950], HSTL.

<sup>57</sup> Telegram, Austin to Acheson, November 6, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 20: Efforts to prevent enlargement of hostilities, HSTL.

<sup>58</sup> Telegram, Austin to Acheson, November 10, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. This document is of poor quality and is very difficult to read.

<sup>59</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, November 11, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL.

<sup>60</sup> Telegram, Austin to Acheson, November 14, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. See also Telegram, Woodward, US Ambassador to Canada, to Acheson, November 15, 1950.

<sup>61</sup> Telegram, Austin to Acheson, November 14, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. See also Telegram, Woodward, US Ambassador to Canada, to Acheson, November 15, 1950.

<sup>62</sup> Telegram, Acheson to the US delegation at the UN and to US Embassies including Canberra, November 16, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL.

<sup>63</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, November 17, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. This part of the document is faded and difficult to read.

<sup>64</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, November 17, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. This part of the document is faded and difficult to read.

<sup>65</sup> Telegram, Jarman to Acheson, November 17, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL.



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<sup>66</sup> Letter, Acheson to Marshall including a copy of a memorandum dated November 17, 1950, outlining the reaction of five allied nations to the US proposal to pursue enemy aircraft across the Manchurian border, November 21, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 23: The Question of hot pursuit, November 1950, HSTL. Emphasis is mine. Also, “unfavourable reaction” appears as “reaction unfavourable” in the document. I have reversed these words for better clarity. See also Telegram, Scotten, US Ambassador to New Zealand, to Acheson, November 22, 1950.

<sup>67</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, Makin, McNicol, Shullaw and Merchant, November 29, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 25: Allied criticisms of the UN Commander, HSTL.

<sup>68</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, Makin, McNicol, Shullaw and Merchant, November 29, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 25: Allied criticisms of the UN Commander, HSTL.

<sup>69</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Situation in Korea”, November 30, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 25: Allied criticisms of the UN Commander, HSTL. The first two pages of this three page document are difficult to read. The briefing took place at the “Canadian Embassy rather than in the State Department in order to avoid press speculation and questioning.”

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Situation in Korea”, November 30, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: 16. Relief and rehabilitation in Korea [Box 2 of 2: Dec 1950-Sept 1952] to 25. Allied criticisms of the UN commander. Box 7: Folder 25: Allied criticisms of the UN Commander, HSTL.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Architect of ANZUS: John Foster Dulles and the American Origins and Making of the Treaty**

#### **Introduction**

Since 1951, the ANZUS Treaty has largely defined the US-Australian relationship. However, the popular Australian narrative of ANZUS, compounded by increasingly distorted American perceptions of the history of the US-Australian relationship, mask the differences in US and Australian understandings and goals of the Treaty. The Australian version of the making of ANZUS has been extensively documented by Australian politicians, diplomats and scholars, whereas there has been no extensive study of the Treaty from the US perspective. This chapter analyses the US origins of ANZUS, arguing that America's Japanese policy and Ambassador John Foster Dulles, Special Representative of the President, were pivotal to the making of the Treaty. This analysis challenges the largely uncontested Australian narrative that Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs, 1949-51, persuaded the US to agree to this Treaty with Australia and New Zealand. The chapter argues that the ANZUS Treaty came to fruition because the US calculated it served its strategic interests.

Although ANZUS was negotiated over four days in Canberra in February 1951, the evolution in American Asia-Pacific strategy that resulted in the Treaty had a much longer gestation period. This chapter begins by analysing the significance of the Truman Administration's decision to conclude a lenient peace with Japan and co-opt that nation in its strategy to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific following the outbreak of the Korean War and the Chinese entry into that conflict. The central factor in the creation of ANZUS was America's desire for allied support for a

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moderate Japanese peace treaty and Japan's inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. This is followed by an analysis of the crucial role Dulles played in the evolution of American Asia-Pacific strategy, the making of ANZUS and its relationship to the Japanese peace treaty and US security treaties with Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. This analysis concludes with an evaluation of Dulles's interpretation of ANZUS. The chapter illustrates the ongoing problematic and nuanced nature of the US-Australian relationship during their Korean engagement.

From the end of World War Two, the Truman Administration consistently rebuffed overtures by Australia's successive External Affairs Ministers, Herbert Evatt and Percy Spender, for a security agreement with the Americans. Secretaries of State George Marshall and Dean Acheson and the State Department, were understandably very cautious about security arrangements involving open ended American commitments that could have unintended consequences. It was the Communist victory in China, followed by the outbreak of the Korean War and the Chinese entry into the conflict that led to a re-evaluation of American strategy in the Asia-Pacific, especially regarding Japan, and the new countenancing of security alliances with regional allies, including Australia.

ANZUS was the result of America's decision to conclude, with allied support, a lenient peace treaty with Japan and include her in a regional anti-Communist alliance. The previous chapters of this thesis noted Australia's attempts to secure American protection against a potentially resurgent Japan in the aftermath of World War Two. Australia considered Japan a greater threat than Communist expansion. Conversely, the US deduced Japan was no longer a danger whereas communism was

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the present and future threat. Hence, the Truman Administration decided Japan would be part of its strategy to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific.

The Americans sought but did not require allied backing for a soft Japanese peace treaty. However, the US did need willing allies to establish an Asia-Pacific anti-Communist alliance that included Japan. This chapter argues the US agreed to ANZUS to secure Australian participation in a regional alliance and acceptance of Japan's inclusion in this containment strategy. Whereas the Americans regarded ANZUS and the Japanese peace treaty as elements of their strategy to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific, Australia viewed ANZUS primarily as an American defence guarantee against a resurgent Japan.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese factor in the making of ANZUS largely explains the differing US and Australian perceptions of the Treaty.

John Foster Dulles was the architect of ANZUS. He was central to the re-evaluation of America's Asia-Pacific strategy that led to ANZUS and the creation of the broader "hub and spokes" US alliance system in the region in 1951.<sup>2</sup> Dulles, a senior Republican, was an expert in international law and foreign policy and an experienced diplomat. In January 1951, President Harry Truman entrusted Dulles with negotiating a peace treaty with Japan and her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. This chapter argues Dulles's conviction that America needed to actively engage the Asia-Pacific region in response to the Communist victory in China, the outbreak of the Korean War and the Chinese entry into the conflict, altered the thinking of cautious American policy makers and led to ANZUS and security treaties with Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. These three events, occurring in relatively quick succession from December 1949 to November 1950, provided the

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impetus for the American re-evaluation of its Asia-Pacific strategy which hastened the conclusion of the Japanese peace treaty and the making of ANZUS and the other security treaties.

In 1951, the Americans entered into security treaties with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan because Dulles and senior US officials reasoned this approach best enabled the US to incorporate her Asia-Pacific allies, including Japan, in a security cordon to contain communism. This analysis evaluates Dulles's consistent view that ANZUS was part of this security link, and argues he and senior Truman Administration officials saw the Treaty facilitating American containment of communism in the Asia-Pacific region. The Americans considered defending Australia and New Zealand as a corollary to this primary function of ANZUS. Dulles also regarded ANZUS and the other security treaties as the initial phase of America's effort to forge a more comprehensive security system in the Asia-Pacific region. The Americans viewed these treaties as the beginning of an evolutionary process integrating an Asia-Pacific alliance to contain communism.

The signing of the ANZUS Treaty in September 1951 did not signify that America and Australia had identical security interests. Rather, the respective US and Australian interpretations of ANZUS, highlighted the differing perceptions each nation had about the function of the Treaty. The Truman Administration was focussed on containing communism in the Asia-Pacific region whereas Australia was concerned about its own security from Japan. ANZUS was an element of the "hub and spokes" alliance system created by the Americans.<sup>3</sup> The US agreed to ANZUS because it wanted Australia, New Zealand and Japan in an Asia-Pacific anti-

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Communist alliance. From Canberra's perspective, ANZUS was now the key pillar of Australian foreign policy, ensuring American protection of Australia from Japan first and communism second. This analysis shows that although the US and Australian strategic outlook overlapped in 1950-51, the two nations maintained similar rather than identical security interests.

The Australian story of ANZUS says the Treaty came to fruition because of Percy Spender's concerted effort to secure a binding security agreement with the US. The literature on the Australian origins of ANZUS and Spender's pivotal role in the making of the Treaty is substantive but not voluminous.<sup>4</sup> Three of the four principal Australian figures in the making of ANZUS have written accounts and interpretations of the Treaty.<sup>5</sup> David McLean's analysis contests this standard view, arguing ANZUS was the product of the evolution of US Asia-Pacific policy resulting in a confluence with Australian objectives.<sup>6</sup> McLean's study traces the evolution of American policy, whereas the analysis in this chapter is focussed on Dulles and largely based on the evidence in his papers. To date, there is no substantive US study of the American origins of ANZUS.<sup>7</sup>

Robert O'Neill contends that "for those with an historical consciousness, the ANZUS Treaty carries the stamp 'Made in Australia' on its front page."<sup>8</sup> David McIntyre wrote that "Dulles became the single most important figure in the making of ANZUS."<sup>9</sup> These statements reflect the US and Australian perspectives but need to be read conjointly for a more complete appreciation of the origins and making of ANZUS. While Spender's energy and tenacity certainly explain the Australian story of the making of ANZUS, this chapter argues Dulles was the crucial figure in bringing

the Treaty to fruition. This chapter shows the Truman Administration signed ANZUS because the Americans decided this alliance was in their best interests. This chapter challenges the narrative that Spender persuaded the Americans to agree to the Treaty. Truman, Acheson, Dulles and other senior US officials had already decided to enter into a formal security agreement with Australia and New Zealand *before* the meeting between Dulles, Spender and Doidge, New Zealand's Minister for External Affairs, in Canberra in February 1951 which produced the ANZUS Treaty.

### **The Japanese Peace Treaty and ANZUS**

Following the Chinese Communist ascension to power in December 1949, the Truman Administration cautiously countenanced a Pacific Pact anti-Communist alliance.<sup>10</sup> The question of “an Asian Union” or a Pacific Pact was discussed at the White House on February 4, 1950, by President Truman, Philippine President, Elpidio Quirino, Philippine Ambassador to the US, Joaquin Elizalde, and US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. Along with South Korean President Syngman Rhee and Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek, Quirino had been advocating for a Pacific Pact since 1949. Quirino raised the “possibility of a Union” which would include Korea, Nationalist China, Burma, Siam, Indonesia and Pakistan. Truman “inquired about the inclusion” of India, Australia and New Zealand and Quirino said “he hoped these states would join later.” Acheson “did not believe” Quirino’s proposal “was the wisest one to pursue” because a “Union without India, Australia or New Zealand would lack essential elements of strength.” Acheson was receptive to the idea of a regional anti-Communist alliance but never embraced an Asian Union or a Pacific Pact and was especially wary of over-extending US commitments in the region. However, the Truman Administration’s intimation that a viable regional anti-

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Communist alliance required Australian and New Zealand participation indicated the US considered them valuable strategic allies.<sup>11</sup>

The origins of ANZUS lay in America's decision to secure allied support for a generous peace treaty with Japan and enlist her in its strategy to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific. US officials began to consider a Japanese peace treaty in 1947. The momentum to finalise a peace treaty with Japan began with the Communist victory in China in October 1949, accelerated after the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, and became a US foreign policy priority following the Chinese intervention in Korea in November that year. These events led to a re-evaluation of US strategy in the Asia-Pacific. The centrepiece of this evolving strategy was the Truman Administration's decision to conclude a lenient peace treaty with Japan and include her in an anti-Communist alliance in the region. Determined to have allied support and prevent Japan falling to the Communists, the US argued a benign peace treaty would make an independent and economically revitalised Japan a powerful ally as an anti-Communist bulwark in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>12</sup>

On April 24, 1950, senior Truman Administration officials including Acheson and Louis Johnson, Secretary of Defense, discussed a Japanese peace treaty and considered how the US could assuage allied fears of a resurgent Japan. This was essential to securing allied support for a lenient peace treaty. Johnson presented a Defense Department proposal that "negotiations be initiated with our friendly Allies looking toward a [Japanese] peace treaty covering political and economic matters but leaving unchanged the occupation regime of control" and General Douglas MacArthur's "reserve powers for the purpose of assuring the maintenance of security



with respect to Japan.” The State Department agreed, noting the “security problem” included “protection against the possible resurgence of Japanese aggression, which is of particular concern to Australia and the Philippines.”<sup>13</sup>

The State Department argued “a peace treaty, non-punitive in nature, should be concluded and ... a security arrangement” made with the Far East Command (FEC) nations and Japan “which would involve mutual commitments among the FEC powers to defend one another against aggression by Japan and to defend Japan against aggression from ... the USSR or Communist China.” Acheson said Australia and New Zealand were “anxious for a peace treaty provided ... their security against the possible resurgence of Japanese aggression is adequately taken care of.” He noted these nations “would welcome the continued presence of US forces in Japan and if some such security arrangement were not made they would insist upon a very punitive peace treaty.”<sup>14</sup> The Truman Administration intended to co-opt Japan into a regional anti-Communist security alliance and despite Australian, New Zealand and Philippine hostility towards Japan, the Americans believed each would accept a soft peace if the US guaranteed their security.

The Australian, New Zealand and Philippine experience and memory of Japanese attack and brutal occupation and treatment of POWs during World War Two, remained very raw and underpinned their palpable fear of a resurgent Japan. However, whereas these three nations still regarded Japan as a threat, the US now perceived Japan as an ally. Herein lay the tension between the US and its allies. The Truman Administration saw communism rather than Japan as the real threat to the interests of the US and its allies. Japan could only be integrated into an anti-

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Communist regional alliance with the support of US allies. The earlier rebukes by the Truman Administration of persistent Australian requests for a security treaty between the two nations reflected American caution about over extending its commitments. Now that America needed its allies to integrate Japan in a regional security alliance, the Truman Administration relented and agreed to a security treaty with Australia and New Zealand to secure their support for a moderate Japanese peace treaty.

The US agreed to ANZUS to ensure its Japanese policy prevailed. The Truman Administration could have signed a generous peace treaty with Japan without allied support but it needed its allies to integrate Japan into a regional alliance. This convergence of circumstances – the American realisation their Japanese policy was dependant on allied support, and Australia's dogged pursuit of a security treaty with the US, led to ANZUS. The evolving American Communist containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific was predicated on linking a series of "hub and spokes" security arrangements with willing allies in the region.<sup>15</sup> For this strategy to succeed, the US needed to persuade Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines to see Japan not as a threat but as a member of an anti-Communist regional alliance, if not an ally.

### **Dulles and the American origins of ANZUS**

John Foster Dulles was the pivotal figure in the making of the ANZUS Treaty and the transformation of regional perceptions of Japan. Dulles was an experienced internationalist who recognised the limits of US power and the importance of allies. These three factors help explain Dulles's influence on the evolving US Asia-Pacific containment strategy and his outlook and leadership as chief US negotiator for the Japanese peace treaty and ANZUS. His extensive experience in international law and diplomacy led to his appointment by Truman on January 10, 1951, as Special

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Representative of the President with the rank of Ambassador. Dulles was chosen to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan and security treaties with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan. His task was to facilitate the implementation of the peace treaty and the formation of the regional alliances on US terms.

Dulles had been a member of the US delegation that despite misgivings, acquiesced to British and French demands to impose the Versailles Treaty on Germany in 1919. A leading figure in the internationalist wing of the Republican Party, Dulles espoused a bi-partisan US foreign policy. Dulles was aligned with Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the political and intellectual leader of those Republicans who supported an internationalist US foreign policy befitting America's new global power status. Indeed, the Truman Administration implemented key pillars of its foreign policy with bi-partisan Congressional support, notably US membership of the UN, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.<sup>16</sup>

As a UN delegate from 1946-48, Dulles was at the forefront of US dealings with the Soviets during the formative years of the Cold War. He was one of the senior US political and diplomatic officials who grappled with the stabilisation and revitalisation of Western Europe, American attempts to resolve the division of Korea and the US response to the outbreak of the Korean War. This experience led him to conclude an American presence in the Asia-Pacific, similar to its commitment in Western Europe, was essential to containing communism in the region. As in Europe, so in the Asia-Pacific, Dulles deduced the US needed dependable allies.<sup>17</sup>

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Following the Communist victory in China, Truman's foreign policy was subjected to sustained Republican attacks for being soft on communism. In April 1950, to placate this criticism, Dulles, regarded as a foreign policy expert by Democrats as well as Republicans, was appointed Consultant to the Secretary of State. Dulles, now part of the top foreign policy making echelon in the Truman Administration, was soon heavily engaged with the formulation of the Japanese peace treaty. Dulles became especially concerned about likely tensions between the US and her Pacific allies regarding a soft peace with Japan. Dulles knew the US would be unable to have Japan in a regional anti-Communist alliance without allied support. On the eve of the Korean War, MacArthur, concurring with Dulles, warned that allowing the "rearmament of Japan at this time would be accompanied by convulsions in Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines and throughout Asia, and might very well solidify a Pacific bloc against American policy vis-à-vis Japan."<sup>18</sup>

The week before the Korean War started, Dulles went to South Korea, addressed its parliament and travelled to the 38th Parallel, seeking to bolster morale amid fears of an impending North Korean invasion. Proceeding to Japan to begin the ground work for a peace treaty, Dulles was there when the Korean War began. He urged Truman to act immediately and fully supported the American intervention in the conflict. The Korean War created greater urgency within the Truman Administration for the US to sign a peace treaty with Japan. Senior American political, diplomatic and military officials, including Dulles, now began earnestly formulating the treaty terms.<sup>19</sup>

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On July 6, 1950, Dulles linked the Korean War and the Japanese peace treaty, noting that before the conflict began, State and Defense Department officials including himself and MacArthur, concluded the “countries at war with Japan, or such of them as are willing, should conclude a [peace] treaty with Japan restoring to Japan all political power and authority” and allow the US “the right to maintain throughout Japan such strategic dispositions as may be necessary to insure that Japan would be an effective part of the structure of international peace and security.” Dulles now argued the US should “proceed promptly” with a Japanese peace treaty because the Korean conflict would make Japan more amenable to accepting an ongoing American presence on its homeland. US bases in Japan would also placate Australia and other American allies who feared the consequences of a soft peace would be a resurgence of Japanese militarism.<sup>20</sup> Japan’s strategic position and economic potential were crucial to the Truman Administration’s Communist containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific. The US now sought to persuade Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines that Japan was an important ally and no longer posed a threat to the region.

Dulles was convinced a revitalised Japan allied to the US was essential to American security interests in the Asia-Pacific. Communist pressure, especially its victory in China, led the US to see Japan as a crucial ally, rather than as a defeated and occupied enemy. The Truman Administration resolved Japan would be an anti-Communist bulwark. Maintaining the US military presence would ensure Japan would not fall to the Communists or again threaten the region. For all these reasons, Dulles fully supported the Truman Administration’s decision to formulate a moderate peace treaty, believing this would co-opt Japan into the American orbit. Dulles’s

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experience at Versailles in 1919 and the harsh treaty imposed on Germany made him wary of the potential consequences of similar punitive measures against Japan.<sup>21</sup>

The tension in the Truman Administration's Japanese policy debate was evident in the October 23, 1950, Council on Foreign Relations Study Group discussion led by Dulles. The US sought to formulate a mild Japanese peace treaty with allied support. Conscious of the strong Australian, New Zealand and Philippine opposition to a lenient peace with Japan, the Americans determined to address these allied concerns and gain their support. The Truman Administration's prime objective was to have Japan as an ally and bulwark against communism in Asia. Japan could not be part of an anti-Communist US alliance without allied agreement. Dulles knew the Americans needed to consider their Pacific allies perspectives and said: "subject only to the views of its allies," the US sought "to restore to Japan complete and untrammelled sovereignty."<sup>22</sup>

The Truman Administration was determined its Japanese policy would prevail. Dulles noted the US "has informed its allies, many of whom are fearful of renewed attempts at aggression by the Japanese, that in its view any attempt to impose military restrictions on Japan in the peace treaty is unrealistic." However, the treaty would contain a stipulation that American forces be stationed in Japan to defend that nation and to "serve as a deterrent to any Japanese attempt at aggression." This would "help to quiet the fears" of those nations "concerned over the possibility of renewed aggression on the part of the Japanese."<sup>23</sup>

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John Allison, chief of the State Department Division of Northeast Asian affairs, 1947-1950, told this Study Group, that opposition to a moderate Japanese peace treaty was mellowing, especially among the British Commonwealth members of the Far Eastern Commission (FEC). “Differences still exist”, said Allison, “but they are not as great as they once were.” Allison noted “the extreme views that have in the past characterised the attitudes of Australia and New Zealand still persist to some extent, but ... if they were given some assurance of American protection against renewed Japanese aggression they would perhaps acquiesce in the American policy of a liberal peace treaty.” Allison, as special assistant to Dulles, 1950-51, was a member of the US delegation that travelled to Japan, Australia and New Zealand in January-February 1951 to finalise the Japanese Peace Treaty and negotiate ANZUS.<sup>24</sup>

Five months into the Korean conflict, Dulles was arguing even more widely for a reappraisal of US foreign policy objectives in Asia, especially the need to re-evaluate how American economic and military resources would be allocated and the need to strengthen alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. On November 3, 1950, Dulles, foreshadowing the “domino theory”, said the Korean War was the most aggressive indication of the Soviet and Chinese intent to ultimately gain control of the Korean peninsula, Japan, Formosa, the Philippines and Vietnam. Dulles surmised the US “may have been sucked into a major military disaster in Korea which could not only gravely impair, for a time, the military capability of the United States everywhere, but which would have grave psychological repercussions upon the Japanese nation and the countries and islands of South East Asia.” Dulles warned these “repercussions” would not be “limited” to Asia, but would “extend” to Western Europe and the British Commonwealth.<sup>25</sup>

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Dulles's expositions of Communist intentions and US policy were contentious but he also emphasised the success of America's containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific was reliant on allied support. Indeed, Dulles was concerned America would lose support from allies who "have until now deferred to our policies, particularly in relation to Korea", "if these policies lead to a major disaster." Significantly, Dulles stated "it would seem important to accelerate some understanding with Australia and New Zealand, the only two dependable countries in the Pacific area." Just over three months *before* Dulles came to Australia for negotiations with Spender and Frederick Doidge, the New Zealand Minister for External Affairs, which resulted in the ANZUS Treaty, he had concluded Australia and New Zealand were reliable allies and their desire for a security agreement with the US was now warranted.<sup>26</sup>

Focussed on garnering allied support for a mild Japanese peace treaty, Dulles shared his thoughts with MacArthur on November 15, 1950. Dulles said the American UN delegation "have completed ... private conversations with all of the other members of the F.E.C." on the peace treaty, and "Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Burma have all raised objections to the absence of military restrictions." Nevertheless, Dulles thought Australia and New Zealand "will give way if we can find some formula for assuring them of U.S. protection in the event of attack. We talked this over with Spender" and the State Department is "studying the problem, and I think it ought to be possible to find a formula – perhaps a Presidential Declaration – which would be mutually acceptable to our three countries and clear the way, as far as Australia and New Zealand are concerned, for the type of Treaty that you, and we, want."<sup>27</sup>



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Dulles's remarks illustrated his confidence that Australia and New Zealand could be persuaded to accept a lenient Japanese peace treaty and her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance in exchange for a formal US security guarantee. The reorientation of American policy in the Asia-Pacific had elevated the strategic importance of Australia and New Zealand for US policy makers. Australian and New Zealand participation in the Korean War, their geo-strategic location, shared values and outlook with the US, also drew Washington's attention. The Truman Administration recognised the depth of Australian and New Zealand opposition to a soft peace treaty. However, it regarded both nations as crucial and reliable allies in the region. From Washington's perspective, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, together with Japan, were essential links in the Pacific island anti-Communist alliance chain the US envisioned. Recognising the limits of US power, Dulles argued allies were essential to the evolving American strategy. Hence, his preparedness to offer Australia and New Zealand a security agreement as a *quid pro quo* for their acceptance of America's Japanese policy.<sup>28</sup>

The full scale Chinese entry into the Korean War in November 1950 increased the Truman Administration's urgency to rapidly conclude a peace treaty with Japan. On December 18, Acheson asked Marshall if, from a military perspective, there were any objections to a possible Pacific Pact, specifically

a willingness on the part of the United States to make a mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific Island Nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan and the United States, and perhaps Indonesia) which would have the dual purpose of assuring combined action as between the members to resist aggression from without and also to resist attack by one of the members, eg Japan, if Japan should again become aggressive.

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The US wanted to co-opt its allies, including Japan, into an anti-Communist alliance that would simultaneously safeguard their security against a possible resurgence of Japanese aggression.<sup>29</sup>

Acheson also informed Marshall he would recommend that Truman assign Dulles to lead a “Presidential Mission” to Japan. The mission would discuss the terms of a peace treaty with Japanese officials but “would have no authority to make any commitments on behalf of the United States.” Acheson raised with Marshall whether the US “should ... unilaterally seek an early conclusion of a Peace Settlement with Japan without assurances of participation” by their Pacific allies or “their support.”<sup>30</sup> The Japanese peace treaty was finalised in late December 1950. Whereas Acheson countenanced unilateral US action, Dulles recognised regional allies were crucial to America’s containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific.

### **Dulles goes to Australia and New Zealand**

The Truman Administration entered into ANZUS to give Australia and New Zealand a security guarantee in return for their acceptance of its Japanese policy. Dulles was at the centre of the re-evaluation of US strategy in the Asia-Pacific, the formulation of America’s Japanese policy, and the making of the regional security treaties that incorporated Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan in a regional anti-Communist alliance. Fearing a resurgent expansionist Japan, Australia and New Zealand reluctantly accepted a liberal peace treaty and Japan’s inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance in return for an American security guarantee.

From Australia’s perspective, Spender was the author of ANZUS. In fact, together, Dulles and Spender made the Treaty. However, ultimately, the treaty came

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into being because the Truman Administration accepted a security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand that facilitated its primary objective: a magnanimous peace treaty with Japan and allied support for Japan's inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. Dulles was the principal figure in the making of this policy and therefore the architect of ANZUS.

The Dulles mission to Australia and New Zealand demonstrated the Truman Administration's determination to implement its Japanese policy with allied support. Truman and Acheson could have sent a lower ranked envoy or worked via the US Embassy in Canberra. Dulles could have arranged for Australian and other allied officials to meet him in Japan. The decision to sign a lenient peace treaty with Japan was non negotiable and the US did not need allied support to do this. However, the Americans needed allies to implement their Asia-Pacific anti-Communist security strategy that incorporated Japan. Sending Dulles to the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand was a powerful signal of the American resolve to secure allied consent for Japan's inclusion in its regional security policy.

The objectives of US policy were clearly laid out in Truman's instructions to Dulles on January 10, 1951. Truman appointed Dulles Special Representative of the President with the rank of Ambassador to conduct the "further negotiations which are necessary to bring a Japanese Peace Settlement to a satisfactory conclusion." Dulles was "authorised to visit Japan and any other country necessary and discuss with appropriate authorities and individuals the general basis on which the United States is prepared to conclude a peace settlement with Japan." Truman told Dulles the US

will commit substantial armed force to the defense of the island chain [the Aleutian Islands, Japan, the Ryukyus, the Philippines, Australia and New

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Zealand] of which Japan forms a part, that it desires that Japan should increasingly acquire the ability to defend itself, and that, in order further to implement this policy, the United States Government is willing to make a mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and perhaps Indonesia) which would have the dual purpose of assuring combined action as between the members to resist aggression from without and also to resist attack by one of the members, e.g. Japan, if Japan should again become aggressive. In connection with this latter point, the United States Government should agree to this course of action only as the other nations accept the general basis on which the United States is prepared to conclude a peace settlement with Japan.<sup>31</sup>

The prime US objective was implementation of its Japanese policy. All other arrangements with its Pacific allies were a corollary to the Japanese peace treaty as a bulwark against the spread of communism.

All treaties negotiated by the US government require Senate ratification to come into effect. Hence, Truman told Dulles:

Your discussions will in no way involve any final commitments by the United States Government, and you will avoid giving any contrary impression. You should have in mind that ... our principal purpose in the proposed settlement is to secure the adherence of the Japanese nation to the free nations of the world and to assure that it will play its full part in resisting the further expansion of communist imperialism. Accordingly, you should feel free to make such recommendations to me or the Secretary of State during the course of your endeavours as will, in your judgment, best accomplish this purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Truman gave Dulles significant latitude to exercise his own judgement in finalising the Japanese peace treaty, including authority to negotiate security arrangements with Australia and other allies in return for their support of US policy. ANZUS emerged from America's decision to secure allied support for a generous peace treaty with Japan and her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance, and the combined advocacy of Dulles and Spender.

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Dulles arrived in Canberra on February 14, 1951 for talks with Spender and Doidge that produced the ANZUS Treaty.<sup>33</sup> Dulles's statements in Australia illustrated the different US and Australian strategic outlook. Australia remained concerned about the past Japanese danger whereas the US was focussed on the present and future Communist threat. Dulles understood Australian fears about Japan but focussed on Australia's role in the evolving regional anti-Communist security arrangement. Dulles and Spender agreed ANZUS provided Australia security but differed on the identity of the greatest threat. From its inception, the US and Australia had different perceptions of ANZUS. Washington regarded ANZUS as a link in an evolving anti-Communist regional alliance; Australia believed the treaty provided security against a resurgent Japan.

On February 15, before the formal talks began, Dulles was asked about reports Washington was now willing "to consider" a Pacific pact. Mindful of Truman's instructions, Dulles stated: "I can only say that the United States has no proposals of its own to make in that respect. We are prepared to listen sympathetically to proposals that may be made to us. We see difficulties and complications. We have no closed minds in the matter."<sup>34</sup> Dulles signalled the US would countenance a security agreement request from Australia and New Zealand but would not itself propose one. The Americans perhaps still hoped to secure Australian and New Zealand support for the Japanese peace treaty without having to make a formal security arrangement with Canberra and Wellington.

After concluding his official talks with Spender and Doidge but before knowledge of the ANZUS Treaty became public, Dulles gave a speech to the

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Australian Institute of International Affairs in Sydney on February 19. Dulles addressed Australian opposition to a benign Japanese peace treaty because of the fear a resurgent Japan would again threaten Australia's security. He said the US was as determined as Australia and New Zealand that Japan would "never again have a great armament which would enable it to conquer and threaten any of its neighbours." Dulles said the strategic situation in the Asia-Pacific would continue to evolve. He regarded the Japanese peace treaty and the US security arrangements with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Philippines as the foundation of this evolutionary process, arguing "more needs to be done to build up ... [the] security of this whole off-shore island chain, and that positive measures need to be taken."<sup>35</sup> Dulles acknowledged Australia's fear of Japan but looked to the future.

However, Dulles was not completely transparent on the Japanese question. Somewhat disingenuously, he claimed he had come to Australia "without any proposals to that respect" because the US "felt that the place from which proposals should best come would be from you people over here who are a more intimate part of the problem than we are and it's a problem that concerns you more than it does us." To the extent that Australia and other Pacific allies were more concerned about a future Japanese threat than was the US, Dulles was accurate. However, the US had formulated its Asia-Pacific strategy and finalised its Japanese policy. The Americans did not initiate additional security agreements but expected and would accept additional proposals that facilitated Australian and allied acceptance of a mild Japanese peace treaty. Dulles never revealed this or that he, Spender and Doidge had just negotiated that agreement.<sup>36</sup>

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Speaking with confidence following the treaty agreement with Spender and Doidge, Dulles said he came to Australia because Americans were “not satisfied” with the security “situation as it stands and we want to sit down and talk with you people about how to make it better.” Dulles cryptically said difficult issues had been discussed with Spender and Doidge and a “satisfactory solution” was by no means certain but that “your representatives have pressed the problem on us very ably, very effectively.” Dulles believed “we will work out something here of a positive character which is going to strengthen the security of this whole area” in which “our concern is greatly for the people of Australia for whom, as I say, we have these close ties that have been developed over the past years.”<sup>37</sup> Dulles let Australians believe they would be protected from an improbable Japanese threat. His objective was to secure Australian participation in a defensive regional alliance against the real Communist danger.

Nevertheless, the success of the talks between Dulles, Spender and Doidge did not mean the security treaty between the US, Australia and New Zealand was a settled matter. Knowing the draft treaty needed to be sanctioned by all three nations, Dulles cautioned his audience saying “I wouldn’t want to give you any illusion that everything has been settled – or that anything has been settled, except that we do have, I think, a better understanding of the problem.” Dulles optimistically spoke of a “spirit of frankness, cordiality and understanding” from which “will come a better relationship between our countries and a greater sense of security for us all.”<sup>38</sup>

The US entered into ANZUS because it facilitated two of its strategic goals: Australian and New Zealand support for a moderate Japanese peace treaty and their

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inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. Dulles made this very clear in Sydney en route to New Zealand on February 19, 1951. The reluctant Australian and New Zealand support for the soft Japanese peace treaty led Dulles to acknowledge “Japan’s past aggressions have left many scars and much distrust.” However, he emphasised the US and its allies must implement a “peace which will afford Japan opportunity in the future and an incentive to develop strength against Communist aggression from the [Asian] mainland.” Dulles said coming to Australia enabled him to gain “a much better understanding of the problem and I think that our discussions are bringing us nearer to a wise solution” that “will enable us to move forward confidently to a good result.”<sup>39</sup> Again, although Dulles assuaged Australian fears of Japan, he was focussed on forging a regional anti-Communist alliance.

On the same day, in an address broadcast in Sydney, Dulles, without revealing ANZUS had been drafted, said the Canberra talks laid the “foundations for future decisions that will be important to us all.” Dulles said America’s Asia-Pacific strategy was borne from the danger posed by “despotic communist leaders” and the Korean War reflected the Communist “peril.” The Americans were now making “sacrifices to preserve peace” and that “with other free nations” including Australia “doing likewise”, the Russians and their Communist allies would be deterred “from further aggression.”<sup>40</sup> These remarks underlay the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement, especially Australia’s contribution to the UN/US effort in the Korean War, in the evolution of the relationship between the two nations. Dulles had argued the US would need allied support to implement its Communist containment strategy in the Asia-Pacific. America sought allies in the region when Australia was



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deliberately making itself visible to Washington. The ANZUS Treaty emerged from this convergence of strategic, if misunderstood, interests.

The Truman Administration was determined Japan would be an anti-Communist bulwark in the Asia-Pacific. America's entry into the ANZUS alliance was conditional to Australian and New Zealand backing of the Japanese peace treaty and Japan's inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. Awake to Australian sensitivities, Dulles simultaneously sought to enlist Australia's support for US Japanese policy and assuage its distrust of Japan. Dulles again publicly acknowledged Australia was "particularly" and "rightly concerned with the future of Japan." He declared Japan had "learned a lesson" from its defeat in World War II and would choose "to be with the free world" if the US and her allies would be "willing to give them decent and self-respecting opportunities along side of us." Again, Dulles conceded this was not an "easy decision to make" especially for the Philippines which was "overrun" and Australia which was "battered and menaced by Japan's recent aggression." However, Dulles reiterated Japan was "vital to the whole problem of defense of the west Pacific." He emphasised the "offshore island chain", including Australia, New Zealand, the Phillipines, and the Ryukyus, "would be hardly defensible if in any important link of that chain, there were a vacuum of power into which ... communist power would surely move."<sup>41</sup>

Dulles argued the current "security arrangements for the entire western Pacific" were "inadequate, fragmentary and provisional". He hoped "more solid and clear-cut arrangements which will increase the security of this whole area" would emerge from his talks in Manila and Canberra. Dulles emphasised the "problem of

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security cannot be solved” by “one or two nations alone.” Co-operation between the US and its Pacific allies was essential and “interdependence” was the key. Japan and the Philippines could “be screens between the aggressive communist mainland of Northeast Asia and Australia and New Zealand.” Dulles said “how to make those screens dependable” concerned Australia and the US. The spread of communism was America’s and Australia’s “problem” and “unless we solve it together, all that we fought and sacrificed for in World War II can quickly be lost.” Dulles intimated this was “why, at the direction of the President, I have been here for these days and while I cannot now say that any final solutions have been reached, I go home with hopes that have risen and with worries that have diminished.”<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, Dulles had fulfilled his mission. Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines would support the Japanese peace treaty and a regional anti-Communist alliance was taking shape. The island chain security cordon was a calculated move by the US. The Americans knew these nations would be difficult to invade and the US could defend them with its overwhelming sea and air power. Dulles understood the limits of US power but sought to maximise America’s air and naval dominance in creating this regional alliance. The start of the Korean War set the precedent for this strategy with Truman’s deployment of the US 7th Fleet to prevent a Communist Chinese invasion of Formosa. Dulles wholeheartedly supported Truman’s action. Unlike Korea, it was highly unlikely the US would need to deploy ground forces to defend their island chain allies.

Dulles departed New Zealand on February 25, returning to Washington. His mission had “been not merely to hasten a final settlement of the old war with Japan,

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but to find ways to provide insurance against” Communist “aggression which threatens ominously in the Pacific, as elsewhere.” Dulles was satisfied his discussions with the leaders of Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, had “examined all phases of this dual problem” and that his delegation had returned “with confidence that the way has been paved for the reinforcement of peace, order and justice by positive and cooperative action in the Pacific island area.” With Dulles as chief negotiator, the US achieved its objectives regarding Japan and an anti-Communist regional alliance. The drafted Pacific security treaties now required US Senate ratification to take effect.<sup>43</sup>

### **Dulles sells ANZUS**

Back in the US, Dulles now focussed on selling the treaties he had negotiated to the Senate and the public. On February 28, 1951, Dulles gave a lengthy news conference about the Japanese peace treaty. Asked about Australian “fears about a possible resurgence of Japanese power”, Dulles said he would be making a statement the following day, adding “various suggestions” made to him in Canberra were “under advisement.” Asked if his impending statement was about a “Pacific Pact”, Dulles directly answered “yes”. Before departing the US, Dulles had said his mission was solely about finalising a Japanese peace treaty with allied support. Dulles now said he “viewed this thing as a dual problem of which the Japanese Peace Treaty was one part and the desire for collective security for some nations was another part.” Asked whether his talks had revealed a much stronger “desire for collective security” among America’s Pacific allies than he “had anticipated”, Dulles stated his visit to Australia and New Zealand “emphasized certainly that aspect of the problem.”<sup>44</sup> Dulles maintained a benign Japanese peace treaty was necessary to forging a regional anti-

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Communist alliance with Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. He remained steadfastly focussed on the Communist threat.

On March 1, Dulles elaborated on the linked regional security arrangements the US had created in his CBS “Pacific Peace” address. Dulles argued the US could not “honourably ignore” the “points of view” of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines in devising the Japanese peace treaty. The prevention of future Japanese aggression was the “principal problem” Dulles had “discussed” in Australia with Spender and Doidge. Although Dulles believed Japan no longer posed a security threat, he recognised Australian and New Zealand “anxiety” towards Japan was “quite understandable” given their World War Two experiences. Dulles explained the Truman Administration negotiated a benign Japanese peace treaty to prevent the fall of Japan to the Communists and/or a resurgence of Japanese militarism. Indeed, Dulles argued an economically revitalised Japan would be a bulwark and ally against communism in the Pacific, thereby strengthening American and allied security. Hence, Dulles said it was “reasonable to try to meet the desire of the Australian and New Zealand peoples for an ending of their apparent state of isolation in the Pacific area through some arrangement which would make clear that an armed attack on them from any quarter would be looked upon by the United States as dangerous to its own peace and security.”<sup>45</sup> Again, this shows Dulles was focussed on thwarting the present Communist danger not the bygone threat from Japan.

Having negotiated a peace treaty with Japan and security arrangements with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan, Dulles was determined they be ratified. Concerned British opposition would jeopardize ANZUS, Spender wrote to

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Dulles on March 8, emphasising Australia was a “metropolitan power in the Pacific and we hope that our view will predominate.... We live in the Pacific.”<sup>46</sup> Dulles did not need persuasion that a viable regional anti-Communist alliance required Australian participation. However, he was uncertain about whether these security treaties would come to fruition. On March 18, Dulles told MacArthur “developments are not all good.” The British “attitude” was “worrying, particularly in relation to Australia, where the forthcoming general elections will make the Japanese Treaty a central issue.” Dulles surmised the British “Labor Government no doubt want the rather anti-American” Labor Party of Australia “to come back to power, and will not want treaty or security arrangements to proceed favourably during the election period.”<sup>47</sup>

Concerned about the ambivalence of some State and Defense Department officials towards the treaties, Dulles told MacArthur he was “resolved to carry through, and am working with determination and without let-up. There is good will from the President, Acheson, Marshall, the Congressional Committees and the press and public generally.” Dulles was apprehensive but remained hopeful:

The United States and Japan are the only significant sources of power in the Pacific, we actual, they potential. If we can work in accord, the lesser Pacific powers will get security and will, sooner or later, formally or informally, endorse that accord. If the United States and Japan fall apart, the situation in the West Pacific is grave for a long time. There is, in this matter, the opportunity to serve well our own nation – and others.<sup>48</sup>

Dulles argued security from communism in the region was dependant on the US and Japan, and that Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines recognised this.

On April 18, 1951, President Truman announced that Australia and New Zealand,

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in connection with the reestablishment of peace with Japan, have suggested an arrangement between them and the United States ... which would make clear that in the event of an armed attack upon any one of them in the Pacific, each of the three would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes; and which would establish consultation to strengthen security on the basis of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid.

Truman said the “possibilities” of a security arrangement between the US, Australia and New Zealand “were fully explored” by Dulles in Canberra and Wellington, and “have since been informally discussed with the appropriate” sub-committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.<sup>49</sup>

In Tokyo the following day, Dulles explained the ANZUS treaty was one component of the US Asia-Pacific security strategy he had devised.<sup>50</sup> Dulles had argued regional security from communism was dependant on a revitalised Japan allied with the US. Dulles said ANZUS would come into being “in connection with the re-establishment of peace with Japan.” ANZUS signified Australian and New Zealand support for the Japanese peace settlement, but what really mattered to Dulles was their inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance. Dulles had fulfilled the task entrusted to him by Truman. He secured allied support for a peace treaty with Japan on US terms, and laid the foundations of an anti-Communist security system in the Asia-Pacific. Dulles said ANZUS was further evidence of American “determination to resist aggression” in the Western Pacific and “solidify the structure of peace by adding a new link” to the “security pact with Japan and the existing relationship” between the US and the Philippines.<sup>51</sup>

Also on April 19, in a press conference on the Japanese peace treaty and future security arrangements between the US and Japan, Dulles was asked whether ANZUS

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would be expanded to include other countries. Dulles said the US envisioned “a series of arrangements” linking “together with the United States as the common denominator of security, Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.” Dulles was asked if a Japanese peace treaty would be delayed until there was “a satisfactory agreement” among “concerned” nations regarding “a security arrangement” to deter a resurgence of Japanese aggression and the “spread of communism in Asia.” Dulles replied he expected ANZUS and the Japanese peace treaty to “become operative at the same time.” He said both agreements would “presumably” be considered and ratified by the US Senate simultaneously.<sup>52</sup> To Dulles, the Japanese peace treaty and ANZUS were crucial links for containing communism in the Asia-Pacific.

Dulles was asked if ANZUS was the “price exacted” by Australia and New Zealand for “their consent” to a Japanese peace treaty allowing rearmament, and whether it was intended as security against both an attack from “communist forces in Asia” and the “resurgence of Japanese militarism which is being felt” in Australia and New Zealand. Dulles replied the US “considers” the “danger” to which ANZUS is “directed is primarily ... from the communist areas” of “mainland” Asia. He said the US did not “consider that Japan is” or would “likely ... be a danger” to security in the Pacific “unless” it fell to the Communists. Dulles said a democratic Japan would not be a “future danger” to security in the region. Nevertheless, fully aware of Australian sensitivities, Dulles stated while the US did not believe Japan posed a security threat, it was, “of course, natural” that because Australia had been attacked and threatened with invasion by Japan during World War Two, “that there should still be a fear in the minds of the people” there. Dulles noted in Australia, he “found” this “fear existed” but was a “reaction from the past.” He emphasised the Truman Administration belief

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that any danger to Australian security “stems, not from Japan, but from the Communist imperialist areas.”<sup>53</sup>

This remained a key difference between US and Australian perceptions of security threats in the region. Whereas Canberra saw Japan and communism as twin security dangers, Washington was focussed on preventing Communist expansion. Dulles acknowledged Australian concerns about Japan but made it clear the Japanese peace treaty and the security treaties the US entered into with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan, were the “hub and spokes” of an American anti-Communist alliance in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>54</sup>

With the US the “common denominator” in these security arrangements, Dulles was asked if Australia and New Zealand would “undertake to help” the US “guarantee Japan’s security.” This suggested ANZUS meant “mutual assistance”, with the US to “guarantee the security” of Australia and New Zealand and they would “guarantee to protect any type of American interests in the Far East outside of those two countries.” Dulles said Truman’s April 18 statement on ANZUS made clear that in the “event of an armed attack upon any of them in the Pacific, each would act to meet the common danger.” Dulles explained “if there is an armed attack upon the United States in the Pacific, others would act and the pact would become operative.” Asked to clarify if an attack on Japan “while American troops were stationed” there meant Australia and New Zealand “would undertake” to go to their “assistance”, Dulles stated “an attack upon” US forces in Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines, “would be deemed to be an attack upon the United States in the Pacific for the purposes of that pact.”<sup>55</sup> The “common danger” was communism. This shows the



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Truman Administration regarded ANZUS as an anti-Communist mutual security treaty rather than solely, or even significantly, an American commitment to defend Australia and New Zealand.<sup>56</sup>

Dulles further explained the purpose of ANZUS in his May 9 interview on Voice of America. Dismissing a NATO style alliance, Dulles said there was “nothing which you can properly call a Pacific Pact.” Indeed, Dulles insisted it was “rather an ambitious term” given the multitude of countries in the region, and the US did not “have anything in mind at the present time” which could be labelled a Pacific Pact. However, Dulles emphasised ANZUS was part of “a series of agreements in contemplation which together will greatly strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific”. Asked if these arrangements “would be a bastion against communism”, Dulles said the security agreements with Japan, the Philippines, and Australia and New Zealand, the latter which he expected to “go ahead” following Spender’s arrival in Washington as the new Australian ambassador to the US, would “together ... have a very definite strengthening of peace in the Pacific area, all in accordance with collective security arrangements” under the UN Charter.<sup>57</sup>

Dulles had steadfastly argued ANZUS was an important link in the anti-Communist security alliances the US had created with her Pacific allies. These security treaties would act as deterrents to the USSR and China. Although Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand were unable to defend themselves alone, Dulles believed they would not be attacked if potential aggressors faced the possibility of conflict with the US too. America entered into ANZUS and these other Pacific security agreements to deter the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific.

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Although these were defensive alliances designed to prevent, not invite, aggression, the Truman Administration accepted the risk of US involvement in potential conflicts defending these allies.

### **Dulles interprets ANZUS**

The ANZUS Treaty was initialled in Washington on July 12 and signed in San Francisco on September 1, 1951.<sup>58</sup> Dulles explained the functioning of ANZUS in his Council on Foreign Relations speech on October 31. This speech was published in *Foreign Affairs* in January 1952, titled “Security in the Pacific”.<sup>59</sup> Dulles said ANZUS was based on the Monroe Doctrine, “an old but not recently used formula ... rather than the formula ... used in the North Atlantic Treaty.” ANZUS “provides that each of the parties recognizes that an attack upon the other is dangerous to its own peace and security.” It was Dulles who inserted “the precise language of President Monroe when he proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine” in the ANZUS Treaty. The US “did not use the language of the North Atlantic Treaty” (NATO) desired by Australia and New Zealand, “that armed attack against one would be considered as an attack against all.” Dulles stated it was “sufficient to use the language” of the Monroe Doctrine in ANZUS given there was “no practical problem” with Australia and New Zealand as it was “not contemplated in any way” that US armed forces would “actually” be sent there. Dulles explained the Monroe Doctrine formula was adopted to “facilitate the ratification of the Treaty.” ANZUS also contained the “Vandenberg formula” which bound Australia and New Zealand “to continue effective self-help and mutual aid.” Australia and New Zealand were expected to make their own contributions to their national defence and regional security rather than relying solely on the Americans.<sup>60</sup>

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This further suggests the Truman Administration primarily saw ANZUS as a valuable link in the regional island chain anti-Communist alliance Dulles negotiated. Indeed, the US agreed to ANZUS because it regarded Australia and New Zealand as important geo-strategic allies in its effort to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific. From Washington's vantage point, ANZUS was about enlisting Australia and New Zealand to help the Americans prevent Communist expansion, rather than about US defence of these two allies. The US reasoned, and stated, that the likelihood it would have to defend Australia and New Zealand was very remote.

Dulles argued although the Japanese Peace Treaty and the security treaties with Japan, the Philippines and Australia and New Zealand "seem to be a series of quite separate arrangements, actually they interlock to a very considerable degree." He emphasised America's "definite series of commitments" to the security of the "off-shore island chain": the Aleutians, Japan, the Ryukyus, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. Dulles said under ANZUS, there was "no obligation" requiring Australia and New Zealand to help defend the Philippines or Japan. However, Dulles explained the mutual support provision in ANZUS applied to a direct attack on the US or Australia and New Zealand, and to an attack upon the armed forces or vessels of these nations. Dulles explained the "critical event" under ANZUS would not necessarily be "an attack" on Hawaii, Australia or New Zealand. Indeed, Dulles said foreign aggression against US forces in Japan would invoke ANZUS.<sup>61</sup> The Communists were the present danger which again shows the US regarded ANZUS as an important link in its regional containment strategy.

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Dulles explained why the US opted to have multiple security agreements with its Pacific allies instead of a single treaty similar to NATO. The US was reluctant to define a “particular geographical area” it would defend because aggressors could be emboldened if they believed targeting an area beyond a defined American security perimeter would avoid confronting the US. Dulles noted a single Pacific security treaty was also impractical because “there is a great deal of distrust ... between the members of that area.” If Japan was attacked, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines would be willing to involve themselves “in an indirect way”, but “they were not willing or able, from a political standpoint, to go into any treaty of alliance or security formally with Japan.” Dulles emphasised the “memories” of World War Two “are too vivid in their minds” and “their public opinion would not tolerate their being a part of a security pact” that included Japan. Dulles explained:

as long as we [the Americans] keep our troops in Japan they [Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines] are willing to say that if there is an attack upon our troops in Japan, then they'll come in, but that is as close as we will get today to any agreement to come to the defense of Japan if Japan is attacked. It will be because the U.S. is there. It is not because of the attack upon Japan.<sup>62</sup>

In his *Foreign Affairs* article, Dulles elaborated on why the US signed three separate security treaties instead of one agreement with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan. Dulles said the Australian, New Zealand and Philippine distrust of Japan was understandable given their World War Two experiences, but hoped it would be “temporary.”<sup>63</sup> Indeed, while the Truman Administration was focussed on the present Communist danger, it could not ignore the legacy of Japanese aggression.<sup>64</sup> This was the paradox of ANZUS. For the US, the treaty was about security against the present and future Communist threat. For Australia and New Zealand, it was more about ensuring Japanese aggression never again materialised.

Dulles argued these treaties intimated the Truman Administration's awareness and acceptance of the limits of American power. The US "should not assume formal commitments which overstrain its present capabilities and give rise to military expectations we could not fulfil, particularly in terms of land forces. The security treaties now made involve only islands, where security is strongly influenced by sea and air power."<sup>65</sup> In a crisis, no one could challenge American deployment of its unrivalled air and naval forces to defend this island chain. This awareness of the limits of US power helps explain why the Truman Administration was determined to forge a regional anti-Communist alliance system.

### **Dulles, ANZUS and future regional security**

Dulles never regarded these treaties as the culmination of the American goal to forge a security alliance in the Asia-Pacific. Rather, he hoped these arrangements would evolve into a stronger security framework. ANZUS would continue to serve its purpose "pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific area." In his April 18 statement, Truman said the security agreements were "natural initial steps." Dulles said the US had "every desire for trying to build these arrangements ... made in somewhat fragmentary and obscurely interlocking ways into something ... more solid." Dulles believed an "all-embracing Pacific Pact" should "certainly" be the US goal. He said the "right way" to do this was "not to build a superstructure until you have a foundation." At the "present time", there was "too much fear and distrust" and "too little confidence to build a treaty structure which would be dependable." Nevertheless, Dulles was "completely confident" strong US advocacy "could create a foundation for an enlarged security

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pact, which would be solid and substantial and which would meet the desires and expectations of many people.”<sup>66</sup>

On January 21, 1952, Dulles appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to argue for ratification of the Japanese peace treaty, ANZUS and the security treaties with the Philippines and Japan. Explaining how the security treaties would operate, Dulles said:

There is really no doubt in any quarter that an armed attack upon Australia, New Zealand or the Philippines would involve the United States. The peoples and governments of these countries feel understandably, that our position in this respect could usefully be formalised, particularly in view of the new relationship which we will be assuming toward Japan.... Indeed, the interest of the United States will be served by making clear, in Monroe Doctrine language, our sense of common destiny with the brave Pacific peoples who were with us in the great Pacific war. It is highly appropriate that not only our friends, but our potential enemies, should learn that our concern with Europe ... and our concern with Japan, in no sense imply any lack of concern for our Pacific Allies of World War II, or lack of desire to preserve and deepen our solidarity with them for security. The Security Treaties with these three countries are a logical part of the effort not merely to liquidate the old war, but to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific as against the hazard of new war.<sup>67</sup>

Dulles viewed these security treaties as elements of an evolving US relationship with these nations, rather than a final outcome. He told the Committee “it may be that the present ... [security] arrangements are not the last best word.” Dulles noted “each one of the Security Treaties indicates the expectation of the parties that there will be further security developments.” Dulles emphasised “the steps for peace and security now proposed are only a beginning” although it was “necessary to consolidate our present position before we move on”.<sup>68</sup>

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The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report on these hearings recommended ratification of these treaties, noting the “desire of Australia and New Zealand to establish some sort of security relationship with the United States is understandable.” This report acknowledged the legitimacy of Australian and New Zealand fears of a resurgent Japan. Australia and New Zealand “could agree to a generous treaty” with Japan “only if the United States would formally express concern for their security and agree to stand with them in the event of an attack.” ANZUS “gave these countries the assurances they needed, and at the same time served the national interests of the United States.”<sup>69</sup> The “national interests” of the US meant containing communism, not Japan.

The report identified Article IV of ANZUS, recognising “an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes”, as the “heart of the treaty.” However, the report stated the “general language” of Article IV invited questions about “the type of action contemplated in the event an armed attack should occur.” The report noted Dulles had said “each country would have to decide that question.” Identifying this ambiguity without clarifying it, the report stated “any action in which the United States joined would have to be taken in accordance with our constitutional processes.”<sup>70</sup> Dulles likely intended Article IV to be ambiguous. It gave the US maximum flexibility while creating the perception it would defend its allies. Indeed, the ambiguous phrasing was powerful. Potential aggressors, uncertain of the US response, would be, or at least might be, deterred from threatening American allies.

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On February 18, 1952, Dulles told the American Australian Association the ANZUS Treaty formalised the relationship that already existed between the US, Australia and New Zealand. He spoke of their shared experiences in the two World Wars and said ANZUS confirmed “no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that any of us stand alone in the Pacific area.” Dulles expressed his hope ANZUS could evolve beyond the present security treaty. He believed ANZUS would “have by-products beyond the formal contemplation of the Treaty itself” and could “help to bring about greater unity of policy in the Pacific between the United States and the Commonwealth.” Dulles said the Japanese Peace Treaty was a symbol of US and Commonwealth “good will and great effort on both sides.”<sup>71</sup>

ANZUS, the Japanese Peace Treaty, and the security treaties with Japan and the Philippines were ratified by the US Senate on March 20, 1952. The State Department, using Dulles’s words, explained these agreements as “logical and desirable steps in liquidating the old war and strengthening the fabric of peace in the Far East against the danger of a new war.” The Cold War realities in the Asia-Pacific underpinned the US pursuit of these alliances. Communism, not Japan, was the real security threat in the region and the Truman Administration formulated these treaties to contain that danger. The State Department noted these “four closely related” Pacific treaties “are better understood if they are viewed as one multi-lateral peace settlement and three supporting mutual defense pacts.” Acknowledging that “measured against the need for collective security throughout the vast areas of non-Communist Asia,” these “security measures ... are far from perfect”, the State Department nevertheless said the treaties “greatly widen the area of united action for peace in the Pacific.”<sup>72</sup> Dulles fulfilled his mission. He secured allied support for a



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soft peace treaty with Japan and her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance system in the Asia-Pacific.

The State Department noted ANZUS reflected the shared “language” and “basic institutions” of the US, Australia and New Zealand, emphasising the three nations had fought together in both world wars and “relations between” them “have always been amicable.” This has become the standard refrain in public statements at meetings of US and Australian officials. The USSR and China were warned that “aggression against either” Australia or New Zealand “would seriously involve” the US. Hence, it was “deemed useful to put the world on notice of this relationship by formalizing it.” The three countries would establish an ANZUS Council that included the American Secretary of State and the External Affairs Ministers of Australia and New Zealand. The ANZUS Council would “consider matters concerning the implementation” of the treaty and was structured “to be able to meet at any time.” The ANZUS Council largely fulfilled Dulles’s hope the treaty would be a central pillar of an evolving and strengthening US-Australian alliance. Indeed, in 1985, the ANZUS Council was superseded by the Australia United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN).<sup>73</sup>

However, the State Department platitudes masked the differences in Australian and New Zealand and US perceptions of the significance and meaning of ANZUS. Australia and New Zealand regarded ANZUS as the pillar of their foreign and defence policy, whereas the Truman Administration saw the Treaty as a “point of departure” in the “development of an effective system of regional security throughout

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the entire Pacific and Asiatic area”. The State Department noted the appraisal of Dulles, the “chief architect of these treaties”:

the steps for peace and security now proposed are only a beginning. There will be a continuing need for the United States, in cooperation with other free nations, to sustain an ever-mounting initiative in Asia and to develop ever-growing fellowship with the peoples of Asia who would be free. It is, however, necessary to consolidate our present position before we move on, and that consolidation involves entering into these treaties.<sup>74</sup>

Without naming or identifying the threat, this again showed the Truman Administration regarded ANZUS as an important link in the regional anti-Communist alliance system. Conversely, despite recognising the Communist danger, Australia and New Zealand saw the Treaty as primarily providing security from a resurgent Japan. The US, Australia and New Zealand entered into ANZUS because it suited their respective strategic interests but they differed over what those interests were.

Addressing the forty sixth annual meeting of the American Society of International Law in Washington DC on April 25, 1952, John Allison, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, and member of the Dulles mission, described the Japanese Peace Treaty and the regional security agreements as “perhaps the most significant and constructive international action” by America in 1951. Allison challenged the “impression” the “only purpose” of ANZUS and the Philippine treaty was to “make it possible for those nations to associate themselves” with the US “in advocating a treaty with Japan containing no arduous restrictive clauses, particularly ones dealing with rearmament.” Citing Dulles’s testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 21, Allison said “while this certainly is one of the purposes of those treaties, it is not ... the chief purpose, for these treaties do not look only to the past, they look to the future.” Allison said the longevity and

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effectiveness of these agreements would “depend not so much on the conditions in the treaties but on whether or not they express the facts of the mutual relationships between the signatories.” Alison emphasised it was “now the task of the policy-makers to ensure that our future policies are such that our fundamental interests will continue to coincide and that these Treaties will thus continue to be effective.”<sup>75</sup>

The Truman Administration had a much more expansive view of ANZUS than the narrower Australian and New Zealand goal. The US envisioned ANZUS and the other security arrangements would evolve beyond the confines of the security, defence and military aspect, and thus facilitate stronger, broader and deeper relations between the signatories. In contrast, Australia and New Zealand were wholly focussed on ensuring that if threatened, the Americans would defend them.

Dulles regarded ANZUS and the other treaties he negotiated as the foundation of an evolutionary security system in the Pacific. On the eve of the first ANZUS Council meeting in August 1952, Dulles told Acheson “this important link in [the] chain of security is one of those non-partisan conceptions which I am convinced will, under all circumstances, be maintained and developed by US policy.”<sup>76</sup> At the second ANZUS Council meeting in Washington on September 9, 1953, Dulles, now Eisenhower’s Secretary of State, again envisioned the evolution of ANZUS into a stronger and deeper alliance. Dulles told the Australian and New Zealand delegations “it has long been my hope to see the nations of the Pacific drawn closer to our own by arrangements which would protect our common vital interests.” He noted ANZUS was the template for the Mutual Defence Treaty he recently negotiated with South Korea. Continuing his evolutionary theme, Dulles said: “I know your Governments

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do not expect, nor does mine, any spectacular results from these conferences. What we look for is steady cooperation on which we can continue to build a solid foundation for the years to come.”<sup>77</sup>

However, Dulles also made clear that while the ANZUS Council would “be focussed squarely on areas of common concern”, the US, Australia and New Zealand each have “other ties, other close friends in the Pacific area.” Dulles noted that “in addition to ANZUS”, the US had security treaties with Japan and the Philippines, a treaty with South Korea awaiting Senate ratification, and “defense arrangements” with the Nationalist Chinese on Formosa. Dulles stated the “basic policy” of the US was “to discuss common problems of defense with each of our partners in these security arrangements.” This clearly indicated that whereas ANZUS was a central pillar of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy, the Americans regarded the Treaty as a component of the network of arrangements that Dulles said “have a close relationship” to the “overall” US “defense efforts” in the Pacific.<sup>78</sup>

Addressing the American-Japan Society on September 15, Dulles explained ANZUS as an element of the security framework for the Asia-Pacific. Dulles recognised the limits of American power and influence in an increasingly interconnected world: “it is equally true that no nation can be wholly independent, economically or otherwise.” All nations were “dependent” he said, including the US which, “powerful as it is, depends largely upon the products of many other lands, and without those products our economy would greatly suffer.” Dulles applied interdependency to security too, arguing “no nation can safely rely on its own strength alone.” ANZUS and the security treaties with Japan and the Philippines, the “mutual

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security pact” with South Korea, the “defense of Formosa”, and contributions to anti-Communist “resistance” in Indochina, were representations of the American commitment to collective security in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>79</sup> Dulles’s message was clear and consistent. The mutual interests of the US and her allies required they work together to contain communism. The US could not do it alone.

Dulles argued these new security treaties were valuable links in a regional alliance system but were limited as individual agreements. He told the America-Japan Society that at the recent ANZUS Council meeting in Washington, the US, Australia and New Zealand decided “not to attempt to enlarge the particular three-nation treaty which had created that Council.” Dulles stressed the US had not “abandoned the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific area, a purpose affirmed in the ANZUS and other treaties.” However, he said it was “unlikely that any one of these existing treaties could itself be the framework for such further development.” Dulles surmised that “multilateral treaties” required the “development within the Pacific area, of a greater sense of solidarity and a greater measure of international goodwill.” He expressed his hope that “these sentiments will soon come in measure sufficient to warrant the development of increased mutual security measures.”<sup>80</sup> ANZUS was trilateral whereas the Japanese, Philippine and South Korean treaties were bilateral. When the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty was signed on October 1, 1953, Dulles said that together with these other regional arrangements, it “affirms our belief that the security of an individual nation ... depends upon the security of its partners and constitutes another link in the collective security of the free nations of the Pacific.”<sup>81</sup>

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The US regarded ANZUS and the security treaties with the Philippines and Japan as defensive alliances to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific. However, in forging these arrangements, the Americans recognised they had to assuage Australian, New Zealand and Philippine fears of a resurgent and aggressive Japan. ANZUS and the other two security treaties were therefore designed by the Americans to account for the legacy of the impact of the Second World War on their allies, while co-opting them to deal with the reality of the Cold War in the Asia-Pacific region. The primary function of these security treaties was to contain the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific. It was not to prevent a future Japanese threat which Dulles and other senior officials in the Truman Administration, the State and Defense Departments, and MacArthur regarded as unlikely. Although ANZUS stipulated the US would defend Australia and New Zealand if either were attacked, the Americans believed this was an improbable scenario.

### **Conclusion**

The ANZUS Treaty came into being because the US decided this alliance served its security interests. ANZUS was born from the US re-evaluation of its Asia-Pacific strategy in 1950-51, following the Communist ascension to power in China, the outbreak of the Korean War and the Chinese entry into the conflict. These events hastened US efforts to conclude a soft peace with Japan and include her in an Asia-Pacific anti-Communist alliance. ANZUS was the result of the American desire to have Japan within the same regional security cordon as Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. Dulles was pivotal to the evolution of America's Asia-Pacific strategy, the making of the Japanese peace treaty and ANZUS, and the creation of the broader US anti-Communist alliance system in the region. This analysis of the central role played by Dulles in the making of ANZUS, challenges the largely uncontested

view that Spender persuaded a reluctant US to agree to the Treaty in return for Australian acceptance of a soft peace with Japan.

The Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, and the Chinese intervention in the conflict in November, resulted in the Truman Administration's decision to sign a moderate peace treaty with Japan. The US wanted a revitalised Japan integrated into an Asia-Pacific anti-Communist alliance. While Australia was determined to prevent a future Japanese threat that in reality had been extinguished by World War Two, the US was focussed on the present and future Communist danger. Although it would accept support for a lenient Japanese peace treaty, Australian and other allied endorsement of this policy was not essential to the Truman Administration. However, the US needed allied support for Japan's inclusion in a regional security alliance. The Americans wanted Australia in this security system because of its geo-strategic importance. Dulles was crucial to the evolution of this US Communist containment strategy.

Persistent Australian efforts to secure a defence alliance with the US since 1945 were consistently stymied by Washington even after Canberra's immediate deployment of armed forces to support the US in the Korean War attracted American attention and gratitude. Ultimately, the US entered into ANZUS because it wanted Australian participation in its Communist containment strategy that included Japan. From Washington's perspective, ANZUS assuaged Australian and New Zealand fears of a resurgent Japan but, most importantly, allowed for the inclusion of the three nations in a regional anti-Communist alliance system. ANZUS would protect Australia from communism, not Japan. The Americans always viewed ANZUS as a

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link in this regional anti-Communist security chain, whereas the Treaty became the central pillar of Australian foreign and defence policy.

The Truman Administration had finalised its Japanese and regional anti-Communist security policy *before* Dulles met with Spender and Doidge in Canberra in February 1951. Indeed, Truman tasked Dulles with securing Australian and other allied support for this US Communist containment policy on American terms. The Americans would enter into a defence arrangement with Australia and New Zealand only if these allies accepted a lenient peace with Japan and her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance system. This was non negotiable. Hence, ANZUS did not come into being because Spender persuaded Dulles Australia would agree to a soft peace with Japan in exchange for an American security guarantee.

Dulles's experience at the UN, especially American efforts to resolve the division of Korea, led him to conclude the US needed to be fully engaged in Asia as it was in Europe to contain communism. Senior American policy makers, notably Truman, Acheson, and Marshall, as well as key State and Defense Department officials, MacArthur, and also foreign policy experts on the Council on Foreign Relations, came to the same conclusion. Appointed by Truman as the Special Representative of the President with the rank of Ambassador in January 1951, Dulles was tasked with negotiating a Japanese peace treaty and other agreements with allies to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific. The Americans signed ANZUS and related security treaties with the Philippines, Japan and later, South Korea, to facilitate their regional Communist containment strategy. This is how and why ANZUS came into being with Dulles as its principal architect.



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Dulles always saw ANZUS as a link in the anti-Communist alliance system he created. He understood the limits of US power, recognising the Americans needed allies to implement their containment strategy. Dulles also regarded ANZUS and these other regional security treaties as the foundation of an evolving security system in the Asia-Pacific that would contain communism and strengthen and deepen existing relations among the signatories.

The 1951 ANZUS Treaty formalised the evolving American-Australian relationship. Since the convergence of US and Australian security interests in Korea in 1947, the peninsula had been pivotal to the growing association between the two nations. As Dulles hoped, the US-Australian alliance would continue to strengthen following the signing of ANZUS. Indeed, in 1952-53, the US-Australian diplomatic partnership concerning Korea further integrated their relationship and alliance.

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### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See Neville Meaney, “Look back in fear: Percy Spender, the Japanese Peace Treaty and the ANZUS Pact”, *Japan Forum*, 15, 3, 2003, pp 399-410, for an evaluation of Australian fears of a resurgent Japan and pursuit of a security treaty with the US. See also Richard Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-1951* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1962) and Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968* (Oxford University Press, London, 1969) Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* (Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2016) and Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia”, *International Security*, 34, 3, 2009/2010, pp 158-196, provides a thorough evaluation of this alliance system the US created.

<sup>3</sup> Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* and Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia”, pp 158-196. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policy-Making, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945-1955* (Macmillan, New York, 1995) Chapter 8.

<sup>4</sup> See Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Chapter 13; Robert O’Neill, “The Korean War and the Origins of ANZUS”, in Carl Bridge (ed), *Munich to Vietnam: Australia’s Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991), pp 99-113; David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*; J.G., Starke, *The ANZUS Treaty Alliance* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965); Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969); David, Lowe, “Percy Spender’s Quest”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 55, 2, 2001, pp 187-198. See also Sandra Penrose, “Percy Spender and the Origins of ANZUS: An Australian Initiative”, Paper presented to the Australian Political Studies Association Conference, University of Adelaide, September 29-October 1, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*; Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1967) pp 117-142 and “The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future”, *Australian Outlook*, 24, 1, 1970, pp 17-36; Ralph Harry, “Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America”, *Australian Outlook*, 35, 1981, pp 201-12.

<sup>6</sup> David McLean, “ANZUS Origins: A Reassessment”, *Australian Historical Studies*, 24, 94, April 1990, pp 64-82. See also Bill Hayden, *An Autobiography* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1996) pp 434-454. Hayden is very critical of Spender and the Australian ANZUS mythology.

<sup>7</sup> References to ANZUS in the literature on US foreign policy during the Korean War period are very scant. I have not found any US study of the ANZUS Treaty. There are references to ANZUS in the following works: Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (Free Press, New York, 1982) Chapters 16-17; Robert Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2006) Chapter 29; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969) Chapters 56 and 72; David Mabon, “Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951”, *Pacific Historical Review*, 57, 1988, pp 147-177.

<sup>8</sup> Robert O’Neill, “The Korean War and the Origins of ANZUS”, in Carl Bridge (ed), *Munich to Vietnam: Australia’s Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991) p 113.

<sup>9</sup> David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, p 2.

<sup>10</sup> South Korean President Syngman Rhee, Philippine President Elpidio Quirino, and Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek, all strongly espoused a Pacific Pact but the idea actually originated from Thomas H. Lockett, an official in the US Embassy in Manila. See Rodney Ross, “Philippines” in Spencer C. Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) p 518.

<sup>11</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between Truman, Quirino, Elizalde and Acheson, February 4, 1950, Dean G. Acheson Papers (hereafter Acheson Papers), Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Missouri (hereafter HSTL): Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversation File, 1949-1953, Box 66: Folder: February 1950.

Acheson again discussed a Pacific Pact with General Carlos Romulo, Philippine UN Ambassador, on March 10, 1950. Romulo told Acheson although New Zealand had “declined the invitation” to join a regional alliance, he “hoped” it “would send observers”, and was “not sure about the attitude of

Australia.” Romulo asked Acheson to support Philippine Government efforts to persuade New Zealand and Australia to be part of a regional pact. Romulo “was most anxious that the Pact should not have a racial foundation but should gather in as many of the countries of Southeast Asia as possible.” Acheson’s ambiguous response that America “had already done a great deal to help” with both Australia and New Zealand but that he would consider whether the US “could be of any further assistance”, signalled his reluctance about committing the US to a regional alliance. See Conversation between Acheson and Romulo, March 10, 1950, Acheson Papers, HSTL: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversation File, 1949-1953, Box 66: Folder: March 1950. See also David Mabon, “Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951”, Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 7 and David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 9.

<sup>12</sup> Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 9 and David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 10.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Japanese Peace Treaty”, April 24, 1950, Acheson Papers, HSTL: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversation File, 1949-1953, Box 67: Folder: April 1950. See also Richard Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-1951* and Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 6.

<sup>14</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Japanese Peace Treaty”, April 24, 1950, Acheson Papers, HSTL: Secretary of State File, 1945-1972: Memoranda of Conversation File, 1949-1953, Box 67: Folder: April 1950. See also Richard Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-1951*.

<sup>15</sup> Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* and Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia”, pp 158-196.

<sup>16</sup> This biographical detail is derived from two biographies of Dulles: Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (Free Press, New York, 1982). I believe this remains the best biography of Dulles even though it does not cover his years as Secretary of State in the Eisenhower Administration. Chapters 15-17 are especially pertinent to this chapter. Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, 1999) is an excellent compact study of Dulles’s life. Chapters 1-3 are especially relevant to this chapter. Richard Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2010) Chapter 5, “John Foster Dulles and the Conflicted Empire”, offers many fascinating insights into Dulles’s views regarding the use of American power. See also Phillip Cantrell II, “Dulles, John Foster (1888-1959)”, in Spencer C. Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 195-96.

<sup>17</sup> Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles* and Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum, MacArthur to Dulles on the Peace Treaty Problem, June 14, 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers (hereafter Dulles Papers), Box 49: Folder: MacArthur, Douglas, 1950, Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University (hereafter SML).

<sup>19</sup> David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 10, Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 9, Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles*, Chapters 16-17 and Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, Chapters 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> Dulles, Briefing on the Korean War and the proposed Japanese Peace Treaty, July 6, 1950, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 10 and Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles*, Chapters 16-17 and Richard Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, Chapters 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> “Japanese Peace Treaty Problems”, Study Group Reports, Council on Foreign Relations, October 23, 1950, pp 4-6, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML.

<sup>23</sup> “Japanese Peace Treaty Problems”, Study Group Reports, Council on Foreign Relations, October 23, 1950, pp 4-6, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML.

<sup>24</sup> “Japanese Peace Treaty Problems”, Study Group Reports, Council on Foreign Relations, October 23, 1950, p 8, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML. Allison was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, 1952-53.

<sup>25</sup> Dulles, “Estimate of the Situation”, November 3, 1950, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML.

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<sup>26</sup> Dulles, “Estimate of the Situation”, November 3, 1950. Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML. Emphasis is mine. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 11.

<sup>27</sup> Dulles noted “the Philippines, [Nationalist] China, Burma, Australia and New Zealand have all raised the question of reparations. They would, of course, like some. But I think they realize that they are up against a practical impossibility.” Letter, Dulles to MacArthur, November 15, 1950, Dulles Papers, Box 48: Folder: Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951] 1950, SML. Parts of this letter are faded and difficult to read. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 11.

<sup>28</sup> David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 11.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum, Acheson to Marshall on the Japanese peace treaty and a Pacific Pact sent to MacArthur by the JCS, December 18, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53: Subject File: Box 14: Folder: Korea: Messages, (JCS and CINCFE) December 1950, HSTL. See also Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 9.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum, Acheson to Marshall on the Japanese peace treaty and a Pacific Pact sent to MacArthur by the JCS, December 18, 1950, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53: Subject File: Box 14: Folder: Korea: Messages, (JCS and CINCFE) December 1950, HSTL.

<sup>31</sup> Memorandum from Truman to Dulles, January 10, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum from Truman to Dulles, January 10, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>33</sup> The most detailed account by a participant in the Canberra talks in February 1951 is Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*. See also John Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairie or Allison Wonderland* (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1973) Chapter 8. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 12, Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 13 and Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 8.

<sup>34</sup> Transcript of Remarks by Dulles, Canberra, Australia, February 15, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Related Material: Speeches and Statements by John Foster Dulles 1951, SML.

<sup>35</sup> Address by Dulles to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>36</sup> Address by Dulles to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>37</sup> Dulles conveyed the appropriate diplomatic platitudes for the occasion, expressing America’s “sense of fellowship and fraternity with the people of Australia”, saying Americans and Australians “have been together in wars and we know that when the going gets tough we just like to have one of your boys around.” Australians, he said, “have conducted” themselves “with such gallantry”. This refrain has subsequently become a standard mantra in public statements between US and Australian officials. Address by Dulles to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>38</sup> Address by Dulles to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>39</sup> Statement by Dulles, Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Related Material: Speeches and Statements by John Foster Dulles 1951, SML.

<sup>40</sup> Address by Dulles Broadcast in Sydney, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Speech Re Japan, “Soviet Communism”, etc Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>41</sup> Address by Dulles Broadcast in Sydney, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Speech Re Japan, “Soviet Communism”, etc Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>42</sup> Address by Dulles Broadcast in Sydney, February 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Speech Re Japan, “Soviet Communism”, etc Sydney, Australia, February 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>43</sup> Statement by Dulles upon departure from New Zealand, February 25, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Statement Upon Departure from New Zealand, February 25, 1951, SML.

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<sup>44</sup> Dulles Press and Radio News Conference, Wednesday, February 28, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Press Conference: Re Trip to the Far East, February 28, 1951, SML.

<sup>45</sup> The drafting of the ANZUS Treaty was not yet public knowledge. Nevertheless, anticipating Senate ratification of ANZUS, Dulles stated the US would “continue [to be] receptive to proposals for adding to the unity and strength of the area of which Australia and New Zealand form part.” Dulles said his discussions in Canberra “enabled us to explore all aspects of the ... Pacific problem in an atmosphere of cordiality and frankness” and noted Spender’s observation that the talks “represented consultation at its best.” The US, said Dulles, was “confident that, in one form or another, good results will follow.” See Dulles, “Pacific Peace”, CBS address, March 1, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>46</sup> Letter, Spender to Dulles, March 8, 1951, Spender Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, MS 4875, National Library of Australia.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Dulles to MacArthur, March 18, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Dulles to MacArthur, March 18, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>49</sup> Statement by Truman, April 18, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 53: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence 1951, SML.

<sup>50</sup> Dulles was in Tokyo because Acheson immediately sent him there following Truman’s dismissal of MacArthur on April 11, 1951, to brief General Matthew Ridgway, the new UN/US commander, on the Japanese peace treaty, and to assure the Japanese government the agreements the US had negotiated remained intact. See Memo by Dulles on his going to Japan in the wake of the MacArthur dismissal, April 12, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Acheson, Dean, 1951, SML.

<sup>51</sup> Press Statement by Dulles from Tokyo, April 19, 1951, and Text of Truman’s Statement on Pacific Security, April 18, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Statement Re Australia and New Zealand from Tokyo, April 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>52</sup> Transcript of Dulles’s press conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Press Conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>53</sup> Transcript of Dulles’s press conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951. Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Press Conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951, SML. Referring to his trip to Australia and the impact of the Japanese attacks on the Australians, Dulles told reporters: “I saw still the signs of the devastation wrought at Port Darwin”.

<sup>54</sup> Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* and Victor Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia”, pp 158-196.

<sup>55</sup> Transcript of Dulles’s press conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 303: Folder: Press Conference, Tokyo, April 19, 1951, SML.

<sup>56</sup> In a meeting on May 3, Truman, Acheson and Dulles “considered the program for concluding, in connection with the reestablishment of peace with Japan, a security arrangement between” the US, Australia and New Zealand, as outlined in Truman’s April 18 statement which also referred to the “contemplated security arrangements” the US was facilitating with the Philippines and Japan, respectively. Dulles also told Truman his April 18 statement “had a very salutary influence in the Western Pacific and was accepted as clear evidence of the determination of the United States to stand firm in this area.” Statement on Dulles’s report to Truman upon his return from his April trip to Japan, May 3, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML.

<sup>57</sup> Transcript of Recording of Dulles interview for Voice of America, May 9, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. See also Percy Spender, “NATO and Pacific security”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1952, pp 114-18.

<sup>58</sup> The Japanese Peace Treaty was signed at the San Francisco conference on September 8, 1951. See David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 13 and Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, Chapter 8.

<sup>59</sup> Transcript of remarks by Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, October 31, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML; John Foster Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, *Foreign Affairs*, 30, 2, January 1952, pp 175-87.

<sup>60</sup> Transcript of remarks by Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, October 31, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. Having argued for NATO to be based on the Monroe Doctrine to maximise US flexibility, Dulles intimated the Truman Administration accepted the Monroe Doctrine instead of the NATO template for ANZUS to ensure Senate ratification of the treaty. Dulles recalled the Senate debate over the NATO Treaty which many Senators feared would greatly expand the “authority of the President of the United States as against the power of the

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Congress to declare war and, to control, to some extent at least, the sending of American troops abroad.” Although the Senate ultimately ratified the NATO Treaty, Dulles believed that given the changed circumstances in Congress, “it might be impossible” for a similar treaty to be ratified “at the present time.” See also Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, pp 180-81 and Michael Cook, “ANZUS and the Monroe Doctrine”, *Quadrant*, 57, 12, December 2013, pp 20-22.

<sup>61</sup> Transcript of remarks by Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, October 31, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. See also Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, pp 181-82.

<sup>62</sup> Transcript of remarks by Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, October 31, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. See also Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, pp 182-83.

<sup>63</sup> Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, p 182.

<sup>64</sup> Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, pp 185-87.

<sup>65</sup> On the Korean War and the possible future role of Korea in these Asia-Pacific security arrangements, Dulles wrote: “the future of Korea, as an independent, united and free nation, is obscure, and there is need for further United Nations action before Korea could be brought into a regional security pact.” Dulles left open the possibility of a future US-South Korea security arrangement. Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, p 183.

<sup>66</sup> Transcript of remarks by Dulles to the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, October 31, 1951, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. See also Dulles, “Security in the Pacific”, pp 183-85.

<sup>67</sup> Statement by Dulles to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaties with Philippines, with Australia, New Zealand, and with Japan, January 21, 1952, Dulles Papers Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence, 1952, SML.

<sup>68</sup> Statement by Dulles to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaties with Philippines, with Australia, New Zealand, and with Japan, January 21, 1952, Dulles Papers Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence, 1952, SML.

<sup>69</sup> “Japanese Peace Treaty and other Treaties Relating to Security in the Pacific”, Report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1952, p 22, Dulles Papers Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence, 1952, SML.

<sup>70</sup> Critics of ANZUS cite the phrasing of Article IV to claim the Treaty does not guarantee the US would defend Australia if it were attacked. “Japanese Peace Treaty and other Treaties Relating to Security in the Pacific”, Report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1952, p 24, Dulles Papers Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Correspondence, 1952, SML.

<sup>71</sup> Remarks by Dulles at Luncheon of the American-Australian Association, February 18, 1952, Dulles Papers, Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Related Material: Speeches and Statements by John Foster Dulles, 1952, SML.

<sup>72</sup> “Pacific Security: Its New Foundations”, Office of Public Affairs, Department of State, April 1952, pp 1-2, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML.

<sup>73</sup> “Pacific Security: Its New Foundations”, Office of Public Affairs, Department of State, April 1952, p 7, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML. See also David McIntyre, *Background to the ANZUS Pact*, Chapter 14. AUSMIN replaced the ANZUS Council in 1985 when New Zealand was suspended from ANZUS because it refused to allow nuclear armed ships into its waters. The annual AUSMIN meetings alternate between the US and Australia.

<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the State Department noted that “pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific area and the development by the United Nations of more effective means to maintain international peace and security, the [ANZUS] Council ... is authorised to maintain a consultative relationship with States, Regional Associations, Associations of States, or other authorities in the Pacific area in a position to further the purposes of this treaty and to contribute to the security of that area.” See “Pacific Security: Its New Foundations”, Office of Public Affairs, Department of State, April 1952, pp 7-8, Dulles Papers, Box 52: Folder: Re Australia 1951, SML.

<sup>75</sup> Speech by John Allison, “The Japanese Peace Treaty and Related Security Pacts”, April 25, 1952, Dulles Papers, Box 61: Folder: Re Japanese Peace Treaty and Security Treaty – Related Material: 1952: Speech by John Allison, April 25, 1952, SML.

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<sup>76</sup> Text of cablegrams between Dulles and Acheson during the latter's trip to Honolulu for the inaugural ANZUS Council Meeting, August 5-6, 1952, Dulles Papers, Box 57: Folder: Acheson, Dean, 1952, SML.

<sup>77</sup> Statement by Dulles at the opening of the second meeting of the ANZUS Council, Washington DC, September 9, 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 71: Folder: Re Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951], 1953, SML.

<sup>78</sup> Statement by Dulles at the opening of the second meeting of the ANZUS Council, Washington DC, September 9, 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 71: Folder: Re Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951], 1953, SML. At the conclusion of this ANZUS Council meeting, the State Department issued a communiqué reiterating what Dulles had said. The communiqué noted the US, Australia and New Zealand "already" had "other relationships and responsibilities" and they "recognized the important interests of other countries in the Pacific." Referring to the security arrangements the US had with Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Formosa, this communiqué clearly indicates the Americans regarded ANZUS as "one of a number of arrangements for the furtherance of security among the nations" of the Asia-Pacific. Australia and New Zealand "as members of the British Commonwealth, have the closest ties with Great Britain and the other Commonwealth nations. All these arrangements and relationships constitute together a solemn warning to any potential aggressor and represent the growing foundation for lasting peace in the Pacific." See Communiqué on Second Meeting of the Council of ANZUS, September 10, 1953. Dulles Papers, Box 67: Folder: Re ANZUS Council 1953, SML.

<sup>79</sup> Draft of Dulles's speech to the American-Japan Society, September 15, 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 71: Folder: Re Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951], 1953, SML.

<sup>80</sup> Draft of Dulles's speech to the American-Japan Society, September 15, 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 71: Folder: Re Japan and the Japanese Peace Treaty [1951], 1953, SML.

<sup>81</sup> Statement by Dulles on the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the ROK, October 1, 1953, Dulles Papers, Box 71: Folder: Re Korea 1953, SML.

## **PART III:**

### **Diplomatic Partners: 1952-53**



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **America's Australian Diplomat: James Plimsoll and the 1952 South Korean Political Crisis**

#### **Introduction**

Since ANZUS came into effect in April 1952, Presidents and Prime Ministers have had occasional contact but the engine of the American-Australian alliance has been driven by the access and connections among subordinate US and Australian officials. James Plimsoll, the Australian diplomat who was very well known to the Americans, was a respected Korean expert and leading member of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) who played a prominent role throughout the 1952 South Korean political crisis.<sup>1</sup> Plimsoll, in unison with John Muccio, US Ambassador to South Korea, and Allan Lightner, US Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Pusan, sought to constrain South Korean President Syngman Rhee's authoritarianism and determination to entrench himself in power.<sup>2</sup> The intricate collaboration between Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner facilitated trust and confidence that permeated and reinforced the US-Australian relationship immediately after the formalisation of their alliance. This analysis argues Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner set a precedent for interactions between US and Australian officials that have become the core of US-Australian diplomacy.

The Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) political crisis which broke out in May 1952 almost immediately after ANZUS had come into effect, was the catalyst for a significant but obscure episode in US-Australian diplomatic collaboration during the Korean War. Although the US and Australia had their respective aspirations and designs for ANZUS, the outbreak of the crisis provided an opportunity for the two

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nations to begin shaping the practical functioning of their new alliance relationship.<sup>3</sup> This chapter argues that indeed, as Priscilla Roberts noted, the collaboration between Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner “helped to reinforce the developing Australian-American alliance.”<sup>4</sup>

Four intertwined factors explain Plimsoll’s prominence throughout the ROK political crisis: his presence on UNCURK, the US desire to work with the Commission, the American familiarity and high regard for him, and his relationship with Muccio, Lightner and Rhee. Plimsoll had three roles in the crisis. He represented Australia and UNCURK and was instrumental to American diplomacy during the crisis.<sup>5</sup> Plimsoll’s involvement in the crisis shows the US-Australian Korean engagement remained central to the evolution of their relationship after ANZUS came into effect. Indeed, this thesis shows the US-Australian Korean engagement did not begin or culminate with ANZUS. Plimsoll’s diplomacy during the crisis served US designs and Australian interests. This crisis further demonstrated that America and Australia pursued similar rather than identical interests throughout their Korean engagement, and that interactions between officials from both nations were central in shaping the nature of their evolving relationship which was much more nuanced than commonly perceived.

This chapter shows Plimsoll’s diplomacy throughout the crisis reflected his personal stature among the Americans and the extent of the evolution of the US-Australian relationship since the beginning of their Korean engagement in 1947. Plimsoll was very familiar to US officials when the crisis erupted. He had gone to the US in 1945 to attend the School of Military Government at Charlottesville, Virginia,

and then served with the Australian Military Mission in Washington. An expert on Japan, Plimsoll served on the Far East Commission from 1945-47 and had frequent contact with General Douglas MacArthur's Tokyo Headquarters. Plimsoll had been intricately involved in UN attempts to resolve the Korean question since 1948. He and John Foster Dulles drafted the December 12, 1948, UN resolution that recognised the government of South Korea and established UNCOK, the predecessor to UNCURK.<sup>6</sup>

Plimsoll's Korean expertise was instrumental in his appointment as Australia's representative on UNCURK in November 1950.<sup>7</sup> When the crisis broke out, Plimsoll was regarded as UNCURK's unofficial leader. He had earned his reputation as a skilled diplomat because of UNCURK's success in helping stabilise South Korea following the Chinese intervention in the Korean War and his ability to exert some influence on Rhee. This was notable during the crisis when Plimsoll persuaded Rhee to commute the death sentence of one political opponent and release others held in custody.

This analysis shows the Americans valued Plimsoll's counsel throughout the crisis. Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner were steadfastly united in pressuring Rhee to abide by the ROK constitution and advising Canberra and Washington to oust him despite the contrary preference of the Truman Administration and the Menzies Government. Nevertheless, although the advice of Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner was not accepted, their collaboration solidified the foundation of the evolving US-Australian relationship and alliance. Plimsoll was so highly regarded that even US officials opposed to intervention in the crisis considered his appraisal sound and were

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determined that he and UNCURK continue their work in Korea. UNCURK's presence in South Korea helped validate American claims the UN/US effort in the Korean War was an international rather than solely an American enterprise.

Although entirely dependent on the US for his and South Korea's political survival, Rhee was a real thorn for the Truman Administration. Plimsoll had a strong personal rapport with Rhee but the latter's precipitation of the crisis convinced him Rhee needed to be removed. This analysis of Plimsoll's stance urging UN/US intervention in the crisis focuses on the tensions between UNCURK and the US Embassy in Pusan who sought intervention, and the Truman Administration, State Department, General Mark Clark, Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (CinCUNC) and Lieutenant-General James Van Fleet, Commander, US Eighth Army, who reluctantly continued supporting Rhee. Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner argued Rhee could not be permitted to bypass or alter the constitution with impunity and urged the UN/US to intervene. However, Rhee ignored pressure for restraint, correctly calculating that Cold War politics, the Korean War and the absence of a real alternative leader, meant the US and UNC would not intervene against him.

Plimsoll's diplomacy throughout the crisis again placed the US-Australian Korean engagement at the epicentre of the evolving relationship between the two nations. The Americans engaged Plimsoll because they deemed his connections and expertise would assist their immediate goal to diffuse the crisis. Yet, Plimsoll's presence served Australian interests too. It strengthened US goodwill towards Australia and gave Canberra direct access to American thinking throughout the crisis. The crisis was a frustrating experience for the US and its UN allies but it was a

fortuitous event for the evolving US-Australian relationship. Yet again, at a moment when the US sought allied support in Korea, Plimsoll's presence and diplomacy made Australia visible to the Americans.

The ROK political crisis was another demonstration of the similar rather than identical US and Australian geo-strategic interests throughout their Korean engagement. The US and its UN allies all wanted the crisis quickly diffused. However, while the US was solely focussed on resolving this crisis, Plimsoll's presence provided Australia with an opportunity to show the US it was a strong alliance partner. Australia too wanted the crisis resolved but was equally determined to use every opportunity to directly engage the Americans because Canberra deemed this was crucial to its geo-strategic interests.

### **Rhee's challenge, the American dilemma and Australia's opportunity**

When Rhee triggered the ROK political crisis in May 1952, he challenged the authority of the UN/US and created a dilemma for the Truman Administration over whether it would continue to support him. However, the crisis provided Australia with yet another fortuitous opportunity to directly engage with the US in Korea. Following immediately after the activation of the ANZUS Treaty, the crisis ensured the US-Australian Korean engagement continued to shape the evolving relationship and alliance between the two nations.

Plimsoll's prominence throughout the crisis was largely due to his position as Australia's representative on UNCURK. This Commission was formed in October 1950 when it appeared the UN/US was on the verge of winning the Korean War to facilitate UN plans to unify and rehabilitate Korea.<sup>8</sup> Plimsoll became its "dominant

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figure”, broadening and strengthening his relationships with US officials and building a rapport with Rhee.<sup>9</sup>

Plimsoll had frequent contact with the Americans, especially Muccio with whom he collaborated closely. Their relationship was mutually beneficial. Plimsoll was sometimes able to give Canberra advance notice of US policy changes from information given to him by Muccio. In turn, Muccio often sought Plimsoll’s advice on US policy directions. Muccio valued Plimsoll’s input which helped “moderate impulsive reactions” in Washington.<sup>10</sup> Their collaboration augured well for the new US-Australian alliance.

Plimsoll also gained respect for his capacity to influence and restrain Rhee who was a wily, often irascible and belligerent politician. Plimsoll himself acknowledged he had “quite a big influence on things, on both Americans and the South Koreans.” The Americans would often request Plimsoll to see Rhee “to help persuade him to be reasonable.” Rhee too, would often ask Plimsoll for advice because “Mr Plimsoll would not let me get into any trouble.”<sup>11</sup>

The full scale Chinese intervention in the Korean War in November 1950 and the UN/US retreat from North Korea eliminated the prospect of a unified Korea. UN/US forces stabilised the battleline in April 1951 but the ensuing stalemate made UNCURK’s function problematic. However, Plimsoll was adamant the Commission needed to facilitate the reconstruction of South Korea, reasoning the UN could not politically and morally abandon the ROK having gone to war to defend it. This struck a chord with the Truman Administration which saw the political value of UNCURK’s

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presence, having argued since June 1950 that America was leading an authorised UN international effort to defend South Korea.<sup>12</sup> US officials were impressed, telling their Australian counterparts that “UNCURK could not survive without Plimsoll.”<sup>13</sup> It was during the ROK political crisis that UNCURK “played its most prominent, and perhaps most useful, role”.<sup>14</sup> This was the situation in April 1952 when Washington, on the advice of Muccio, requested that Plimsoll, temporarily working in Canberra, return to South Korea because of the “need to counsel” Rhee who was becoming increasingly problematic.<sup>15</sup>

Header says the US request to send Plimsoll back to Korea “constituted a compliment” to Australia and to Plimsoll “personally.” Richard Casey, Minister for External Affairs, was ambivalent about UNCURK but “reluctantly agreed” to send Plimsoll back to Korea. Percy Spender, Australia's Ambassador to the US, was adamant that Plimsoll had to go back to Korea. Spender told Casey the Americans “would regard Plimsoll's return to Korea for perhaps six months as an important factor in rallying UNCURK and exercising influence on ROK especially Rhee.” With ANZUS having just come into effect, Spender was characteristically forthright about what he thought was in Australia's best interests, telling Casey “any assistance we can give [the US] in respect of UNCURK would I am sure, pay dividends.”<sup>16</sup>

Plimsoll's strong relationship with American officials was in stark contrast to the problematic association between Rhee and the US. Rhee's tenure as the first ROK President, 1948-1960, created a great deal of consternation in Washington. Rhee clashed repeatedly with US officials throughout the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, both of whom expended notable efforts to restrain him. Rhee

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portrayed himself as the embodiment of Korean nationalism and although the Americans disliked him, he correctly calculated that Cold War politics virtually guaranteed US support for South Korea. This helps explain his strident behaviour. Rhee had three significant advantages over political rivals: 1) he garnered US support because of his staunch anti-communism, 2) the lack of any real alternative leader acceptable to the US, and 3) his fluency in English gave him a huge ascendancy over political opponents in dealing with the US.<sup>17</sup>

The political crisis erupted in May 1952 when Rhee, to ensure his political survival, advocated amending the 1948 South Korean Constitution to have the president directly elected by the people rather than by the ROK National Assembly. If the National Assembly retained the power to elect the President, Rhee was almost certain to lose the election scheduled for August 1952 as the Assembly, elected in May 1950, consisted of a majority of anti-Rhee members.<sup>18</sup> However, Rhee was certain to win a popular election, given his profile among the South Korean people, the absence of any rivals with a similar stature, and his control of the police and security forces. The Assembly countered with a proposal for a constitutional amendment to provide greater cabinet accountability to the Assembly. Under the 1948 constitution, the Assembly was only involved in confirming the prime minister. The Assembly now wanted the power to remove a prime minister by a two-thirds majority vote and to confirm the appointments of all the cabinet ministers.<sup>19</sup>

On May 19, a large number of activists orchestrated by Rhee began entering Pusan, where the ROK government was temporarily located, to demonstrate against the National Assembly and demand the popular election of the president. The



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Truman Administration now had to decide whether it would continue supporting Rhee. The crisis further aggravated the antagonism between John Muccio and Rhee which was palpable at their May 23 meeting.<sup>20</sup> Muccio announced he was returning to the US for consultations and denied he opposed Rhee's re-election and was "taking a partisan interest" in the crisis.<sup>21</sup> Rhee told Muccio he would proclaim martial law in Pusan and its surrounding areas, ominously assuring him the situation was under control and the "corrupt, venal and unpatriotic elements ... responsible for the situation would be prevented from accomplishing their fell purposes." Muccio warned Rhee this would "discredit" the ROK.<sup>22</sup> This meeting underscored Rhee's determination to remain in power and foreshadowed the tensions between the US Embassy and UNCURK, and the Truman Administration, State Department and the UNC over whether to intervene in South Korean politics.

The strained relationship between Rhee and Muccio meant Plimsoll's personal influence and Korean expertise were invaluable to the Truman Administration, the UNC, UNCURK and Canberra. The Americans and Rhee were disdainful of each other but each trusted Plimsoll. Hence, with unrestricted access to US officials and Rhee, Plimsoll was privy to their unguarded thoughts and conflicting positions. Plimsoll's personal diplomacy enhanced his reputation among the Americans and South Koreans and his vantage point provided Canberra with direct and detailed knowledge of the unfolding crisis.

The crisis escalated when Rhee imposed martial law in the Pusan area on May 25, and ROK security forces then arrested some of the National Assemblymen.<sup>23</sup> Plimsoll's prominence on UNCURK and strong personal rapport with the Americans

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and Rhee, meant he was immediately at the centre of the crisis, conferring with Rhee and the two senior UN/US commanders, General Mark Clark, CinCUNC, and Lieutenant General James Van Fleet, Commander US Eighth Army, attempting to diffuse the situation. On May 26, UNCURK officials led by Plimsoll met with Rhee seeking an explanation for the imposition of martial law. Only Plimsoll openly criticised Rhee, urging him to release the Assemblymen. Rhee released most but not all. UNCURK also hoped Van Fleet's personal influence would persuade Rhee to exercise restraint.<sup>24</sup> Van Fleet opposed using the ROK army for "political purposes" and concurred with UNCURK and US concerns about the impact of Rhee's actions on the UN "cause in Korea."<sup>25</sup> From Canberra's perspective, Plimsoll's immediate and intricate involvement in the American response to the crisis, sustained Australia's visibility in Washington and reinforced US goodwill towards its new ally.

Plimsoll's position on UNCURK and his rapport with senior US officials and Rhee, meant he had considerable diplomatic clout throughout the crisis. Plimsoll informed Van Fleet UNCURK would keep pressuring Rhee to explain why he had imposed martial law. In the ensuing meeting between Allan Lightner, US Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Pusan, Van Fleet and Rhee, Van Fleet told Rhee he and Clark were concerned the crisis would "reflect unfavourably" on the ROK Government and it "would be most unfortunate" if this caused the "outside world to lose confidence" in South Korea. Van Fleet emphasised the need to keep the armed forces "from being involved in politics" and expressed concern about their use in Pusan "under the martial law regime."<sup>26</sup> He told Rhee the "imposition of martial law in the Pusan area was not a matter of military necessity."<sup>27</sup> Rhee said he would

comply if Van Fleet wanted martial law rescinded but was tellingly non-committal when the General said that would be a “good idea.”<sup>28</sup>

Lightner's appraisal of the crisis went to the core of the policy dilemma faced by the Truman Administration over whether to continue supporting Rhee. Lightner argued that despite his “large popular following” which included the “inarticulate masses”, Rhee should be ousted, and advised the State Department “most intellectuals, businessmen, and increasing numbers [of] government officials, army officers and other educated groups ... would welcome [a] change [of] government.”<sup>29</sup> Rhee was “determined at all costs” to remove his opponents and remain in power and “appears willing to face criticism from abroad” despite his known sensitivity to international perceptions of himself and the ROK. Lightner explained Rhee calculated the UN/US would “not intervene” in a “manner sufficiently strong to divert him from his course” and warned “further informal representations” to Rhee by UNCURK, Van Fleet and the US Embassy would be “ineffective” and “stronger action now seems required.”<sup>30</sup>

On May 28, Lightner advised Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, that only immediate UN/US intervention could thwart Rhee.<sup>31</sup> Lightner recommended working with UNCURK because combined American and allied disapproval of Rhee's actions would exert greater pressure on him. Lightner advised it was “still desirable” that UNCURK make the “initial formal protest and demands” and urged pressuring the UN Secretary General to provide “full support” to the Commission. If UNCURK's efforts failed to “produce immediate results”, the US needed to intervene “promptly”. Lightner argued if the “democratic process is permitted to be violated” in Korea in the

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presence of UN/US forces, the “very elements on whom we have been relying for building democracy ... will be completely disillusioned.” The “impression” to “new governments” in Asia and the world would be that America was “unwilling [to] fully back the system and ideology we profess.”<sup>32</sup>

Despite pressure from Lightner, Rhee correctly calculated the US would not intervene in the ROK because of Cold War politics and the Korean War. Hence, not even Plimsoll, with all his diplomatic skill and experience, and rapport with Rhee, was able to persuade him to rescind martial law. The crisis protagonists – Rhee, the ROK opposition, Plimsoll and UNCURK, Muccio and Lightner – all knew that without UN/US intervention, Rhee would force through the constitutional changes enabling him to remain in power. On May 28 Plimsoll called on Rhee to revoke martial law and release the detained Assemblymen.<sup>33</sup> The following day, Rhee told UNCURK he was “attempting to carry out” the “overwhelming will of the people” to have the president elected by popular vote. Rhee rejected UNCURK’s request to end martial law and free the Assemblymen, charging they were part of a Communist plot to seize the ROK government he “was attempting to save.”<sup>34</sup>

The Truman Administration considered imposing martial law under the UNC but decided to seek a compromise solution to the political crisis. This signalled its wariness about intervening in South Korean politics and its willingness to accept Rhee’s continuation in power. On May 29, Lightner was instructed that Rhee and his opponents “should be encouraged” to “find some reasonable means” for “compromise perhaps through” the “good offices” of UNCURK. This would “demonstrate” to the world the capacity of the Koreans to “solve their political problems through normal

democratic purposes.” The “early elimination” of martial law would greatly help create a “more favourable public reaction outside” South Korea.<sup>35</sup>

The American decision to work with UNCURK to seek a political compromise ensured Plimsoll continued to play a central role in the crisis. The Truman Administration's caution about involvement in ROK politics and its decision to work with UNCURK signified its desire for an international rather than solely American response to the crisis. This was consistent with the American emphasis throughout the Korean War that the UN/US undertaking was indeed an international effort. Plimsoll's contacts and Korean experience made him invaluable to the US. Again, at a moment when the Truman Administration sought the input of allies in Korea, Plimsoll's presence made Australia visible to the Americans. The crisis presented Canberra with an opportunity to solidify the new US-Australian alliance.

Lightner was determined to have the US intervene and oust Rhee. On May 30, he reported Rhee would not make any concessions and urged Washington to keep pressuring him, arguing this was a “struggle to [the] death: Either Rhee has his way or Rhee falls.” Lightner also expressed his concern the “primary interest” of the US/UN “in maintaining [the] security of [the] rear areas” and the “emphasis on law and order” would mean the acceptance of Rhee's “version of law and order” resulting in the “eclipse of constitutional government” and the “regime of law.” If Rhee was “permitted [to] have his way”, Lightner warned the “hope of ever having [a] democratic government” in South Korea would “be postponed indefinitely.” Lightner said Rhee had “thumbed his nose” at the US and her allies, was “playing for time” and would ignore any diplomatic overtures and continue “with his dirty work.” The US

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government, said Lightner, could not claim later it had been unaware of the situation in the ROK and “must decide now (I mean now) whether to let this thing slide or take necessary steps [to] thwart it.” Plimsoll and UNCURK concurred with Lightner’s assessment of the urgency of the situation.<sup>36</sup>

Acheson acknowledged Lightner’s concerns but was wary about US intervention. He wanted Plimsoll and UNCURK to facilitate a resolution to the crisis. On May 30, Lightner was told it was “essential” that “every effort” was made through UNCURK and the US Embassy to persuade Rhee to lift martial law and resolve the differences between Rhee and his political opposition. The imposition of martial law by the UN/US would be politically explosive so the US had to “exhaust every effort short [of] such [a] step.” Lightner was instructed to consult with Van Fleet and Plimsoll on the “desirability” of the UNC assuming “police powers or imposing martial law” in Pusan and the “timing” of such a move. Acheson asked whether UNCURK would recommend the “desirability” of UNC intervention to the UN Secretary General if the “situation” in the ROK “continues [to] deteriorate.” Plimsoll was assured if the Truman Administration decided to intervene it would inform each government represented on UNCURK and America’s “principal allies.”<sup>37</sup>

The State Department was concerned about the “dangers” of South Korean demonstrations against UN/US intervention, the “reaction” of Rhee, his supporters and the ROK armed forces. Lightner was asked to confer with Plimsoll and Van Fleet about the “possibilities” of Rhee continuing to defy the National Assembly, orchestrating “demonstrations and mob violence”, even “declaring [an] emergency” to achieve his goals “by any means if martial law [was] lifted or taken over” by the

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UNC. Lightner, Plimsoll and Van Fleet were asked to assess the “probable political consequences” in South Korea of the proposed constitutional amendments and the election of the president. The State Department wanted advice on the likelihood of the National Assembly electing a new president but with Rhee continuing to “act as president under emergency powers with control of [the] police and armed forces.” Lightner, Plimsoll and Van Fleet were also asked for advice on the “best procedure” for the “imposition of martial law” by the UNC if it was “considered feasible and desirable”, and also on its “scope and method” and “subsequent exercise.” Lightner was advised to make clear to Plimsoll and Van Fleet that no decision to intervene in South Korea had been made and the State Department was “simply endeavouring [to] assess [the] possible effects of what would be [an] extremely serious action and be prepared for all contingencies.”<sup>38</sup>

On May 30, the Truman Administration ordered General Clark to meet with Rhee to convey to him in “the strongest terms” UNC concurrence with the US Embassy and UNCURK regarding the “lifting of martial law and restoration of constitutional processes.” However, there was to be “no open threat or ultimatum” in Clark’s dialogue with Rhee. Clark reported to Washington that the ROK situation could “require positive and forceful military action” by the UNC, but that “political negotiations and pressures upon Rhee should, if possible, continue to be used to restore normalcy” in South Korea. Clark’s primary concern was that UNC “military intervention” in the ROK would be perceived as “an empty threat” because the UN/US did not have enough troops to deal “simultaneously” with “a possible major Communist offensive”, restore control following the Communist POW uprising on Koje-do island, and respond to “possible disturbances in our rear areas.” Clark

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advised the UN/US “must wait until the situation” deteriorated to a point requiring “positive action” before the UNC responded by “mustering all of the forces available and establishing military government or martial law.”<sup>39</sup>

Like the US, Australia too was reluctant to intervene in the crisis. Australia had always been ambivalent towards Rhee, emphasising that its participation in the Korean War was to repel North Korean aggression, not to support Rhee. Actually, as Chapter Four of this thesis shows, Australia sent forces to Korea to strengthen its relationship with the US and pursue a security treaty between the two nations. Casey and External Affairs sympathised with Plimsoll that Rhee “threatened the future of democracy” but concurred with the US that the problematic consequences of intervention – impact upon the UN/US cause in Korea, the lack of personnel, the necessity of having to prop up a new regime and leader, and a likely prolonged military occupation – outweighed any benefits that would come from ousting Rhee.<sup>40</sup> Canberra’s unwillingness to support intervention was crystallised by Ambassador Spender’s advice that the US attitude about removing Rhee was “negative.” Canberra was also much more concerned than Washington about adhering to the principle of non intervention in the internal affairs of states which had been incorporated in the UN Charter largely because of Evatt’s advocacy.<sup>41</sup>

The US and Australia pursued similar and yet different objectives throughout the crisis. Whereas the crisis exasperated the Truman Administration, Canberra’s response was muted and largely indifferent. Australia was focussed on cultivating its relationship with the US, not getting mired in internal ROK political machinations. Rhee was authoritarian but staunchly anti-Communist so Washington and Canberra



grudgingly accepted him and looked for a compromise resolution.<sup>42</sup> However, whereas the US objective was to ensure a stable South Korea, Australia sought to maximise another opportunity to directly engage with the US in Korea. The primary objective of Australia's Korean involvement was always to engage the US and seek to influence American policy to serve Australia's security interests. This was why and how Plimsoll's involvement in the crisis proved advantageous for the new US-Australian alliance.

Plimsoll's position on UNCURK, his Korean expertise, and rapport with the Americans and Rhee, meant US officials on both sides of the intervention debate sought his advice and support. Acheson wanted UNCURK to be the conduit for a diplomatic solution he hoped Plimsoll could facilitate by using his influence with Rhee. Moreover, Acheson sought Plimsoll's advice on what he thought Rhee and the Assembly would do as the crisis unfolded. Acheson also asked for Plimsoll's assessment of the feasibility of UNC intervention if the standoff between Rhee and the Assembly proved insurmountable and threatened the stability of the ROK and UN/US operations in Korea. Conversely, Lightner was determined to see Rhee ousted and keenly informed his superiors that Plimsoll and UNCURK agreed. Weeks after the ANZUS Treaty came into effect the ROK political crisis broke out and Plimsoll became a key adviser to the US. As the Americans dealt with yet another unwanted crisis in Korea, Plimsoll's prominence maintained Australia's visibility in Washington and heightened US goodwill towards its new alliance partner.

### **Plimsoll and Lightner argue for intervention**

The Truman Administration's tactic to work with UNCURK for a diplomatic resolution to the ROK political crisis coincided with Plimsoll becoming its Chairman

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on June 1, 1952.<sup>43</sup> Plimsoll's access to US officials and Rhee, and his leadership of UNCURK, gave him a strong vantage point. His position and access also gave Canberra direct knowledge of American thinking throughout the crisis. The crisis fortuitously deepened the US-Australian relationship because of the American reliance on Plimsoll's advice and diplomacy. Hence, the convergence of Plimsoll's connections with the Americans and Rhee, and his leadership of UNCURK enabled the solidification of the evolving US-Australian relationship.

However, Plimsoll was not always in sync with Washington and Canberra about Rhee. Lightner and Plimsoll met on June 1 and, contrary to Washington's and Canberra's non-intervention stance, affirmed that only an immediate and decisive US response could stymie Rhee.<sup>44</sup> Although instructed that the US would "exhaust ... every effort" to "find" a "compromise formula before imposing martial law", Lightner nevertheless recommended immediate intervention because continued political unrest in South Korea could trigger a renewed Communist offensive forcing the US into an "agreement leaving Rhee in control." This would be exploited by the Communists with a propaganda campaign accusing the UN/US of defending a dictator, and increasing "subversive activities" in South Korea. Lightner had the backing of Plimsoll who told him if the "situation" in South Korea deteriorated to such an "extent" that the UN/US believed "military operations" would be "affected", UNCURK "would recommend" the "imposition of martial law" by the UNC. However, Plimsoll was talking about a future contingency whereas Lightner reasoned immediate UN/US action would be less costly than delaying.<sup>45</sup>

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Despite pressure from the Truman Administration and UNCURK, Rhee refused to lift martial law. Lightner advised Acheson that only an UNC “imposed martial law” would thwart Rhee. Determined to see Rhee ousted, Lightner argued a transition could be achieved smoothly without creating further political turmoil in South Korea. Lightner advised Acheson the imposition of martial law should be preceded by UNCURK requesting the UNC “take all appropriate measures, including if necessary [the] use of force, to enable” the presidential election “to be held freely and in accordance” with the ROK constitution.<sup>46</sup>

Although US intervention was unlikely, the Truman Administration still countenanced the option. On June 2, Alexis Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, told Acheson if Rhee failed to respond to “public and official pressures”, the US, her allies and UN agencies would “have to make grave decisions” on preventing or allowing the “demise of representative government and the rise of personal dictatorship” in South Korea. Johnson said Rhee had “ignored the admonitions” of Plimsoll and UNCURK, the US Government, Van Fleet, the ROK Cabinet and National Assembly, and other South Korean “civil and military leaders”. Rhee was in a dominant position because his opposition was “leaderless, incohesive, and without effective means of self protection.” The US Embassy in Pusan was reporting growing “dissatisfaction with Rhee’s tactics and objectives” within the South Korean Government and US officials believed the anti Rhee forces would increase significantly if Rhee’s grip on power could be weakened sufficiently to make his removal a realistic option. The ROK Army was the key factor and South Korean “military officials” were “becoming increasingly dissatisfied” with the situation.<sup>47</sup>

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Plimsoll made it clear to the Americans he believed “reconciliation between Rhee and his opposition is impossible and immediate strong actions are needed.” Johnson told Acheson that Plimsoll had advised that General Clark “make a strong approach to Rhee and that President Truman send a strong personal letter to Rhee.” Plimsoll told the Americans UNCURK “would recommend the imposition of martial law” if it was deemed necessary by the US Government and the UNC. Johnson conveyed to Acheson, Plimsoll’s belief that “major decisions for concrete action” were “now beyond” the “purview” of UNCURK and “squarely up to UN member nations” who needed to “decide” immediately “how far to go.” Plimsoll told the Americans that UNCURK and the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) would pressure Rhee by intimating the delaying of Korean “reconstruction projects until constitutional government is restored.” This was supported by the State Department and the UN Secretary General.<sup>48</sup>

The Truman Administration’s caution and reluctance to intervene, together with the inability of US officials and UNCURK to apply pressure by presenting a united front, advantaged Rhee. Clark was reluctant to meet Rhee because it “might stiffen” his “resistance.” However, Van Fleet, a Rhee ally nevertheless opposed to his imposition of martial law, urged taking “strong measures” against him.<sup>49</sup> Rhee, knowing the UN/US reluctance to intervene in the domestic politics of the ROK, completely dismissed American and UNCURK urges to lift martial law. Plimsoll and Lightner were urging the US to take decisive action against Rhee but Washington and Canberra indicated their advice would not be followed.<sup>50</sup>

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The State Department notified the US Embassy in Pusan that UN/US intervention could only be authorised following a “request” from the National Assembly to UNCURK followed by UNCURK “recommendations” to the UNC. Johnson advised Acheson the US urgently needed to decide whether, “in consultation with UN agencies and other interested governments”, it should “take all measures short of martial law to restore political stability” in South Korea. The US could pressure Rhee by suspending “additional economic aid” to South Korea, ensuring “maximum publicity regarding Rhee’s defiance”, authorising the UNC to provide “safe quarters and moral support” for the National Assembly, and organise a demonstration of UN/US “military force in cooperation with loyal ROK armed forces to restore stability”. Also, the US should not recognise elections held by Rhee “to replace National Assemblymen or ... create an entirely new government.” If Rhee continued his defiance, Johnson advised the UNC “should fully intervene to restore political stability” by placing the ROK police under its control, using UN/US and ROK forces to impose martial law, providing security for Rhee and the National Assembly and, “supporting the new President to be elected by the Assembly”. Johnson argued it was critical the UN/US “ensure the integrity” of the National Assembly and the South Korean constitution.<sup>51</sup>

The Truman Administration was unwilling to involve the UN/US in the ROK political crisis and Canberra concurred with this stance. Woodard says US and Australian “policies were in fact united in caution.”<sup>52</sup> Yet Plimsoll and Lightner argued for intervention, correctly gauging that only the UNC had the power to thwart Rhee. Without intervention, Rhee was able to ignore diplomatic and political pressure to lift martial law and compromise with the National Assembly. Rhee was

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determined to entrench himself in power and Plimsoll and Lightner argued that having gone to war to prevent South Korea falling to the Communists, the UN/US had a political and moral obligation and the strength to prevent Rhee usurping the ROK constitution.

Despite giving advice contrary to the Truman Administration and Australian government position, Plimsoll's reputation remained undiminished. Indeed, Plimsoll's Korean experience and access to Rhee meant the Americans sought and valued his counsel. Furthermore, Plimsoll's collaboration with Lightner earned him greater kudos with the Americans and enhanced Washington's perception of Australia as a dependable ally.

### **Plimsoll and Lightner disagree with Clark and Van Fleet**

One of the paradoxes of the 1952 ROK political crisis was that Plimsoll's advice to forcibly oust Rhee did not weaken his standing with the Truman Administration which rejected intervention. Another paradox was that Plimsoll and Lightner were diplomats urging intervention whereas Clark and Van Fleet, the UNC military commanders, sought accommodation with Rhee. Nevertheless, Clark and Van Fleet also continued seeking Plimsoll's advice as the crisis unfolded. Indeed, although this crisis was an irritant for the Americans, it helped solidify the new US-Australian alliance because Plimsoll's diplomacy and Korean expertise were invaluable to them.

Plimsoll's June 2 meeting with Clark and Van Fleet seeking UNC backing for UNCURK's response to the crisis was indicative of the differences between Plimsoll and Lightner, on the one hand, and the UNC on the other hand, regarding Rhee. Clark

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“sympathized” with Plimsoll but was unwilling to pressure Rhee to relent, judging the “present situation” was not interfering with UN/US operations. Clark told Plimsoll although the US did not “approve” of Rhee’s actions, it “might be obliged to put up with him for years.” Clark would not pressure Rhee to lift martial law and free the detained Assemblymen but would say his actions could impact on UN/US support for South Korea. Plimsoll “pointed out” the “danger” of Rhee exploiting any “divergence” between UNCURK and the UNC. Plimsoll cautioned any “short term advantage sought” by the UNC “through avoiding” involvement in the crisis, was “likely to be heavily outweighed” by the “danger of future developments which might include [the] complete loss of Korea to [the] democracies.” Plimsoll suggested UN governments consider suspending discussions with South Korea on the “rebuilding of Seoul.” Clark agreed such measures “could be contemplated” but would limit his talks with Rhee to “military matters.” Clark accepted Plimsoll’s warning about maintaining a united front and would publicly support UNCURK. Van Fleet said the UN/US could not label Rhee a “dictator” without handing the Communists a monumental propaganda victory and gravely undermine the UN/US effort in Korea. UNCURK and the US Embassy in Pusan were in unison about challenging Rhee’s actions but Commission members were “very discouraged” by the UNC “attitude.”<sup>53</sup>

On June 3, Clark met with Lightner and Plimsoll prior to meeting with Rhee. This meeting reflected the division between Plimsoll and Lightner and Clark over UN/US intervention. Clark told Lightner and Plimsoll the US “frequently had to deal with dictatorial regimes” and that “we might well have to swallow pride here in Korea and go on working with Rhee even after watching him over-throw democracy.” Clark “stressed” no UN/US troops were currently available to send to Pusan, arguing this

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should only be “considered” if there was a “real threat to military operations.” Clark hoped the political pressure from the US and UNCURK would “stop Rhee” but made it clear the UNC lacked the resources to “assist” their efforts. Plimsoll “recognized” Clark’s military constraints but “pointed out [the] long-term” consequences if “political efforts failed and nothing further [was] done to prevent Rhee accomplishing his purposes.” Plimsoll explained to Lightner and Clark the people and institutions the UN depended upon to build a democratic South Korea “were being persecuted and many might lose their lives”. Plimsoll “was convinced ... [a] Rhee tyranny would ... end ... all hopes for democracy” and the ROK would fall to the Communists in a “short time.” Clark told Plimsoll the UN/US response to the crisis was beyond his purview as UNC commander. This exchange solidified Plimsoll’s belief that only immediate UN/US intervention would compel Rhee to back down.<sup>54</sup>

Clark was equally determined to prevent UN/US forces being drawn into the crisis. At this June 3 meeting, Lightner sought discussion about UNCURK’s support for a possible resolution by ROK National Assembly “opposition leaders ... requesting [the] protection of members and meetings” by the UN because it would “involve” military forces. Clark told Lightner and Plimsoll that UNCURK lacked the capacity to “provide protection” and that security “would have to be furnished by UN forces not now available in Pusan.”<sup>55</sup> Even if a resolution was passed by the ROK Assembly and UNCURK “recommended its implementation”, Clark would argue the UN/US troops needed to enforce it were “not available.” Clark told Lightner and Plimsoll he “did not want to discuss future steps at this time” and emphasised that “principal recommendations should come from UNCURK and [the US] Embassy.”<sup>56</sup>



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Clark's opposition to intervention in the crisis, contrasted with Lightner and Plimsoll who argued only decisive American action with allied support could prevent Rhee concentrating power in his hands. Clark preferred conciliation, telling Lightner and Plimsoll "he would not" support UNCURK and the US Embassy "taking strong exception" to Rhee's actions because "he did not wish to invite recriminations." Clark said he was meeting Rhee "as a friend" and would express "his concern" as CinC UNC that the political crisis "could endanger the success of [UN/US] military operations in Korea". Clark would ask Rhee to consider the crisis could result in the withdrawal of UN support for the ROK "which could be exploited by Communist forces". More immediately, the crisis "could have [a] disturbing effect on Pusan supply operations." Clark would "express [his] hope for continuing ROK support" of the UN/US "war effort" but he would not object to Rhee's failure to "lift martial law in defiance" of the ROK National Assembly and cabinet, as well as UNCURK and the US government. Clark said he would tell the press he met with Rhee to discuss "possible repercussions" for UN/US military operations in the "present political crisis" and he agreed to Plimsoll's request to state his support for UNCURK's stance on the crisis if the press questioned him. Although Plimsoll and Lightner and Clark espoused different approaches, they sustained their close collaboration.<sup>57</sup>

Whereas Lightner and Plimsoll argued for intervention, Clark was advocating conciliation. Rhee's awareness of these differences explains why, as Lightner told Acheson, Clark preferred to talk with Rhee on his own and "thought it best" Lightner "not accompany him". Clark met with Rhee accompanied by Van Fleet. Afterwards, Clark told Lightner he spoke with Rhee about the impact of the political crisis on the UN/US military effort in Korea. Clark said with the focus "on not hurting [the] war

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effort”, Rhee gave “full assurances” frontline South Korean troops “need not be concerned”, that there was “no question of withdrawing any to Pusan” and all the “troubles should be over soon”. However, the divisions between these US officials remained with Lightner informing Acheson that Van Fleet expressed the “necessity of getting along” with the ROK government “of whatever complexion”. Clark honoured his understanding with Plimsoll and Lightner, telling the press he explained to Rhee his main concern was the impact on UN/US military operations and that he “fully support(ed)” the US and UNCURK response to the crisis.<sup>58</sup>

Lightner was much more wary, informing Acheson he “did not get very far in discussing” with Clark the question of UNC protection for the ROK National Assembly. Lightner said he would canvass options with Plimsoll but was not confident they would come up with any new policy alternatives. Lightner was adamant the meeting between Clark, Van Fleet and Rhee “had very little if any effect.” He feared Rhee “came away” from this meeting “with added confirmation” in his belief “that no matter what he does”, the UN/US “will remain aloof.” Lightner told Acheson “any appearance of weakness on our part at this time will only encourage” Rhee, making the “possibility of his backing down more remote.”<sup>59</sup>

The Truman Administration recognised the crisis could damage the UN/US effort in Korea but was unwilling to intervene. Robert Lovett, US Secretary of Defense, told Clark on June 4 that direct UN/US intervention “should be contemplated only as a last resort if necessary to support the military effort.” The Americans sought to “facilitate a political solution” that ensured continued ROK support for the UN/US in the Korean War. Lovett told Clark the diplomatic pressure

on Rhee needed to largely come from UNCURK, Muccio and other UN members. The Americans hoped Truman's June 2 letter and UN/US pressure would facilitate a "compromise reconciliation" between Rhee and his opponents. The division between the assertive Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio, and the cautious Clark concerned the Truman Administration. Lovett told Clark it was "imperative" the "prestige and influence" of the UNC commander "be used ... in presenting [a] strong unanimity of views." Rhee must be "given no room" to believe differences existed between US "political and military viewpoints which he would quickly exploit to his advantage." Clark was instructed to "continue close and active cooperation and consultations" with Muccio and UNCURK and "provide them with full support, short of active military intervention."<sup>60</sup>

As leader of UNCURK, Plimsoll remained at the centre of the crisis because the US wanted the Commission to facilitate a resolution. Although Plimsoll's and Lightner's advice to intervene was rejected, the Truman Administration nevertheless relied on their input to find a diplomatic solution. Similarly, Clark and Van Fleet disagreed with Plimsoll on intervention but nevertheless sought his advice and cooperated with him. Plimsoll's collaborative relationship with Lightner, Clark and Van Fleet provided a template for the functioning of the new US-Australian alliance. The engine of the US-Australian alliance relationship has been powered by the access, connections and friendships among American and Australian officials. Plimsoll was a pioneer of this *modus operandi* in US-Australian diplomacy.

### **The Truman Administration backs Rhee**

Acheson's June 4 instructions to Ambassador Muccio, now back in Pusan, confirmed the Truman Administration decided US interests were best served by

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retaining Rhee. Acheson reiterated that “every means must be exhausted to obtain a resolution of this internal crisis by methods short of active military intervention.” Political leadership in the ROK would “best be provided by Rhee under some controls” and UN/US “interests would best be served if the end result is that Rhee remains as President.” Rhee “would have much more standing within” and beyond South Korea “if he were elected by popular vote rather than by a reluctant and coerced Assembly.” Acheson said Rhee “should be subject to Assembly controls” and the “constitutional amendment providing for popular election of [the] President and subjecting him to greater degree of parliamentary control might be the most desirable outcome of the present crisis.” Muccio was instructed to inform Rhee the Truman Administration supported UNCURK’s wish to lift martial law and release the detained Assemblymen. Acheson emphasised the US would continue to seek a compromise to the impasse.<sup>61</sup>

Despite Acheson’s instructions, Lightner continued to argue for Rhee’s removal. On June 5, Lightner told Ken Young, the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs in the State Department, he and Plimsoll agreed the US needed to decide if Rhee would “be permitted to remain” in power. Rhee had “made perfectly clear” his intention of breaking his opponents and employing any means to “get himself re-elected.” There was “no possibility” of “reconciling differences. It is a fight to the finish.” Lightner accepted there was “no obvious alternative candidate” to Rhee and his removal entailed “a certain risk” that the ROK government “without Rhee might be less effective”. Nevertheless, Lightner and Plimsoll “felt the principle at stake was sufficiently important to out-weigh this risk.” Lightner told Young that Rhee “is now such a menace that literally any other man would be an improvement.”

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The US, said Lightner, needed to assess the “importance” it “attached to the development of democracy in Korea.” He said keeping Rhee would mean giving up “all possibility of continuing to work toward a democratic state.” Lightner reiterated it was clear, especially following Rhee’s talks with Generals Clark and Van Fleet, that his actions were predicated on his belief the US would not intervene. This meant the US was unable to exercise any leverage over Rhee. Lightner told Young, Rhee would only accept the complete capitulation of his opponents and if he remained president, “the development toward a one-party, police state with a cowed, docile legislature will be inevitable”.<sup>62</sup>

Acheson now authorised a meeting between State Department officials and the representatives of the UN member states with military forces in Korea to discuss the UN/US response to the crisis. The June 6 meeting was presided over by Alexis Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Australia was represented by David McNicol, Second Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Washington. On June 3, Rhee had issued an ultimatum to the National Assembly to agree to his proposed constitutional amendment or be dissolved. Johnson informed the UN representatives Truman had dissuaded Rhee from taking any “irrevocable action” by proceeding with his ultimatum until Muccio returned to Pusan and discussed the crisis with him. Indeed, the Assembly met on June 6 with a substantial number of members present despite the tense atmosphere. Johnson stated American efforts were focussed on getting the South Korean factions to resolve their differences “in some legal and constitutional manner” and it was “not proper” for the US to “support one side against the others”. It was best the South Koreans “work out their problem themselves.” Johnson accepted that in “all probability free elections would

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result in President Rhee's re-election." Rhee was still widely regarded by South Koreans as the "symbol of Korean independence and of the Korean state" and there was "no potential political rival" to challenge him.<sup>63</sup>

### **Plimsoll and Muccio urge Rhee to compromise but continue to recommend intervention**

With the Truman Administration ruling out UN/US intervention, Plimsoll's concerted effort in urging Rhee to compromise virtually made him America's Australian diplomat. As UNCURK's nominal leader working with the Americans, Plimsoll sustained the diplomatic pressure on Rhee to diffuse the crisis by negotiating with his opponents. Plimsoll collaborated closely with Muccio and his assertiveness with Rhee strained their strong relationship. Plimsoll's prominence meant Australia maintained its visibility in Washington and gave Canberra access to the thinking of the decision makers in the Truman Administration, thus aiding the gelling of the new US-Australian alliance.

In Pusan on June 7, Muccio and Plimsoll agreed to "strongly advocate" that Rhee compromise with his National Assembly opponents. However, Muccio and Plimsoll recognised a negotiated resolution was unlikely because Rhee would only accept the Assembly's total capitulation and his opponents lacked the strength to challenge his "nationwide political apparatus", his control of the police and capacity to maintain martial law in Pusan.<sup>64</sup>

Muccio told ROK opposition leaders the Truman Administration, the UNC and UNCURK all wanted the political crisis resolved in a manner "acceptable" to the allied "nations participating" in the Korean War. Muccio said the crisis could not be

resolved by him or “any foreigner”. It was up to the ROK political leaders to find a solution but he and other UN/US and UNCURK officials could help facilitate a resolution. Muccio especially encouraged ROK opposition leaders to consult with Plimsoll on finding a compromise solution. The Americans regarded Plimsoll as the enabler of a negotiated resolution to the crisis.<sup>65</sup>

On June 7, Rhee received a letter from Plimsoll reiterating UNCURK's stance on the crisis.<sup>66</sup> Plimsoll said UNCURK considered the ROK constitution “has been violated in important respects and that this situation is damaging both to [the] present welfare and stability of the republic and to its future development as a democratic state.” Plimsoll again requested Rhee revoke martial law in Pusan and free the detained Assemblymen but made it clear UNCURK would not “take sides in [the] internal politics” of the ROK and would not “express” any opinion on the “merits” of the constitutional amendments proposed by Rhee and the National Assembly. Plimsoll said UNCURK's primary concern was that constitutional amendments adhered to the constitutional process, and that the upcoming presidential election be conducted in “accordance with [the] constitution.”<sup>67</sup> In his confrontations with Rhee, Plimsoll was never as vehement in his approach as Lightner.

Plimsoll also forcefully told Rhee that although UNCURK would not “express any opinion” on the actual and alleged conduct of National Assemblymen who were under arrest or wanted by the ROK security forces, the Commission was “indeed surprised so many arrests” had been made given Rhee's acknowledgement the “necessary investigations have not been completed”. Plimsoll urged Rhee to immediately seek UNC cooperation “in making these investigations so that you can

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avail yourself of that command's facilities and experience in collecting and shifting evidence", especially as "these charges", if accurate, "would be of vital importance to [the] security of all [UN] nations fighting in Korea." Plimsoll explained that while UNCURK "has not passed judgment on the validity" of any charges against the Assemblymen, it was duty bound to bring to Rhee's "attention" that the arrests were made in violation of the ROK Constitution.<sup>68</sup>

Plimsoll challenged Rhee's justification he was responding to the "will of the people", reminding him the "basis of every constitutional democracy" was that the "will of the people can be expressed validly only in the ways provided for" constitutionally, such as "by a free and secret ballot ... or by [the] votes of freely-elected representatives of the people". Plimsoll confronted Rhee, telling him "such methods of gauging [the] will of [the] people as mass meetings; demonstrations and petitions are generally used where a real respect for constitutional rights and duties is lacking." Plimsoll reiterated UNCURK was "not interfering in [the] internal politics" of the ROK and would leave "all questions of substance to be settled by the Korean people." Nevertheless, Plimsoll told Rhee, the UN/US "having taken up arms in defense" of South Korea, "has both a right and interest to see that the constitution" of the ROK is "observed so that there will be no doubt as to the legitimacy of the government of [the] country on whose behalf" much was being expended. Plimsoll reminded Rhee UNCURK was established by the UN as "its principal representative" in Korea with the "full consent" of the ROK. UNCURK's task to facilitate a "stable and democratic government" in Korea had the "full support" of the UN Secretary General and the "nations whose forces are fighting" alongside those of the ROK.<sup>69</sup>



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While it was up to the South Koreans to resolve their “political differences”, Plimsoll told Rhee UNCURK “reaffirms its readiness” to extend “its good offices to you or any other constitutional authority” in the ROK “in helping them to find a solution” to the crisis. Plimsoll said UNCURK hoped the “various representatives” of the Korean people would “find some compromise which, while not completely satisfying [the] desires of either” Rhee or his opponents, could “provide a basis for national unity during [the] present hostilities.” Any possibility of a resolution would evaporate if Rhee dissolved the Assembly or the Assembly elected a new president. Plimsoll suggested South Korean political leaders agree to a ten day political truce to work on a compromise agreement. UNCURK proposed that Rhee end martial law in Pusan, free the detained Assemblymen and cease the harassment of the Assembly and, in turn, the Assembly would adjourn for the ten days. Plimsoll told Rhee UNCURK could mediate between him and the Assembly, saying “it would be deplorable if Koreans were unable to settle their differences in a constitutional way.” Plimsoll hoped an “agreement” could be “achieved” and South Koreans could “continue to work together for the defence and reconstruction of their country.”<sup>70</sup>

On June 9, UNCURK again urged Rhee to lift martial law and release the detained Assemblymen. Muccio informed Acheson that Plimsoll had reported Rhee was not interested in compromising with the Assembly. Rhee was determined to force the Assembly to accept the popular election of the president. Rhee told Plimsoll the Assembly was “coming around and would finally agree to his amendments.” His Assembly opponents had been “relying” on Muccio returning with a message from Truman promising US support for their cause but “they now knew no immediate help was coming”. Rhee told Plimsoll he was reluctant to formally reply to UNCURK's

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requests because he “would have to say things embarrassing to foreigners, including” UNCURK, Truman and Muccio. Plimsoll surmised Rhee would counter any move by the UN/US to support the Assembly with claims of “undue interference” in ROK domestic politics and “harboring his enemies.”<sup>71</sup>

Rhee told Plimsoll that since Japan occupied Korea in 1910, “internal political conflict” had “always” occurred and it was unnecessary to “get excited now” as he would handle the situation “if ... only” the UN/US would “trust him.” Plimsoll told Muccio that Rhee again argued he had imposed martial law and arrested Assemblymen to thwart a Communist conspiracy. Rhee insisted the Communists, “having failed” to achieve their goals at Panmunjom, were now attempting to destabilise the ROK. Asked by Plimsoll why he had not asked for UNC “assistance in investigating” the “alleged Communist plot”, Rhee evasively said it was his “intention to request” the “assistance of two investigators.” Muccio disputed Rhee’s claim his opponents in the Assembly “would be willing [to] compromise or capitulate.” Muccio sought to determine Rhee’s intentions and reasoned “Rhee might talk more frankly with Plimsoll alone”. The Americans relied on Plimsoll’s negotiating skills in dealing with Rhee. <sup>72</sup>

On June 10, Acheson told Muccio that Plimsoll’s June 7 letter to Rhee was “constructive and practical”. Acheson authorised Muccio to inform UNCURK, Rhee, and the ROK Assembly leaders that the Truman Administration supported Plimsoll’s efforts and hoped the executive and legislative political leaders of South Korea would accept UNCURK mediation. Acheson hoped UNCURK would facilitate “genuine efforts at reconciliation” between Rhee and his opponents. Acheson’s confidence in

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Plimsoll reflected his standing among the Americans and his capacity to exert some influence on Rhee.<sup>73</sup>

Despite working for a negotiated resolution, Plimsoll was convinced Rhee's removal was essential for the survival of South Korean democracy. Collaborating with Muccio, Plimsoll sustained the diplomatic pressure on Rhee to compromise with his opponents. Plimsoll's stance had a detrimental effect on his previously strong rapport with Rhee. Nevertheless, Acheson and Muccio continued to seek Plimsoll's counsel. Indeed, as the crisis unfolded, Plimsoll continued to play an integral part in the American effort to resolve the crisis. All the while Plimsoll's presence and reputation helped solidify the new US-Australian alliance.

American support for Plimsoll's June 7 mediation offer to resolve the crisis provoked yet another confrontation between Muccio and Rhee on June 12. Muccio said this was the "most futile hour" he had "ever spent" with Rhee. Muccio reported US backing of Plimsoll triggered "one of the most irrational explosions" he "ever had to endure" from Rhee, who retorted the US was "been too drastic and did not understand his noble purposes". Rhee accused UNCURK of "interference" in ROK domestic politics and of leaking confidential details to the press, and "fervently" repeated his claim of a "plot to take over" the ROK government and "make a deal with the Communists." Muccio told Acheson that Rhee "was so completely irrational", it was "impossible" to articulate "his wanderings."<sup>74</sup>

Muccio concluded the US could not "expect effective leadership" from Rhee who made "vague references" about no longer wanting to be President and who was

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“absolutely convinced of a plot against him and Korea.” Muccio informed Acheson he felt “strongly” Yi Pom Sok, the ROK home affairs minister, and his supporters, including General Won, the martial law commander, had “practically taken Rhee over completely.” The “main immediate problem” for the US was to “thwart” Yi Pom Sok’s “group from taking over.” Muccio informed Acheson he was “keeping in very close touch” with Plimsoll and Van Fleet and they were all “still doing everything possible to impress upon” the South Koreans the necessity for a “satisfactory solution” to the impasse.<sup>75</sup>

Muccio told Acheson although UN/US military operations were not currently affected, they could be “very seriously undermined” if the crisis continued to deteriorate. Rhee had no intention of revoking martial law and allowing the Assembly to meet without harassment. Instead, Rhee signalled there would be more arrests and spoke of the “necessity” to “clean-up” the Assembly “before even considering” any “compromise amendment” to the ROK Constitution. Muccio reported that Rhee ignored Truman’s appeal to calm the situation. Instead, Rhee’s “goon squads” continued to intimidate any suspected opponents and pro government “demonstrations” had again started, increasing the risk of “serious incidents”. Muccio said that “despite ceaseless pressure from foreign governments and [the] foreign press”, Rhee was determined to secure the constitutional amendments he sought and totally vanquish his opposition. Muccio advised it was “urgent” that Plimsoll and Clark meet to discuss the response by UNCURK and the UNC if the “public disorders” lead to “bloodshed” in Pusan. Muccio also suggested he, Clark and Van Fleet jointly appeal to Rhee to diffuse the tensions, and that he meet with both generals and Plimsoll to consider this.<sup>76</sup>

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As tensions escalated, Plimsoll remained at the forefront of American contingencies to resolve the crisis through either mediation or intervention. Plimsoll's mediation efforts secured US support but alienated him from Rhee. Nevertheless, Plimsoll and Muccio continued to work for a compromise despite wanting Rhee removed. Indeed, Muccio advised that Plimsoll and Clark prepare for a possible intervention.

On June 16, Muccio requested a meeting with Clark, Van Fleet and Plimsoll to countenance possible responses should the US “ precipitously be forced to go beyond [the] diplomatic phase” in the crisis. Muccio believed the situation in the ROK was deteriorating and wanted Clark and Van Fleet to appeal to Rhee to diffuse the crisis. Given their rapport with Rhee, Muccio thought the two generals were more likely than Plimsoll or himself to persuade him to lift martial law and free the detained Assemblymen by convincing Rhee his actions threatened to harm the UN/US war effort and jeopardise international support for South Korea. Acknowledging the “validity” of Clark's and Van Fleet's opposition to UNC intervention, Muccio nevertheless emphasised Rhee must have no doubts about the unity of UN/US opposition to his actions.<sup>77</sup> Muccio wanted Rhee removed and urged the Truman Administration to have contingency plans in place ready for a UN/US intervention should the crisis escalate. The US, said Muccio, should carefully monitor “anyone who is apt to come to the fore in any upheaval” as the “calibre of leadership that emerges is of [the] utmost importance.”<sup>78</sup>

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The caution of State and Defense Department officials and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) throughout the crisis reflected their reluctance to intervene. Nevertheless, they discussed and planned for possible intervention in South Korea. Muccio advised his superiors of the need to keep UNCURK involved in the diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. On June 23, Muccio told Robert Murphy, US Ambassador to Japan, that intervention needed UN approval and UNCURK “must be brought into the picture.”<sup>79</sup> The JCS indeed factored UNCURK’s involvement into their planning but were cautious about how much information should be disclosed.<sup>80</sup>

On June 25, the State Department and JCS ordered Clark to “prepare a plan” for UNC intervention. Codenamed Operation Everready, the plan “included the arrest” of Rhee. Casey, knowing the US was contemplating intervention, spoke about considering “action which might be taken” if Rhee’s “behaviour caused turmoil” and “impeded” UN/US operations. However, Australia “did not press the issue further.”<sup>81</sup> Despite planning for this contingency, Washington, Clark, Van Fleet and Canberra remained reluctant to intervene.<sup>82</sup> The JCS told Clark the State and Defense Departments believed the “premature disclosure” of the “existence” of a plan for intervention in the ROK “could be extremely embarrassing” to the US Government and “therefore, UNCURK participation in your planning should be to [the] extent to which you mutually [with Muccio and Van Fleet] determine to be necessary.”<sup>83</sup>

Two days later, on June 27, Laurence McIntyre, Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, explained the Department’s view of the crisis to Plimsoll. It is worth quoting at length because it encapsulates the concerns of Canberra and Washington about intervention:

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You may feel that you have not had very much positive support from us on the line to be taken with Syngman Rhee. I sense ... you feel that something decisive ought to be done to get rid of Rhee and preserve democracy. Needless to say, we agree with you in spirit, but we are somewhat hesitant about supporting anything in the nature of drastic action. Open intervention in South Korean politics by UNCURK and the UN Command ... might have unpredictable consequences on Asian and world opinion and might saddle us with responsibilities that could later embarrass us. Accordingly, we have rather sympathised with Clark's reluctance to intervene in any way unless the military operations should be prejudiced—though we have been all in favour of his bringing all possible pressure to bear on Rhee short of direct military intervention.... One thing that we have had very much in mind is that if we get rid of Rhee we have got to put something in his place, and a satisfactory replacement, in addition to finding himself labelled as a United Nations stooge, might need a lot of propping up. And ... is it going to be too disastrous if Rhee's illegal and arbitrary methods succeed in maintaining him in office? We have ... been hoping that some compromise could be worked out for amending the Constitution legally, even if it opens the way for Rhee's re-election.<sup>84</sup>

### **US wants Plimsoll and UNCURK to remain in Korea**

Rhee's intransigence caused growing disillusionment among UNCURK members and sparked US concerns the Commission would withdraw from Korea. The Truman Administration was determined to prevent this happening. It wanted UNCURK to maintain its stabilising influence.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, UNCURK symbolised

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that the defence of South Korea was an international rather than solely American undertaking. The Truman Administration was also adamant that Plimsoll remain on UNCURK, arguing he was essential to its effectiveness.<sup>86</sup> This demonstrated just how much the US valued and relied on Plimsoll's advice.

As the Truman Administration moved to solidify its final position on its willingness to let Rhee have his way, US officials issued statements in support of UNCURK and its efforts at affecting a compromise. Acheson notified American Embassies in UNCURK member countries that the State Department was "gravely concerned" Commission representatives were "considering ... withdrawing from Korea" because their "position [was] untenable". The Truman Administration believed UNCURK was playing a crucial role and was determined to ensure it remained engaged in Korea. Acheson told the Embassies "every possible effort" needed to be made to "encourage" UNCURK to "remain" in Korea. Acheson urged his diplomats to "discuss [the] situation with Plimsoll and other members" of UNCURK at their "discretion indicating" the State Department's "great satisfaction" with the Commission's "functioning" in the ROK political crisis, and its "strong hope" UNCURK would "continue" its "vital role" in Korea. American Embassy officials were urged to emphasise that as events could "evolve to ameliorate [the] situation", the US Embassy and UNC would "need UNCURK's presence" in Pusan.<sup>87</sup> From Pusan, Muccio too argued UNCURK had a crucial role to play in resolving the crisis and the aftermath.<sup>88</sup>

The June 24 discussion on UNCURK's role between John Hickerson, US Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, and Jacobus De Beus, the Dutch Minister



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Plenipotentiary in Washington, clearly indicates the Americans valued Plimsoll's and the Commission's contribution in the political crisis. Hickerson and De Beus concurred that if the Commission withdrew from Korea, Rhee "would be freed from the restraint which UNCURK has hitherto imposed, it would be a definite loss of prestige" for the UN, and it "would be impossible for UNCURK to take any further remedial action." Both agreed "direct intervention" in South Korea would weaken the UN/US military position and undermine the political strength of the UN. They concurred that although the crisis could not be resolved by foreigners, UNCURK "should stay" in Korea and "continue to be the mitigating influence which it has already proved itself to be."<sup>89</sup>

Hickerson informed De Beus that Selwyn Lloyd, the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, had recently met with UNCURK officials in Korea, and praised their efforts especially the contributions of Plimsoll and Gerald Van Ittersum, the Dutch representative. Hickerson told De Beus that Lloyd thought UNCURK "has been very effective" in curbing Rhee in the crisis, and that "it is imperative" the Commission "stay to continue to exercise what influence it can." The Americans were especially determined that Plimsoll remained in Korea. Hickerson told De Beus US concerns about the quality of UNCURK representatives were "intensified" as the Australians intended to reassign Plimsoll to another post in "about the middle of July." Although the Americans had asked the Australians to leave Plimsoll in Korea, Canberra was insistent on redeploying him and despite assurances his replacement would be of the "same calibre", External Affairs were "having difficulty finding such a person."<sup>90</sup>

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On June 25, Muccio and Van Ittersum, who would succeed Plimsoll as UNCURK chairman in July 1952, “emphasized” it was essential the US Embassy, the UNC and UNCURK maintain unity to counter Rhee’s intransigence. Van Ittersum told Muccio he and some other UNCURK members had concluded the Commission’s role was “becoming untenable since its strong representations” to Rhee “had been brushed aside.” Van Ittersum also said the reluctance of the US/UN to intervene directly in the crisis and enforce its demands on Rhee, was eroding UNCURK’s authority to function. Muccio told Van Ittersum “the game was not up” and the Truman Administration was still intent on “urging” Rhee and his opponents to “reconcile their differences.” Muccio reminded Van Ittersum of the UN/US effort in Korea and that Generals Clark and Van Fleet “were giving serious attention” to the crisis. Muccio informed Acheson that, in contrast to Van Ittersum, Plimsoll argued vigorously that UNCURK must remain in Korea. Despite the misgivings of Van Ittersum, Muccio told Acheson there was “no serious consideration” regarding the “withdrawal of UNCURK” from Korea “at this time.”<sup>91</sup>

Although Muccio wanted Rhee removed, he acknowledged the gravity of power in South Korean domestic politics. On June 28, Muccio advised the State Department there was a “good possibility” Rhee would triumph “without having to resort to or being faced with measures or situations which would invite UN intervention.” Muccio said the US needed to consider the challenge of dealing with the continuation of Rhee’s authoritarian and corrupt regime.<sup>92</sup> However, despite the likelihood Rhee would remain in power, Muccio was still considering the nature of a UN/US intervention if the situation deteriorated. On June 30, Muccio informed Johnson he and Plimsoll agreed that although the UNC “would have to take the

responsibility” if the UN/US intervened in the ROK, it needed to “act through” the ROK Army Chief of Staff or the ROK Chiefs of Staff and “preserve as much of the ROK governmental administrative structure as possible.” Muccio and Plimsoll cautioned against a “dangerous and unnecessary” UN/US occupation and military government in South Korea.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the urgings of Muccio, Lightner and Plimsoll, the Truman Administration remained reluctant to intervene in the political crisis. Generals Clark and Van Fleet concurred with the political, security, logistical and military reasons against intervention. Rhee's premise that the US would not intervene in the crisis proved correct and gave him an insurmountable advantage over his opponents. Conversely, Rhee's opponents were dependent on American intervention to thwart his move to amend the ROK Constitution and entrench himself in power. Without US intervention, Rhee's opposition had no option but to acquiesce to his demands. Plimsoll later reflected that Rhee was “not indispensable, but an alternative leader was unlikely to emerge until after Rhee had disappeared from the scene.”<sup>94</sup>

On July 2, Rhee announced ROK Assemblymen who did not attend the special session he had called to pass his constitutional amendments would be “guided and escorted” to the legislature by the police. The Assemblymen were indeed “rounded up” and held for two nights. Under threat of coercion and intimidation by Rhee's security forces and supporters, the National Assembly met on July 3 and the following day agreed to Rhee's demands to amend the ROK Constitution to allow for the popular election of the President and Vice President, a bicameral legislature, and limited cabinet responsibility, 163 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions. The legislation

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allowing for these constitutional changes was passed by the National Assembly on July 15 and the presidential election date was set for August 5. His objective achieved, Rhee ended the political trials against some of the previously detained Assemblymen.<sup>95</sup>

Rhee's manoeuvre extinguished any possibility of UN/US intervention. Operation Everready was never activated.<sup>96</sup> On July 5, Clark advised the JCS that following the passage of the constitutional amendments, he expected the "political situation" in the ROK would "shortly return to normal" but he was "prepared for any eventuality".<sup>97</sup> The Truman Administration, having maintained a cautious stance throughout the duration of the crisis, welcomed its resolution. John Allison, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, told Acheson the National Assembly's acceptance of the constitutional amendments meant "the Korean internal crisis appears to have resolved itself, at least for the time being." Allison said the constitutional agreement seemed "to be a sensible and, from our standpoint, acceptable solution to the crisis."<sup>98</sup> The resolution of the crisis was a triumph for Rhee. A week after the passage of the constitutional amendments, Muccio wrote: "Rhee still holds most of [the] cards, and can play them any way he sees fit."<sup>99</sup>

The US Embassy and UNCURK now focussed on observing the forthcoming presidential election. Muccio continued to work closely with Plimsoll and Van Ittersum who was now UNCURK Chairman. On July 18, Muccio told Acheson the US Embassy and UNCURK were "most interested [in] observing [the] manner in which [the] forthcoming election" would be "carried out." Muccio reasoned that because Rhee was now contesting a "popular election ... which will unquestionably

return him to power”, the necessity to mobilise his security forces and political machine “to swing” the election “will not exist as far as [the] election of [the] President is concerned.” However, Muccio cautioned it was “too early to know whether Rhee’s political police apparatus will go into high gear to assure [the] election of [his] favoured vice presidential candidate.”<sup>100</sup>

Muccio informed Acheson discussions with Plimsoll and Van Ittersum, indicated UNCURK “expects to be officially invited [to] observe [the] elections” but faced a number of obstacles, notably a limited number of personnel, the “difficulty [of] obtaining qualified interpreters” and a “disinclination [by] Koreans with grievances” to speak out “or let names be used”. Nevertheless, Muccio was confident UNCURK would successfully discharge its duties, and was buoyed that “both Van Ittersum and Plimsoll [were] expected [to] remain [in] Korea until after [the] elections.”<sup>101</sup>

The political atmosphere in South Korea remained tense. Although Rhee had secured his constitutional amendments, Muccio observed that he “has made no obvious gesture or genuine effort at rapprochement with [the] opposition nor has he taken additional steps to crack down on [the] opposition.” Muccio told Acheson that “positive action” by Rhee following his July 5 statement “promising to let bygones be bygones would definitely ease [the] political tension.” Indeed, on July 16, Rhee told Plimsoll martial law would be rescinded “in due course.”<sup>102</sup>

Acheson wanted UNCURK to observe the ROK presidential election but the concerns of Plimsoll and the Commission worried him. On July 28, Acheson told

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Muccio “there should be UNCURK observation” of the election. Acheson authorised Muccio that if he considered it “necessary”, to “suggest [a] joint approach” with a British diplomatic official to Plimsoll and other UNCURK representatives “to assure” the Commission would observe the election. Muccio was further advised that if ROK officials “create any obstacle you should” attempt to “persuade” Rhee that UNCURK must observe the election.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, UNCURK did observe the August 5 presidential election which, as expected, was won by Rhee in a landslide and despite the acrimony caused by the political crisis, took place with relatively few incidents.<sup>104</sup>

The American desire for Plimsoll to remain in the ROK in the aftermath of the election again reflected their high regard for the Australian. Richard Casey, Minister for External Affairs, notified the Americans in June that Plimsoll’s services were “required elsewhere”.<sup>105</sup> Casey wanted to reassign Plimsoll but “not at the cost of antagonising the Americans.” In August, at the first ANZUS Council meeting in Honolulu, Casey spoke personally to Acheson and Allison about Plimsoll. Allison said the US accepted Australia “wanted to send Plimsoll elsewhere, but that they hoped very much we’d replace him with someone adequate.” Acheson said he “preferred that Plimsoll remain with UNCURK.”<sup>106</sup> The Americans and Rhee were in agreement about their regard for Plimsoll. Despite the tension between them during the crisis, Plimsoll and Rhee “continued to treat each other with mutual respect”. Indeed, Rhee said Plimsoll’s “mistakes” during the crisis were due to the “bad company” of the Americans and British “which was far from the truth.”<sup>107</sup> Plimsoll’s “contribution” to UNCURK had “strengthened Australia’s significance as an ally” to the Americans. Plimsoll distinguished himself as UNCURK’s leader and for “his rare

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capacity to influence Rhee. It is not surprising" the US "exerted itself strenuously against his reposting from UNCURK."<sup>108</sup>

In September, Casey actually announced that Plimsoll would be transferred to Jakarta but, as Woodard says, Casey "acceded, reluctantly, to American pressures to keep" Plimsoll in Korea. Washington was determined to have UNCURK continue to maintain an active and visible UN civilian presence in Korea advising Clark and the UN/US. The Americans argued Plimsoll's calibre and stature made his "continued presence" in Korea "essential" to UNCURK's viability.<sup>109</sup> Casey wanted to reassign Plimsoll but did not want UNCURK dissolved because Australia's membership provided Canberra with "direct influence in many aspects of the [Korean] conflict and helped to increase Australia's status in Asian and Pacific Affairs."<sup>110</sup>

Most importantly, UNCURK provided Canberra with direct access to US officials. The Americans, well aware of Canberra's focus on direct contact with their officials, told Casey "no Australian interest would be served 'by causing the termination of UNCURK'".<sup>111</sup> Plimsoll remained in South Korea until December 1952 when after Dwight Eisenhower's visit as President elect, and coinciding with the end of Muccio's tenure as Ambassador to the ROK, he returned to Canberra to serve as assistant secretary of External Affairs.<sup>112</sup> Woodard says although Plimsoll failed to persuade Washington and Canberra to intervene against Rhee in 1952, his "service in Korea has gone down in foreign affairs folk-lore as setting a standard for Australian diplomats."<sup>113</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Plimsoll's central role in the 1952 ROK political crisis reflected the extent of the evolution of the American-Australian relationship since the beginning of their Korean engagement in 1947. Plimsoll played a prominent role in the crisis because of his leadership of UNCURK, his Korean expertise, and his strong rapport with Rhee and the Americans. Plimsoll was highly regarded by the Americans who valued his advice and capacity to exert some influence on Rhee.

Whereas the Americans enlisted Plimsoll to help them diffuse the crisis, Australia regarded his presence as an opportunity to directly engage with the US because Canberra deemed this best served its security interests. The crisis again demonstrated the US and Australia had similar rather than identical interests and that their Korean engagement was significant in the evolution of their relationship and alliance which was much more nuanced than commonly perceived.

While this crisis frustrated the Truman Administration, it was also a catalyst for the continuing evolution of the US-Australian relationship and alliance. Plimsoll's expertise and approach endeared him to the Americans. Although representing Australia and UNCURK, Plimsoll was in essence conducting diplomacy for the US. He was indeed, America's Australian diplomat. Plimsoll's prominence in the crisis enhanced American goodwill towards Australia and sustained Australia's visibility in Washington. Plimsoll's presence also gave Canberra direct access to US thinking throughout the crisis. All this augured well for the new US-Australian alliance.



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Plimsoll's intricate involvement in the American response to the crisis reflected the US reliance on his expertise and counsel. The US rejection of Plimsoll's advice to remove Rhee did not affect his standing with the Americans. Indeed, Plimsoll's conduct throughout the crisis enhanced his reputation among the Americans. Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio collaborated closely, advising Acheson to sanction UN/US intervention to remove Rhee, while simultaneously endeavouring to find a compromise to the crisis. However, Acheson, Clark and Van Fleet who opposed intervention, also sought Plimsoll's advice on fostering a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Indeed, Acheson regarded Plimsoll's involvement as essential to the facilitation of a negotiated resolution.

The American regard for Plimsoll was further evident as the crisis neared its end and in the aftermath. Disillusioned with Rhee's intransigence, most UNCURK members saw their position as untenable and wanted to leave Korea. Plimsoll and the US argued UNCURK needed to remain and continue fostering the stabilisation of South Korea. Just how much the US relied on Plimsoll was perhaps best illustrated by the American pressure on Casey to keep him in Korea in the aftermath of the crisis. The Americans regarded Plimsoll's presence as crucial to UNCURK's effectiveness.

The contrast between the American regard for Plimsoll's expertise during the 1952 ROK political crisis and the tensions and mistrust between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs during the 1948 South Korean election, analysed in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis, shows the impact of personal relationships in shaping the evolution of the American-Australian diplomatic relationship during those years. In 1948, US officials would never have countenanced involving Jackson in their policy making,

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whereas in 1952, the Americans regarded Plimsoll's participation as crucial to the resolution of the crisis.

The collaboration between Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio throughout this crisis which erupted soon after ANZUS came into effect, helped lay the foundation for the practical functioning of the new US-Australian alliance. Plimsoll's contribution was again indicative of the significance of the personal connections forged by American and Australian officials in the evolution of the US-Australian relationship from the beginning of their Korean engagement. One of the defining features and strengths of the US-Australian alliance since the activation of ANZUS has been the collaboration, connections and friendships between US and Australian officials. Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio were pioneers of this *modus operandi* in US-Australian diplomacy. Their collaboration can be seen as a reflection of the extent of the evolution of the American-Australian relationship since the beginning of their Korean engagement and an indication that the new alliance would continue to grow deeper and stronger.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The members of UNCURK were Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> John J. Muccio was the first US Ambassador to South Korea, 1949-1952. For more biographical information on Muccio see, Rodney J. Ross, "Muccio, John J.", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Korean War: A Political, Social and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 461-62.

Edwin Allan Lightner was assigned to the US Embassy in Pusan as a counsellor in March 1951. He became involved in the 1952 ROK political crisis because he was Charge d'Affaires during May-June 1952 in the absence of Muccio. For more biographical information on Lightner, see Spencer Tucker, "Lightner, Edwin Allan Jr.", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*, pp 385-86.

<sup>3</sup> The literature on Plimsoll and the 1952 South Korean political crisis is rather threadbare. The two most detailed published accounts of the political crisis are the UNCURK report written by Plimsoll and the selected Department of State documents in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. See UN, Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, General Assembly Official Records: Seventh Session, Supplement No. 14 (A/2187) New York, 1952, and *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS) 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1 (United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1984), Section II: May 1-July 14, 1952: The South Korean Political Crisis and Third Party Approaches to End the War, pp 187-408.

Plimsoll had a distinguished diplomatic career, yet Jeremy Header, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll* (Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat, 2015) is the only thorough study of his life. A good biographical sketch of Plimsoll's career is Priscilla Roberts, "Plimsoll, James", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, pp 520-21.

There is no analysis of Plimsoll's collaboration with US officials during the ROK political crisis. Some aspects of Plimsoll's Korean diplomacy representing Australia and UNCURK at the UN and in Korea have been analysed by Header, O'Neill and Woodard.

Header recognises Plimsoll's diplomatic collaboration with the Americans but does not explain its significance in strengthening of the new US-Australian alliance.

O'Neill refers to Plimsoll's diplomatic efforts to illustrate his argument that Australia made influential contributions to UN/US diplomacy during the Korean War. See Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Ch 21.

Plimsoll's relationship with Rhee is central to Woodard's analysis of the Australian diplomat's mediation throughout the crisis. Woodard argues Plimsoll's recommendation to remove Rhee from office if he did not abide by the ROK constitution, release political prisoners and allow a free election, demonstrated his willingness to propose options contravening Australian and US government policy. See Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 56, 3, 2002, pp 473-486.

Keefer argues the Truman Administration's non intervention in the crisis signified a US failure to defend South Korea's fledgling democracy. See Edward C. Keefer, "The Truman Administration and the South Korean Political Crisis of 1952: Democracy's Failure?", *Pacific Historical Review*, 60, 2, 1991, pp 145-168.

Jong's analysis of the internal ROK political dynamics during the crisis argues Rhee's survival can be attributed to the absence of a real ROK leadership alternative acceptable to the US. See Jong Yil Ra, "Political Crisis in Korea, 1952: The Administration, Legislature, Military and Foreign Powers", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27, 2, 1992, pp 301-318.

Keefer and Jong only provide fleeting references to Plimsoll, but along with Header, O'Neill and Woodard, do not analyse the significance of Plimsoll's collaboration with Muccio and Lightner. By focussing on Plimsoll's collaboration with US officials, this chapter links the analysis of these authors. Header recognises Plimsoll's collaboration with the Americans but does not explain its importance to the evolving US-Australian relationship. O'Neill and Woodard refer to Plimsoll's interactions with Rhee but provide no analysis of his diplomatic efforts in collaboration with US officials. Keefer and Jong only make passing references to Plimsoll in their respective evaluations of US-ROK diplomacy during the crisis.

<sup>4</sup> Priscilla Roberts, "Plimsoll, James", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, p 520.

<sup>5</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 478.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis and Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, Chapters 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, Chapters 2-3. See also Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 56, 3, 2002, pp 473-75.

<sup>8</sup> See Donald W. Boose, Jr., "United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, pp 681-83.

<sup>9</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 474.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 73.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 72.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, pp 64-67 and 70-71.

<sup>13</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 477.

<sup>14</sup> Donald W. Boose, Jr., "United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, p 682.

<sup>15</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", pp 473 and 478.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 75.

<sup>17</sup> Rhee had a deep knowledge of the US and Americans and was the first Korean to obtain a PhD from an American university, graduating from Princeton University in 1910. Rhee was forced from office in 1960 when mass demonstrations against his authoritarian rule and US pressure to resign left him with no alternative. For an outline of Rhee's biography, see Priscilla Roberts, "Syngman Rhee", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, pp 624-628. Robert T. Oliver, Rhee's friend and adviser, provides a sympathetic portrait of Rhee in *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (Dodd, Mead, New York, 1955) and *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960: A Personal Narrative* (Panmun Books, Seoul, 1978). For critical appraisals of Rhee, see Richard Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee: An Unauthorized Portrait* (Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, VT, 1960), Stephen Jin-Woo Kim, *Master of Manipulation: Syngman Rhee and the Seoul-Washington Alliance, 1953-1960* (Yonsei University Press, Seoul, 2001), Chang Jin Park, "The Influence of Small States upon the Superpowers: United States-South Korean Relations as a Case Study, 1950-53", *World Politics*, 28, 1, 1975, pp 97-117 and Barton J. Bernstein, "Syngman Rhee: The Pawn as Rook: The Struggle to End the Korean War", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 10, 1, 1978, pp 38-47. Perhaps surprisingly, given his prominent role in the crisis, General Mark Clark did not write about the 1952 ROK political crisis in his memoir. However, Clark did say that "although I respected Syngman Rhee ... and although personally I liked the man, I still found him as exasperating an ally as anyone could have." See Mark Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu* (Harrap, London, 1954) pp 139-140.

<sup>18</sup> Under the 1948 ROK Constitution, the President was elected by the National Assembly for a four year term. The first ROK National Assembly was also elected in 1948 for a two year term. In 1950, the National Assembly was elected for a four year term. As well as seeking to have the President popularly elected, Rhee also wanted a bicameral legislature. The National Assembly would serve out its term until 1954 and be replaced by a House of Representatives (lower house) and a House of Councillors (upper house). Rhee wanted some of the members of the upper house to be appointed by the ROK government.

<sup>19</sup> The details of this account of the 1952 South Korean political crisis are from Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "Special Korean Briefing", June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, Harry S Truman Library (hereafter HSTL), Independence Missouri: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952.

<sup>20</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "Special Korean Briefing", June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952.

<sup>21</sup> Rhee disingenuously said he "had no particular desire to continue as President" yet argued the "only way" to ensure the "people's will was followed" was to allow direct presidential elections and the creation of a bicameral legislature and these reforms depended on him remaining President. He said

these were “objectives he simply had to accomplish before leaving office”. Aware the US was primarily concerned with the stability of the ROK, Rhee brazenly told Muccio he must also continue as President because the multiple factions in South Korean politics were united in opposition to him and if he left office, that unity would disintegrate and the ensuing struggle between them “would be disastrous for ... Korean unity.” See Memorandum of Conversation by the Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) Pusan, May 23, 1952, *FRUS* 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1 (United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1984) pp 229-30.

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by the Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) Pusan, May 23, 1952, *FRUS* 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 230-31.

<sup>23</sup> Simultaneously, the ROK press was placed under severe censorship. The ROK constitution stipulated the president had the authority to impose martial law only when the Assembly was not in session but that the Assembly needed to be recalled as soon as practicable after such an event. Furthermore, the Assembly had the constitutional authority to rescind martial law and the president had to acquiesce to any such request by the Assembly. Believing Rhee was determined to prevent the Assembly acquiring the necessary quorum it needed to end martial law, the US Embassy concluded the “imposition of martial law was a political maneuver to provide an excuse for extralegal action by Rhee.” When the Assembly first met following Rhee’s imposition of martial law, it postponed voting on this issue but subsequently voted to request that Rhee retract his order. Rhee completely ignored the Assembly and martial law remained in place. See Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Special Korean Briefing”, June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952, and Editorial Note, *FRUS* 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 242. The quotation is from the latter.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 252 and Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Special Korean Briefing”, June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952. See also Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, pp 75-76 and Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 302.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 252.

<sup>26</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 253.

<sup>27</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Special Korean Briefing”, June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952. See also Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 253.

<sup>28</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 253.

Rhee again said he “was the champion of democracy” in South Korea. Lightner warned Rhee using force against the ROK National Assembly could have “repercussions” for “future economic and military aid” to South Korea but an irate Rhee retorted that “gangsters” controlled the ROK Assembly and he did not need to depend on the police or army because “he had the people with him”. Rhee told Lightner and Van Fleet “he would proceed with his just purposes regardless of outside pressures.” In two months, Rhee said, the “situation would be well in hand” and “order would be restored”. This meeting ended when Lightner infuriated Rhee by asking him if in two months South Korea would have a “democratic government”. Rhee, “with considerable vehemence”, said indeed the ROK Assembly would be democratic and chillingly remarked the “principal traitors” in the Assembly “would all be arrested and put out of the way” following “fair trials open to the public”. See Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 254-55.

<sup>29</sup> Lightner assessed Rhee was “sincerely convinced” only he could thwart his opponents who were “rascals” and that South Korea’s “welfare” was synonymous with his “perpetuation” in power. See Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 255.

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<sup>30</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 27, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 256.

<sup>31</sup> Emphasising the stark contrast between the only two real options for the US, Lightner said the US could maintain its “traditional non-intervention policy” and allow Rhee to succeed and confine its response to a “diplomatic protest”. However, Lightner advised issuing an “ultimatum demanding [the] immediate ... release” of the apprehended Assemblymen, allowing the Assembly to meet safely and guaranteeing “Assemblymen and their families” would be “protected from future arrest” and “mob violence”, warning Rhee he had twenty-four hours to accept these demands or UN/US forces would take “necessary protective action” including the “possible removal of Assemblymen to safe areas.” See Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 28, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 264.

<sup>32</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 28, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 264.

<sup>33</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Special Korean Briefing”, June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952.

<sup>34</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Special Korean Briefing”, June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952.

<sup>35</sup> Telegram, Department of State to US Embassy in Pusan, May 29, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 265.

Lightner notified Rhee the US supported UNCURK’s recommendations that “democratic guarantees” and “constitutional ... government” needed to be maintained. Rhee was told the US fully concurred with UNCURK’s wishes for the lifting of martial law, the release of the arrested Assemblymen, and allowing the National Assembly to “function” unobstructed. However, Rhee refused to acquiesce and was irritated by the pressure from Lightner and UNCURK. Rhee’s response to Lightner’s request to explain his claim that martial law “would be lifted shortly”, was that it “might be two minutes or two months”. When Lightner reiterated the Truman Administration’s concern that Rhee’s actions “threatened ... constitutional government” in South Korea, Rhee repeated that he was acting according to the “will of [the] people”. Rhee attempted to argue he was protecting South Korean democracy from the threat posed by Communists and traitors but Lightner noted the “coincidence” that the arrested Assemblymen accused of being traitors were also Rhee’s political opponents “was too much to believe.” Lightner reported Rhee “waxed wroth at this point” accusing the US and UNCURK of “interfering” in the ROK’s “internal affairs” and “supporting his enemies.” Lightner said the US favoured no “particular political group or individual” and warned Rhee the “principle of non-intervention” might have to be “weighed against” the “principle of protecting constitutional government and human rights.” Lightner reminded Rhee of the UN/US support for the ROK since its inception. Rhee reverted to his standard defence that he sought to “promote democracy and human rights”. Lightner retorted that UNCURK had shown some Assemblymen had been “arrested for ... voting against” Rhee’s “proposed constitutional amendments” not because they were Communists and traitors. Rhee dismissed UNCURK’s findings saying the South Korean situation was “an internal problem” and warned against any interference from the “outside world”. See Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 30, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 266-67.

<sup>36</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Department of State, May 30, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 268-69.

<sup>37</sup> Telegram, Department of State to Lightner, May 30, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 269.

<sup>38</sup> Telegram, Department of State to Lightner, May 30, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 269-70.

<sup>39</sup> Memorandum, “The Issues Requiring Decision in the Korean Internal Political Situation”, Alexis Johnson to Dean Acheson, June, 2, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>40</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 474; Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Ch 21.

<sup>41</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", pp 474 and 481.

<sup>42</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, pp 76-77.

<sup>43</sup> The Chairmanship of UNCURK was rotated on a monthly basis among each of its seven member nations.

<sup>44</sup> Lightner concurred with General Clark that "martial law should not be imposed until combat operations" or the "social and economic situation of Korea is adversely affected which in turn adversely affects military operations." Lightner also accepted the difficulty of determining precisely when "one or both of these conditions exists" and cautioned against any "precipitate action" that could "jeopardize the military situation" of the UN/US. Lightner was concerned that should intervention become necessary, the requirement to obtain the agreement of the other UN members with forces in Korea would not "cause dangerous delay." See Department of State Telegram, Lightner to Acheson, June 1, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>45</sup> Department of State Telegram, Lightner to Acheson, June 1, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>46</sup> Department of State Telegram, Lightner to Acheson, June 1, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952]. Lightner's view contrasted with General Clark who argued that until the ROK political crisis deteriorated to the "point where our military operations in Korea may be jeopardized, ... negotiations and pressure upon" Rhee to "desist from his high-handed procedures should be handled through diplomatic channels, specifically by UNCURK and the [US] Embassy in Pusan, supported" by the UNC. Clark thought that while the "difficulties remain largely political, political channels should direct our efforts to bring normalcy to the situation." Lightner wanted Rhee removed and was concerned with the diplomatic repercussions of the ROK President's actions whereas Clark had to consider both the diplomatic and military implications of UNC intervention in South Korea. As CINCUNC, Clark was concerned he did not have enough forces to maintain the frontlines in the Korean War, deal with the Communist POW insurrection on Koje-Do, and handle security and policing in the ROK. See Telegram, CINCUNC (Clark) to the Chief of Staff, US Army (Collins), May 31, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 274-76. The quotations are on p 276.

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum, "The Issues Requiring Decision in the Korean Internal Political Situation", Alexis Johnson to Dean Acheson, June, 2, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>48</sup> Memorandum, "The Issues Requiring Decision in the Korean Internal Political Situation", Alexis Johnson to Dean Acheson, June, 2, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>49</sup> Johnson now conveyed to Acheson, Lightner's view that diplomatic overtures would not work with Rhee and that "action" needed to be taken against him before it was "too late" and Rhee had achieved his goal. Lightner proposed that an ultimatum be made to Rhee "to release the arrested Assemblymen, guarantee the functioning of the National Assembly, and assure the protection of the Assemblymen and their families." This would be accompanied "with a warning" that the UN/US "would assume responsibility for the protection" of the National Assembly if the ultimatum went "unheeded." Lightner was "advocating" immediate action against Rhee, arguing it would be "less costly than any action that might be unavoidable later". Lightner's dislike of Rhee was palpable and he advised the UN/US could take five steps without imposing martial law. The UN/US could assume control of ROK "police and military establishments" in Pusan, ensure "protection" for the Assemblymen and their families, adopt "measures" allowing the National Assembly the "freedom ... to meet", and secure the "release" of the "arrested Assemblymen." Economic aid could also be withheld "except for direct relief supplies." If necessary, the ROK armed forces would impose martial law "under the direction"

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of Clark. See Memorandum, “The Issues Requiring Decision in the Korean Internal Political Situation”, Alexis Johnson to Dean Acheson, June, 2, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>50</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 303-304.

<sup>51</sup> Memorandum, “The Issues Requiring Decision in the Korean Internal Political Situation”, Alexis Johnson to Dean Acheson, June, 2, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>52</sup> Garry Woodard, “The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952”, p 481.

<sup>53</sup> Telegram, Ernest Gross to Department of State, June 2, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 286-87.

<sup>54</sup> Department of State Telegram, section one of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952]. Fully aware of the sensitivity of this situation for the Truman Administration, Lightner emphatically stated that this telegram was not to be distributed beyond the State Department and that no reference was to be made to “this message in subsequent telegrams.”

<sup>55</sup> Department of State Telegram, sections one and two of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>56</sup> Department of State Telegram, section two of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>57</sup> Department of State Telegram, section two of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>58</sup> Department of State Telegram, section three of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>59</sup> Department of State Telegram, section three of three, Lightner to Acheson, June 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>60</sup> Telegram, Lovett to Clark, June 4, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 301-302. Following consultations in Washington, Truman sent John Muccio, who had been Ambassador since the ROK’s inception in 1948, back to South Korea. The antagonistic relationship between Muccio and Rhee was further aggravated by Muccio’s presentation of Truman’s letter critical of Rhee. Truman was “shocked” at the unfolding events in South Korea, noting it was “difficult” for him to “believe that, at this critical hour in the history of the ROK,” the South Korean government could not resolve its differences in a “manner which will maintain the confidence ... of the US and the free world in Korean leadership and ... democratic institutions.” It would be a “tragic mockery”, Truman said, “of the great sacrifices in blood and treasure” made by “many free nations” and by South Korea “in the past two years” if the ROK was unable to alter its “political structure” in “accordance with due process of law.” Truman told Rhee: “I urge you most strongly to seek acceptable and workable ways to bring this crisis to an end and hope that you will take no irrevocable acts”. See Letter, Truman to Rhee, June 2, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 285-86. The “irrevocable acts” Truman referred to was in response to Rhee’s ultimatum to the ROK National Assembly on June 2 to pass his proposed constitutional changes or he would dissolve the Assembly.

<sup>61</sup> Muccio was authorised to tell Rhee that “only a quick resolution” of the political crisis would “maintain vital support” in the UN for the “Korean operation.” See Telegram, Acheson to Muccio, June 4, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 302-305. The quotations are on pp 302, 303 and 304.



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<sup>62</sup> Telegram, Lightner to Young, June 5, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 305-308. The quotations are on pp 306, 307, 308. In this telegram, p 307, Lightner also told Young that "Rhee can't last many years anyway, and there may be real advantage in having his successor take over now when US/UN influence and personnel are available on the spot to guide him, rather than later when that influence will be less."

This chapter contrasts Lightner's determination to see Rhee removed from power with the cautious approach of the Truman Administration and Generals Clark and Van Fleet. However, Lightner should not be seen as a lone voice attempting to persuade the Truman Administration to discard Rhee. Indeed, the State Department considered the pros and cons of direct US/UN intervention in the ROK political crisis and removing Rhee from power. In these deliberations, the State Department recognised the merits of Lightner's stance, it believed UNCURK was crucial to resolving the crisis, and it understood the US would be intricately linked to whatever happened in the ROK. John Hickerson, US Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, in a memorandum dated June 13 to Freeman Matthews, US Deputy Under Secretary of State, said: "We are convinced that the interests of the United States and of the United Nations require that Rhee be prevented from achieving his goal in violation of the ROK constitution and of democratic processes. The United States was the prime mover in bringing constitutional democracy to Korea. We brought the Korean problem into the United Nations and made Korea, in effect, a ward of the United Nations. When aggression came, we called for United Nations action and have made great sacrifices to safeguard the Republic of Korea. Our association with the ROK is such that whether we take effective action or refrain from taking action we will not escape a major share of the responsibility for what happens." See Memorandum, "Continuing Political Crisis in Korea", Hickerson to Matthews, June 13, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 326-328. The quotation is on pp 326-27. Ken Young, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, weighing up whether or not the US should intervene in the ROK, told John Allison, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs: "The justification for intervention rests on the intimate and unusual relationship among the United States, Republic of Korea and the United Nations since V-J Day. This association has become so interlocked that we cannot disclaim all responsibility for the past or the future of the ROK. We are involved in whatever happens there. We would even be implicated in the establishment of a personal dictatorship, even though we might strongly disapprove of it." See Memorandum, "General Approach and Possible Active Steps to Meet the Korean Internal Political Crisis", Young to Allison, June 13, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 328-337. The quotation is on p 337.

<sup>63</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "Special Korean Briefing", June 6, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3: Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, March 14-November 25, 1952.

<sup>64</sup> Unable to prevail without UN/US intervention, the ROK opposition tactically emphasised their weakness, arguing intervention was necessary to uphold the ROK "constitutional process". Rhee's opponents accepted the UN/US could not directly intervene in South Korean politics by endorsing "particular presidential candidates or taking sides" over the "proposed constitutional amendments." However, Rhee's opposition argued it was "thoroughly justifiable" for the UN/US to intervene to defend ROK constitutional "principles". Rhee's opponents hoped the UN/US would pressure him to rescind martial law, release the arrested Assemblymen and ensure the Assembly could "meet without fear or restriction." Rhee's opposition were adamant there would be no negotiations until these conditions were met. See Department of State Memorandum, section one of two, Muccio to Acheson, June 7, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>65</sup> Muccio said it was critical for ROK democracy that South Korean political leaders "work together" and that "conflicting Korean factions" needed to come together to resolve their differences. Thus far, Muccio noted, neither side was showing a willingness to reach a compromise and each needed to recognise the "calamity that would befall" South Korea if the situation festered. See Department of State Memorandum, section one and two of two, Muccio to Acheson, June 7, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>66</sup> This letter from Plimsoll to Rhee was not released to the press "pending further developments." See Text of UNCURK letter to Rhee June 7, 1952, Department of State Telegram, section one of three,

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Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>67</sup> Text of UNCURK letter to Rhee June 7, 1952, Department of State Telegram, section one of three, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>68</sup> Text of UNCURK letter to Rhee June 7, 1952, Department of State Telegram, section one and two of three, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>69</sup> Text of UNCURK letter to Rhee June 7, 1952, Department of State Telegram, section two of three, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>70</sup> Text of UNCURK letter to Rhee June 7, 1952, Department of State Telegram, section two and three of three, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>71</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>72</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 9, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>73</sup> Department of State Telegram, Acheson to Muccio, June 10, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>74</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 12, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>75</sup> Muccio was wrong in his assessment of Rhee and Yi. Rhee never intended to give up power and remained in total control. Yi was a willing subordinate who, in July 1952, acting under Rhee's orders, illegally coerced the National Assembly into accepting Rhee's demands to amend the ROK Constitution but was made a scapegoat for these illegal actions after the Assembly had acquiesced to Rhee's demands. See Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 12, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

Frustrated and concerned about Rhee's intransigence, Muccio informed Acheson on June 14, the UN/US and UNCURK had been unable to persuade Rhee to rescind martial law, release detained Assemblymen and negotiate with his opponents to resolve the crisis. Muccio reported Rhee had made no effort "towards conciliation or compromise" and his security forces continued to intimidate the National Assembly. Muccio surmised the "basic reason" Rhee ignored the "serious concern(s)" of the UN/US and UNCURK was his belief UN/US forces would not intervene unless the crisis escalated into "open civil war" that threatened the security of UN/US forces and their military operations. Muccio believed Rhee would only initiate steps to diffuse the tensions in Pusan if he was convinced the UNC was equally concerned about the crisis as were US Embassy and UNCURK officials, and that military intervention was a real option. See Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 14, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>76</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 14, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [1 of 2: February-June 14, 1952].

<sup>77</sup> Telegram, Muccio to Clark, June 16, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 338-40. The quotations are on pp 338 and 339.

<sup>78</sup> Telegram, Muccio to Department of State, June 18, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 341-343. The quotations are on p 342.

<sup>79</sup> Muccio also informed Murphy that Rhee had told UNCURK Van Fleet supported the imposition of martial law in Pusan. However, Rhee had also expressed his "misgivings" about the Communist conspiracy he claimed was undermining the ROK government, telling Muccio and Plimsoll "his whole record and reputation depend on this case." See Letter, Muccio to Murphy, June 23, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 349-51. The quotations are on pp 350 and 351.

<sup>80</sup> Telegram, JCS to Clark, June 25, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 358-360.

<sup>81</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 306.

<sup>82</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 482.

<sup>83</sup> Telegram, JCS to Clark, June 25, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 358-360. The quotations are on p 359.

<sup>84</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 306.

<sup>85</sup> On June 20, Alexis Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, informed John Hickerson, US Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, that De Beus, the Dutch Minister Plenipotentiary at the Netherlands Embassy in Washington, told him G.E. Van Ittersum, the Dutch UNCURK representative, and other Commission members, had become "very discouraged" with Rhee ignoring UNCURK's requests, that they intended to recommend to their governments the Commission's withdrawal from Korea. Johnson told Hickerson he had "indicated as forcefully" as he could to De Beus "how disturbed we were over this report and pointed out that UNCURK had thus far and could in the future exercise a most helpful and useful role" and that while "it was not always 100 per cent successful, its role as a moderating influence had undoubtedly been great." Johnson told De Beus the US Government and Generals Clark and Van Fleet "had given and would continue to give UNCURK every possible support", and "most earnestly asked" that the Dutch Government reject the recommendation of their Commission representative to withdraw from Korea. Knowing De Beus would also be meeting with Hickerson and anticipating UNCURK's future would likely be raised, Johnson suggested to Hickerson he address this "as forcefully as possible." See Department of State Memorandum, Confidential Security Information, Johnson to Hickerson, June 20, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>86</sup> Plimsoll was still able to exert some influence on Rhee despite alienating him. Plimsoll's advocacy contributed to the subsequent release of all but twelve of the ROK National Assemblymen who were detained following Rhee's proclamation of martial law in Pusan. The twelve were tried and seven were convicted of involvement in a Communist plot to overthrow the South Korea government. UN/US and UNCURK officials pressured Rhee to allow their representatives to attend the trials of these Assemblymen. On June 18, Acheson told Muccio "attendance" at these trials "should be coordinated" with UNCURK. Acheson instructed Muccio to "suggest" Plimsoll "approach" Rhee to remind him of UNCURK's concerns the detained Assemblymen were being "held in violation" of the ROK Constitution, and their trials "should be" in a civil court, in "public", and "in accordance with previous Rhee promises." If Rhee refused to abide with UNCURK's wishes and his own undertakings and the military trials were "held in secret", UNCURK "could send unofficial observer(s) for [the] purpose of making [an] accurate record [of the] proceedings," and "making clear its disapproval" of the "nature" of the "trial and stressing [the] unofficial character" of its representatives. Regarding attendance by US Embassy officials, Acheson instructed Muccio to follow UNCURK's "example" and suggested he and Van Fleet "associate" themselves "with any statement" UNCURK "may make." See Department of State Telegram, Acheson to Muccio, June 18, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

In late June 1952, Plimsoll persuaded Rhee to commute the death sentence handed down to So Min Ho, one of Rhee's most prominent political opponents. So was one of the twelve National Assemblymen arrested and tried following the imposition of martial law in Pusan on May 24. So and six others were convicted of involvement in a Communist plot to overthrow the ROK Government. After discussions with US, British and French diplomatic officials in Pusan, Plimsoll met with Rhee urging him to commute So's death sentence. The trials of the twelve Assemblymen, Rhee's fabrication of a Communist plot, the convictions given to seven of the Assemblymen, and So's death sentence attracted

widespread criticism among UN/US member states. This enabled Plimsoll to present a united front in urging Rhee to release the detained Assemblymen and commute So's death sentence. In a conciliatory display, the often combative and irascible Rhee told Plimsoll that So "had the right of appeal and that no precipitous action would take place." On July 1, Alexis Johnson surmised with a French diplomat that it was "just possible" Rhee would use So's "conviction for political pressure on his opponents and not actually order the death sentence carried out." See Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "Korean Internal Situation", July 1, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>87</sup> Acheson argued it was most "inopportune" for UNCURK to "consider giving up and withdrawing." This would have the "most adverse impact on support" for UN/US military operations. "Every effort", Acheson said, "should be made to forestall" UNCURK's "withdrawal and to encourage" it to continue playing a "leading ... role" in the crisis. Acheson was concerned UNCURK's withdrawal would "appear as [a] capitulation to Rhee" and "discredit [the] standing" of the UN in Korea and "might break [the] morale" of the ROK Assemblymen and "other political leaders" opposing Rhee. Indeed, the consequences of UNCURK withdrawing "could be most serious." Acheson instructed US Embassy officials to "ascertain" from their host nations "whether they have received any indications of UNCURK intentions" to leave Korea. See Department of State Telegram, Acheson to US Embassies, June 20, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>88</sup> Letter, Muccio to Murphy, June 23, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 349-51.

<sup>89</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, John Hickerson, "UNCURK and the Domestic Political Situation in Korea", June 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>90</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, John Hickerson, "UNCURK and the Domestic Political Situation in Korea", June 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>91</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, June 26, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>92</sup> Telegram, Muccio to Department of State, June 28, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 362-64. The quotations are on pp 362 and 363.

<sup>93</sup> Letter, Muccio to Johnson, June 30, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, p 368.

<sup>94</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 76.

<sup>95</sup> Editorial Note, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 376-77. The quotations are on p 376.

<sup>96</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 306.

<sup>97</sup> Telegram, Clark to JCS, July 5, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 377-79. The quotations are on p 378.

<sup>98</sup> Memorandum, "Recent Developments in Korea", Allison to Acheson, July 9, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 395-98. The quotations are on pp 397 and 398.

<sup>99</sup> Telegram, Muccio to Department of State, July 12, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea, Part 1, pp 402-404. The quotation is on p 404.

<sup>100</sup> Muccio reasoned Rhee's conduct depended on whether Yi Pom Sok, the Home Affairs Minister made a scapegoat for carrying out Rhee's orders to coercively force the National Assembly to agree to Rhee's constitutional amendments, stood as a vice presidential candidate. See Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, July 18, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>101</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, July 18, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>102</sup> Department of State Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, July 18, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

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<sup>103</sup> Department of State Telegram, Acheson to Muccio, July 28, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 45-50: Box 11: Folder 47: The Political Crisis in Korea [2 of 2: June 16-Oct 1952].

<sup>104</sup> The 1952 ROK presidential election results were:

Syngman Rhee: 5,238,769

Cho Pong Am: 797,504

Lee Shi Yung: 764,715

Shin Hung Woo: 219,696

These figures are from UN, Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, General Assembly Official Records: Seventh Session, Supplement No. 14 (A/2187) New York, 1952, p 36.

<sup>105</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 484.

<sup>106</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 78.

<sup>107</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 485.

<sup>108</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 403-404.

<sup>109</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 484. See also Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 307.

<sup>110</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 307.

<sup>111</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, p 78.

<sup>112</sup> Plimsoll later served as Secretary of External Affairs, Ambassador to the US, USSR, and Japan, and High Commissioner in London. One of Australia's most capable and dedicated diplomats, he died while serving as Governor of Tasmania in 1987. Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 474.

On Australia's involvement in Korea, Plimsoll said there was "a lot that can be done unobtrusively and behind the scenes in encouraging and stimulating the Koreans and influencing and helping the Americans in the form of assistance they are giving the country...." Plimsoll's Korean service "enhanced his reputation among ministers and colleagues at home, and abroad especially" in the State Department and the UN. At the UN in 1974, Gordon Bilney noted the "awe in which Plimsoll was held for his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Korean question." See Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll*, pp 79-80.

See also Priscilla Roberts, "Plimsoll, James", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War*, p 521.

<sup>113</sup> Garry Woodard, "The politics of intervention: James Plimsoll in the South Korean constitutional crisis of 1952", p 485.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **The Ambassador and the Americans: Percy Spender's Public and Private Diplomacy on China and Voluntary Repatriation of Korean War POWs**

#### **Introduction**

Percy Spender's Korean War diplomacy as Minister for External Affairs and Ambassador to the US has eluded extensive attention but was crucial to the shaping of the evolving American-Australian relationship in the final phase of their Korean engagement.<sup>1</sup> This chapter examines Spender's response to China's Korean War intervention, his diplomacy on approaches to China, and his advocacy supporting the US on voluntary repatriation of POWs. Spender worked assiduously to cultivate the close US-Australian ties he regarded as essential to maintaining Australia's security and capacity to influence US policy to benefit its strategic interests. David Lowe wrote that Spender "proved a skilled mediator in complex negotiations between the UN allies in the Korean War, and more than once provided a diplomatic bridge between the Americans and their allies less disposed to confronting China."<sup>2</sup> This chapter expands this minimalist assessment and argues that Spender's Korean War diplomacy demonstrated both the extent of the evolution of the US-Australian relationship and the limits of Australian influence on American policy.

Although Spender was an apostle for very strong US-Australian ties, he was also critical of American belligerence towards China, concerned it would lead to an expanded war that threatened Australia's strategic and security interests. Lowe notes that as Ambassador, Spender "aimed to build on the goodwill Australia banked in Washington through military involvement in the Korean War" to strengthen Australian strategic and security interests by alignment with the US.<sup>3</sup> However, this

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chapter also shows that Spender had strong concerns about America's Korea and China policy.

Spender's American networks gave him unfettered access to senior US political and diplomatic policy makers. Indeed, he and John Foster Dulles became strong personal friends.<sup>4</sup> However, despite the increasing strength of the evolving US-Australian relationship, and Spender's personal connections, his influence with the Americans was limited and problematic. Spender's advice to consider diplomatic approaches to China challenged the prevailing political orthodoxy in Washington and Canberra and went unheeded, whereas his advocacy at the UN was instrumental in helping the US secure allied support for the voluntary repatriation of POWs.

Although highly critical of China's intervention in the Korean War, Spender urged the US to respond with restraint. He opposed US designs to bomb China and gave only qualified support to labelling China an aggressor. Spender consistently told his US counterparts that diplomacy offered constructive options in dealing with China whereas a military response would have catastrophic consequences. Contrary to US and also Australian policy, Spender argued it was in the long term strategic interests of both countries to engage with China.

Spender also privately confided with Dulles, telling him the US ought to consider a more flexible and moderate approach in its attitude towards China which had hardened since its intervention in the Korean War. Anticipating events and policies many years in the future, Spender argued the Soviet-Chinese alliance was fractious and a potential separation should be encouraged. Spender's views on China

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were contrary to the staunch anti communism of the Menzies government and indeed, Dulles and the Americans. Nevertheless, Spender reasoned a more conciliatory US approach would better serve the security and strategic interests of America, China and Australia because it would lessen China's dependency on the Soviets, increase the prospects for peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, and hasten the end of the Korean War.

Spender's most public alignment with American policy was over the vexed issue of the fate of captured North Korean and Chinese soldiers. The Korean War peace talks were deadlocked for two years over voluntary repatriation of POWs. The Americans were determined to prevent a repetition of what happened at the end of World War Two when countless Soviet POWs in Allied custody were forcibly returned home to the USSR, there to be imprisoned or executed by Stalin. Claiming the moral authority and political high ground over the Communists, the Truman Administration resolved that no Chinese or North Korean POWs would be repatriated against their will. Aware that significant numbers of their POWs would refuse to return home, the Communists vehemently opposed voluntary repatriation because the loss of face would weaken their figurative political and ideological authority.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas the Americans were adamant about standing firm, insisting on voluntary repatriation, some US allies preferred to immediately exchange all POWs and thus end the war. Australia was ambivalent. The Menzies government was keen to support the US on voluntary repatriation but did not want further prolongation of the conflict. Contrary to the Australian government, Spender saw no basis for ambiguity. A vociferous advocate for voluntary repatriation, he argued Australia



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must unequivocally support the US. The Americans welcomed Spender's skilled and forceful advocacy, confident he could convince wavering allies to stand firm in pursuit of an armistice that included voluntary repatriation. Spender was instrumental in facilitating UN/US support for the Indian resolution that led to the Korean War armistice agreement without compromising on voluntary repatriation.

The objective of Spender's diplomacy on China and advocacy for voluntary repatriation was to enhance Australia's security interests by maintaining direct Australian-US engagement. Spender was the Australian largely responsible for ANZUS but securing the Treaty was not enough for him. ANZUS strengthened Australia's security but Spender believed Australia could only hope to influence US policy to the benefit of Australia's strategic interests by maintaining continuous and direct engagement with the Americans. Spender recognised that as a small power, Australia had to remain visible to the Americans or it would be sidelined. Neville Meaney argued the tension between principle and objective characterised Australian foreign policy in the early Cold War years.<sup>6</sup> Spender, a realist who always prioritised objective over principle, was determined to strengthen Australia's security through an alignment with the US. Presenting his Ambassador's accreditation to Truman on June 8, 1951, Spender said he hoped to "bring even closer our two countries in substantially the same relationship as exists between members of the British Commonwealth."<sup>7</sup>

Spender's engagement with the Americans enhanced the evolving relationship between the two allies but produced mixed results. Spender's reasoning that US diplomatic overtures to China would hasten the end of the Korean War and reduce

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regional tensions in the aftermath of the conflict, had no impact on Dulles and US and Australian China policy. However, Spender was influential at the UN on the voluntary repatriation of POWs because he had earned the respect and trust of the Americans and their allies, and his views were in sync with Washington, although not wholly with Canberra.

### **Spender urges diplomacy and restraint in UN/US-China confrontation**

As Minister for External Affairs, Spender's measured reaction to the full scale Chinese intervention in the Korean War in November 1950, masked his concern about the threat an expanded conflict would pose to Australia's strategic and security interests. Spender concurred with the warning from General Douglas MacArthur, CinC UNC, that the UN/US faced "an entirely new war" following China's Korean intervention.<sup>8</sup> Determined to prevent an expanded war, Spender argued UN/US diplomacy, restraint and flexibility would diffuse the escalating tensions through fruitful engagement with China. Spender's emphasis on restraint contrasted sharply with the bellicose American posture and reflected the Australian stance. While the Menzies government was unwilling to recognise China, it opposed the US proposal to bomb China because it would escalate the Korean War. Moreover, contrary to the prevailing political climate in Washington and Canberra, Spender favoured diplomatic approaches to China and was convinced that engagement with Beijing was in the long term strategic interests of the US and Australia.

On December 2, 1950, Spender said the crisis was heightened by President Truman's "public speculation" about the "possible use of the atom bomb" which prompted British Prime Minister Clement Attlee's immediate mission to Washington for "personal talks" with Truman. Spender was hopeful a conciliatory approach

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would diffuse the crisis. He surmised one of China's likely goals was to ensure the "inviolability of the Manchurian border" and the "preservation of power supplies" from North Korea to Manchuria. If Chinese intentions were "limited" to securing these "objectives", Spender believed "it should be possible, without undue difficulty, for some agreement to be reached between" the warring parties that "would satisfy the Peking regime and still not run counter to the basic purposes" of the UN/US. Spender said "consideration could be given to ... the establishment of a demilitarised zone", which would create a "neutralised area between the opposing armies." Spender was optimistic that following an "agreement upon such interim arrangements", it ought to be possible to "expand the area of agreement in other directions."<sup>9</sup> However, Spender's stance was neither open-ended nor an appeasement of Chinese aggression.

While Spender accepted China had legitimate border security interests, he said "an entirely different situation would arise" if the "real objective of the Peking regime was to use force in an attempt to throw" UN/US "troops out of Korea, while maintaining for that purpose supplies from Manchurian bases" which the UN/US "forces had scrupulously refrained from attacking." If this was their goal, Spender warned "it would be quite unreasonable" for the Chinese "to expect that such immunity from attack could be allowed to continue indefinitely."<sup>10</sup> Spender was prepared to engage in negotiations with China over its legitimate interests but warned the UN/US would resist Chinese attempts to expel them from Korea.

From this nuanced position, Spender was determined Australia would be an influential and moderating voice among UN/US members. He urged the UN/US to maintain unity and exercise diplomacy and restraint in responding to China's

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intervention in Korea, arguing this was the best hope of averting an expanded war. Mindful of the policy differences towards China among the UN/US nations, and the tensions generated by the belligerence between the US and China, and allied apprehension toward the US position, Spender said it was “essential” for the UN/US to “maintain unity of purpose” and to avoid “any captious criticism between the various members of the United Nations as such criticism could serve only the interests of the aggressor.”<sup>11</sup>

In response to Truman’s utterance that the US would consider using the atomic bomb against China that had generated an immediate and alarmed response from America’s allies, Spender said he “deprecated loose speculation as to the possible use of the atomic bomb.” Stressing the need for caution, Spender emphasised that the presence of UN/US forces in Korea meant “a determination to use the atomic bomb” required that a “decision of such a grave character should naturally be taken only after the fullest consultation.” Australia’s “profound hope” was that “sane counsels would prevail.” If China “indicated” her preparedness “to approach the matter reasonably”, Spender said “there should be no insurmountable obstacle to prevent issues which had arisen in Korea being settled consistently with the security of China and the achievement of the objectives” of the UN. However, Spender warned if China demonstrated it “did not desire a peaceful settlement”, then it “must take the responsibility” for the ensuing events, and in “such circumstances, there could be no turning back in the task to which” the UN/US “had committed themselves.”<sup>12</sup>

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In his New Year's Message on December 31, 1950, Spender implied criticism of US Korean policy. Spender said that because the UN had "direct responsibility" over Korea, it was "essential" that the UN "have a much clearer understanding than presently is manifest" of its "objectives in Korea and how best they may be accomplished." The allied effort in Korea was being undertaken under the UN flag but it was overwhelmingly an American operation. In the wake of the Chinese intervention in Korea, Spender said that without "clarity ... on both these matters, we could easily drift into catastrophe." Although Australia was "one nation" with "only one voice", Spender said the upcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting presented Australia with a "unique opportunity to influence events".<sup>13</sup> Spender was convinced that restraint and diplomatic engagement offered the best possibility of containing the hostilities between the UN/US and PRC and avoiding an escalation of the conflict beyond the Korean peninsula.

The UN/US retreat in Korea triggered by the Chinese intervention began to stabilise in January 1951. Having thwarted the Chinese offensive, the UN/US offered truce talks with China and North Korea to establish a ceasefire and resolve all outstanding issues. Rejecting the offer, the Chinese demanded the "immediate recognition" of the PRC as the legitimate UN "representative of China", the withdrawal of all UN forces from Korea, the removal of US naval forces from "Formosan waters", and that "any negotiations must take place in China" without the precondition of Chinese forces halting their attacks on UN/US and South Korean forces.<sup>14</sup>

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On January 18, Spender declared China's proposals "completely unacceptable" to Australia. Stressing the need for UN/US unity, Spender stated it would be a "great tragedy for the free world if divided counsels prevent" the UN/US "from presenting a united and determined front" to confront China's belligerence. Spender said while the Australian government remained "resolute" in its efforts to "prevent any extension of the conflict in Korea", and was "prepared to explore any reasonable approach" the Chinese "may make", the UN/US would "suffer a serious disaster if any weakness and vacillation is displayed" by the allies in "dealing with the continued contempt" the PRC "has treated every effort" to end hostilities in Korea and seek a peaceful resolution to the issues stemming from the conflict.<sup>15</sup> On January 21, Spender emphatically stated Australia "must stand fast, whatever the dangers such action may involve, by the principles" of the UN Charter which was the "basis upon which the free world took its first firm stand against aggression" in Korea.<sup>16</sup> Spender urged the UN/US to exercise restraint and diplomacy with China but was resolved not to appease Chinese aggression.

On January 30, 1951, Australia supported the US sponsored UN resolution branding China an aggressor for its Korean intervention. Spender said the UN vote represented a powerful affirmation of the "principles" of the UN Charter. Despite some misgivings, most of the Commonwealth nations supported the US position. The UN vote on the aggressor resolution prompted Spender to note the general "solidarity" with the US and that "most members of the British Commonwealth" had acted accordingly. Although Spender agreed with the US that China was an aggressor and had no qualms about supporting the resolution which made no concessions to the Chinese, he reiterated it did not "close the door to peaceful settlement on honourable

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terms.” Spender was determined to pursue diplomatic options to avert an expanded war. He noted the UN response to the North Korean attack on South Korea and China’s intervention, showed that the UN had clearly “condemn(ed) aggression for what it is without discrimination ... between the small nations and the larger ones.”<sup>17</sup>

Spender balanced his support for diplomacy between the UN/US and China with criticism of General MacArthur. He reiterated that the resolution labelling China an aggressor was no impediment to “efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement” and said Australia would continue to “steadfastly” support all attempts to negotiate an end to the fighting in Korea. However, Spender said that in the “meantime”, the UN had “no alternative but to continue to resist aggression in Korea” but he hoped “operations in Korea will not be prolonged beyond what is unavoidable.” Spender then publicly rebuked MacArthur’s calls to extend the war to China, saying the General was interfering in political and policy making spheres beyond his domain. The UN resolution, Spender said, “makes no change in the principles under which military operations will be carried out. They will continue to be carried out in accordance with political principles laid down” by the UN. Spender stated “declarations of political policy and statements about broad military objectives should continue to be the sole prerogative” of the UN and, in a calculated swipe at MacArthur, said it would “be a good thing if military leaders were to confine their observations to factual military communiqués.”<sup>18</sup>

Australia’s strategic and security interests were Spender’s priority. Although he was determined to closely align Australian policy with the US, an expanded war in the region jeopardised Australian interests. MacArthur’s wish to bomb China

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threatened to escalate the Korean War beyond the peninsula. This would endanger Australia's strategic and security interests. Hence, Spender was openly critical of MacArthur despite his affinity with the Americans.

In his March 14, 1951 statement on Korea, the Japanese Peace Treaty and Pacific security to Parliament, Spender said only China's intervention had prolonged the Korean War: the "responsibility for the continuance of hostilities and for postponing and making more difficult of achievement the establishment of an independent Korea lies firmly and squarely upon the Chinese Communists." Spender acknowledged some of China's justifications for its Korean intervention – the non recognition of the PRC by the UN, the UN/US crossing of the 38th Parallel and advance to the power installations on the North Korean-Manchurian border – but argued China's primary aim was to prevent the defeat of the North Korean regime. China would not accept UN/US forces on its border and an American backed unified Korea. Spender's realist assessment of China's Korean intervention was courageous given the vehement anti-communism then pervading the political discourse in Australia and the US which made more difficult any nuance on China or Korea, especially given UN/US forces were dying fighting Communists.<sup>19</sup>

Although unequivocal about confronting China's aggression in Korea, Spender reminded Parliament that before the outbreak of the Korean War, the Menzies government had "indicated that it would keep under continuous review the question of the recognition" of the PRC. Spender said recognising a state required the consideration of more than simply who controlled the territory and was able to govern the people, stating "there are deeper issues of a moral character which we will



disregard at our peril.” On China, the Menzies government followed the precedent set by the US in recognising nation states. While the nature of the government in power may not have been a critical factor in extending recognition, ideology certainly was. Spender reiterated that recognition of the PRC by the Menzies government “depends primarily upon the conduct” of China. He said “to suggest that simple recognition of the Peking Regime would have led to an immediate solution of the Korean problem and to a peaceful settlement in the Far East must, at its best, be described as mere wishful thinking.”<sup>20</sup>

Looking beyond the escalating tensions in Korea caused by the Chinese intervention, Spender reasoned diplomatic engagement with China would enhance American and Australian strategic and security interests. In the prevailing political climate, Spender was performing a delicate balancing act. He believed Australia’s interests were best served by a close alignment to the US but his realist, considered and nuanced outlook on China was out of sync in the prevailing political climate in both Australia and the US.

Spender rejected criticism that the UN/US crossing of the 38th Parallel in October 1950 provoked the Chinese intervention, arguing those critics “completely ignore the moral grounds for the decision” by the UN to “resist aggression” in Korea. Spender did “not doubt that the 38th parallel has *some* special significance for the Chinese Government” but he did “not accept the view” that the UN/US crossing of the parallel “was the primary or determining reason for the intervention” of Chinese forces in Korea. No action by the PRC, Spender stated, indicated that the Chinese sought a “peaceful settlement of the Korean issue” that would result in a free and

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independent Korea. Conversely, the UN had indicated on numerous occasions that its objective was to “limit the area of conflict” to the Korean peninsula and to negotiate and “secure a peaceful settlement” for the region. Spender reminded Parliament the PRC had rejected the proposals by the UN Cease Fire Committee for a cessation of hostilities and negotiations on issues regarding Korea and China.<sup>21</sup>

Spender told Parliament the January aggressor resolution demonstrated that Australia and a large majority of UN members could no longer “refrain from expressing moral condemnation of Chinese actions.” Australia simultaneously supported the aggressor resolution, the formation of the Good Offices Committee to “continue peaceful negotiations” and the establishment of an Additional Measures Committee to “consider whether additional measures” were required to “meet the aggression” in Korea. While Australia “agreed that it was necessary to state publicly” that China had “committed aggression”, Spender emphasised Australia would “do its utmost to limit the area of conflict” and “while continuing military aid to South Korea, it would also exhaust all possibilities of peaceful negotiation” with China. Determined to keep the diplomatic door open, Spender stressed Australia’s support of the aggressor resolution did not alter these broader objectives.<sup>22</sup>

The objective of the Good Offices Committee was to seek contact with China to begin “negotiations for a peaceful settlement” whereas the Additional Measures Committee (which included Australia), had formed a sub-committee “to consider ... what further action should be taken against” China. It was Spender’s “fervent hope” that the PRC would “realise the urgent need to demonstrate by its actions that it really wants peace”. Spender said the Chinese “could at any moment” by their own actions,

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“start the process of peaceful negotiation which could lead to an end of hostilities in Korea, a diminution in tension and a gradual settlement of outstanding problems in the Far East.” Spender warned if the PRC regime “remains completely intransigent; if it insists on laying down its own terms; if it prefers to concentrate its efforts on trying to push United Nations forces into the sea, it can only blame itself for any consequences which might follow.”<sup>23</sup> Spender’s warning to the Chinese reflected his concern about the consequences of an expanded conflict for Australian and US interests.

Spender argued the UN had “shown extraordinary patience in dealing with Peking” and had made “genuine ... offers” of peace which so far had been rejected. He said it was “hardly reasonable to expect that these offers can continue indefinitely with no response from Peking” while UN/US forces “continue to suffer casualties.” Spender said it was incumbent upon China to “prove its bona fides by responding to the genuine and reasonable offers put forward” by the UN “designed to end hostilities in Korea and to facilitate a peaceful settlement in the Far East.” Echoing the domino theory that would later be applied to Vietnam, Spender told Parliament there could be

no question of withdrawing from Korea, except as part of a proper settlement of the Korean question. If Korea were allowed to go under – with our consent – leaders in some countries in South and South East Asia and Europe might be tempted themselves to come to terms with the Communists. It would not be a case of letting Korea go and not having to fight anywhere else; it would probably mean having to turn our attention to other threatened countries. The task of resisting aggression would become increasingly more difficult.<sup>24</sup>

The Australian government, Spender said, would continue to seek a “peaceful conclusion” and do all it could to “limit the area of conflict.” Seeking to have some influence on UN/US policy, Spender told Parliament that “no major decision, whether

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of a political character or a military one, such as those which may relate to the 38th parallel, is likely to be made without Australia being fully consulted.” Determined to avoid an expansion of the Korean War and safeguard Australia’s strategic and security interests, Spender said Australia would “continue to do all” it could “in association with the other nations serving in Korea, to resist aggression.”<sup>25</sup> Spender’s argument that unity and diplomacy would best contain communism, reflected his recognition of the limits of UN/US political and military power.

By April 1951, reinvigorated UN/US forces had forced a Chinese retreat and advanced to the 38th Parallel. Despite this success, the battlefield situation remained in flux with the Communists expected to launch a “substantial counter-offensive” to thwart the UN/US momentum and regain the initiative. On April 10, 1951, amidst the prospect of an impending Chinese offensive, Spender said three objectives underpinned Australian policy in Korea. Firstly, Australia had joined the international effort in “resisting aggression” in Korea because if the UN had failed to act, the “effects upon other areas in Asia might have been catastrophic.” Indeed, the UN “resistance to Communist pressure in Korea had given the greatest possible encouragement to non-Communist Governments and peoples in other parts of Asia to continue their own resistance.” Spender argued the withdrawal of UN/US forces before securing “reasonably stable conditions” in Korea, would likely “undermine the determination and confidence” of other free Asian states.<sup>26</sup> Spender’s primary concern was the potential for the Korean War to undermine the regional stability that was necessary to promote Australian interests. The Korean conflict reinforced his belief that US engagement in the Asia-Pacific was essential for regional stability and

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that Australia's security and strategic interests depended on engagement with the Americans.

Limiting the "area of hostilities" to the Korean peninsula was Australia's second objective in Korea. Spender criticised MacArthur's advocacy of expanding the war to China, noting the Australian government "had taken immediate and frequent diplomatic action to counter any proposals, whether made officially by Governments or unofficially by important spokesmen, including the United Nations Command [MacArthur], which contemplated" the extension of the "area of conflict beyond" Korea. Australia "had consistently and with strength maintained that any [such] decision must be the subject of prior consultation, at least between the Governments whose forces were fighting" in Korea. An expanded war threatened Australia's security and strategic interests. Spender would likely have welcomed Truman's dismissal of MacArthur on April 11 for criticising US policy that restricted the fighting to the Korean peninsula.<sup>27</sup>

Australia's third objective in Korea was to continue resisting aggression and "pursue every possible means of securing a peaceful settlement" to the conflict. Spender's resolute belief in the primacy of diplomacy was sustained by his conviction that an expanded war would damage Australia's interests. Spender said Australia "had done its utmost to facilitate a negotiated settlement", having, on multiple "occasions through diplomatic channels ... taken active steps with a view to exhausting the possibilities of peaceful negotiation" with the Chinese. Australia had "encouraged the maximum activity" by the UN Good Offices Committee whose task was to contact PRC officials to facilitate a ceasefire and begin negotiations to

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peacefully resolve issues concerning Korea and China. Spender said although China had thus far failed to respond to the “approaches” of the Committee, Australia “had continued to urge that every effort should be made, through any avenue which offered any reasonable prospect of success, to contact the Peking regime with a view to ascertaining whether some peaceful settlement was practicable.” Australia would continue to pursue “diplomatic action” even though China’s “only visible response ... at the present time was the continuation of preparations for another offensive.”<sup>28</sup>

Spender also emphasised Australia had constantly stressed the “great importance of maintaining as far as possible” a united voice among UN members, especially the US and UK, involved in Korea. However, he also said it “was inevitable” UN members would have “somewhat different approaches” on policy in Korea. Australia “had engaged in the closest possible consultation, particularly” with the US and UK, and “insisted on its own right to be consulted before any important decision” and “such consultation had been freely accorded.” Spender said from the outbreak of the Korean War, Australia had “used every effort to restrict hostilities to Korea” – it had “advised caution in pursuing certain military objectives even within Korea”, it had “insisted upon prior consultation before important changes were made in military objectives”, and it had consistently “advocated the utmost efforts to bring about a settlement through peaceful negotiation.”<sup>29</sup> Spender argued it was essential Australia and other American allies be united if they hoped to influence US policy and avoid an expanded war by restraining the US and China.

After the UN/US defeated the Chinese Fifth Offensive at the end of April, and allied advances in May cleared Communist forces out of South Korea, US Secretary

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of State, Dean Acheson, announced on June 1 that America would accept a truce along the vicinity of the 38th Parallel. Spender, now Australian Ambassador to the US, attended his first State Department Korean War briefing of ambassadors on June 8, 1951. These regular briefings were provided to the Ambassadors and representatives of the other fifteen UN members with forces in Korea. Spender's first briefing was provided by John Hickerson, a career foreign service officer and Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, 1949-53.<sup>30</sup> The discussion centred on the nature of UN/US approaches to the PRC regarding a ceasefire and truce talks to end the Korean War. Hickerson said the Truman Administration believed this was not the right moment for issuing a public statement to the PRC but nevertheless, the US wanted to be ready to act when circumstances allowed and was interested in the viewpoints of the Ambassadors.<sup>31</sup>

Spender argued the UN/US should make no public approach to the PRC at this moment because of indications the Chinese were preparing for another offensive and would not respond to any peace offer. Determined to prevent an escalation of the war, Spender suggested contact with the Chinese through private channels as "any publicized offer" that is "rejected only causes harm ... because known offers usually bring public pressure for more drastic efforts" that are often contrary to the protagonists' interests. Spender said a public statement declaring the UN/US was "at all times prepared to bring about a peaceful and proper settlement" could be worthwhile.<sup>32</sup> Spender never diverted from his conviction that diplomacy with China offered the best hope of reaching some accommodation that would avert an expanded conflict.

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Spender was concerned that if the Korean conflict continued with no end in sight, the “pressure” on the Truman Administration would “increasingly exert itself” and “may compel decisions which we might have cause to regret.” An escalation of the conflict, whether or not it was militarily justifiable, “may precipitate hostilities extending far beyond” the Korean peninsula. Spender feared if the Korean War did not end quickly, it could escalate into a nuclear confrontation and a “prolonged” conflict that threatened Australia. Although wary the UN/US could be “easily led into a trap” should the Soviet intention be to create further divisions among UN members, Spender believed the UN/US needed to be “prepared to find *peaceful means*” to end the conflict “if we can.” Spender wrote if the Soviets were expressing a “genuine desire” to end the war, “we must use that desire in whatever way it best meets our ends being quite certain that Russia has not changed her objectives but is engaging in a tactical withdrawal.” If the Russian proposal was “genuine”, it offered the UN/US an opportunity to “achieve our objective in Korea by political intervention.” Understandably wary of Soviet motives, Spender nevertheless saw a pathway to reduce regional tensions through diplomacy.<sup>33</sup>

The Korean War reinforced Spender’s belief that an American presence in the Asia-Pacific was crucial to regional stability and that Australia’s security and strategic interests depended on engagement with the US. However, Spender’s desire to align Australian strategic policy to the US and his personal affinity with Americans did not preclude criticisms of US policy when he believed it contravened Australia’s interests. Spender urged the Americans to act with restraint following China’s intervention in Korea because he was concerned escalating aggression would lead to an expanded war that would be detrimental to Australian interests. Spender’s primary goal was



safeguarding Australia's security and strategic interests. Hence, while he wholly supported confronting China's aggression, Spender steadfastly argued that diplomacy with China offered the UN/US the best hope of avoiding an expanded conflict. Contrary to the prevalent political climate in Washington and Canberra, Spender was convinced a regional accommodation was in the best long term strategic interests of the US, China and Australia.

With the battlelines in Korea entrenched in the 38th Parallel area and with neither side seeking to break the stalemate, on June 23, 1951, the Soviets proposed the warring sides meet to negotiate a ceasefire and armistice. China's endorsement of this proposal two days later indicated the Communists now sought to end the Korean hostilities through diplomacy rather than by continuing to pursue an unlikely battlefield victory over the UN/US forces. Spender regarded the truce talks as an opportunity to diffuse regional tensions. As Ambassador, Spender was able to have that direct engagement with American officials which he believed offered the best, perhaps the only, hope Australia had of influencing US policy to benefit its interests. A forceful advocate, Spender consistently argued diplomacy offered the best pathway for reducing regional tensions.

### **Spender privately expresses doubts about US China and Korea policy**

While Spender's belief that regional tensions would best be reduced through diplomacy never wavered, his public optimism masked his private frustration with what he deemed inflexible US China and Korea policies. Spender recognised the belligerence of the Americans did not mean they wanted an expanded conflict, and he too was wary of Communist intentions. He also knew both sides accepted there was no palatable military solution to the stalemate in Korea and that an escalation of the

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war would have disastrous consequences. An accommodation could only be reached through diplomacy. Spender was therefore impatient with the American rigidity and absence of pragmatism he believed was narrowing their China and Korea policy options, and impeding negotiations to end the Korean War and reduce regional tensions. Spender was concerned the longer the Korean War continued, the greater the risk it would escalate into the very regional conflict no one wanted. He judged too that the time for efficacious diplomacy was finite.

Since 1949, the US had refused to recognise the Chinese Communist regime and China's Korean intervention hardened the American stance against recognition. Now the US and China were the principle adversaries in the Korean War and diplomatic initiatives that might have thawed US-China relations had frozen. The tensions between the UN/US and China were further aggravated in January 1952 when the Korean War armistice negotiations became deadlocked over voluntary repatriation of POWs.<sup>34</sup>

On January 31, Spender wrote a "personal and private" letter to his friend, John Foster Dulles, US Ambassador at Large, and the chief architect of the Japanese Peace Treaty and ANZUS, on diplomacy with China. Spender's letter was prompted by Dulles's remark about the "impermanence of the present Moscow oriented role of China." Spender concurred with Dulles that "any change in China would require a more positive policy on the part of the Free World, notably the United States." Whereas Britain had recognised Communist China, the US refused and Australia withheld recognition.<sup>35</sup>

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Spender told Dulles he shared his “view that it would be defeatist to assume the permanence of a Moscow dominated China, and dark though the prospects may be, it should be the objective of foreign policy to seek to draw China away, no matter how long it may take us or how difficult the road, from her Soviet association.” The “present policy in relation to China”, Spender wrote, “already confounded by politics, is more deeply confounded by the cleavage in the free world, particularly as between the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom, on the issue of recognition, and until some resolution between the two opposing points of view on this is forthcoming ... I can see little chance of the evolution of any long term policy, and we will be compelled to resort, as we have so often in the past, to ad hoc expedients.” Spender told Dulles it was “absolutely essential that the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom get their lines straightened out and agree upon a common approach. If they do other nations will probably fall into line.” Spender argued the present situation was untenable and allied unity was necessary to break the impasse.<sup>36</sup>

Spender said Dulles, as the architect of the 1951 Pacific security treaties, was again the person who could work with the British to formulate a common China policy. Spender encouraged Dulles, telling him that as “a prominent American familiar with the issues involved and in good standing”, he “could conceivably pave the way for an intelligent sorting out of ideas.” This could be followed by the formation of a “working party ... in London or Washington” tasked with formulating a policy. “If this effort fails”, Spender wrote, “at least we will have tried, and tried intelligently, to get together. It could hardly be said ... that we have to date tried any intelligent approach to achieve a common policy on matters, which are not only of prime consequence to world affairs but which presently ... bedevil the relations

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between the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom.” Spender told Dulles that “should this suggestion appeal to you as practicable, I would be only too glad to discuss it further with you and do what I can to give it effect.” Spender’s ambitious initiative was to be kept private: “you will of course understand that these observations are written by me to you purely in our personal capacities, and I know you will treat them strictly as such.” There were dangers. Spender was all too aware that with McCarthyism rampant and anti-Communist sentiments prevailing in Washington and Canberra, Spender’s and Dulles’s careers would be terminated if they were seen as publicly countenancing an accommodation with China.<sup>37</sup>

Spender’s candid advice to Dulles that a more flexible US China policy would alleviate regional tensions reflected their strong personal friendship and the significance of individual US and Australian officials in the evolution of the relationship between the two nations throughout their Korean engagement.

Nevertheless, Spender’s friendship with Dulles did not constrain him from making strong criticisms of US Korean policy. On June 2, 1952, he wrote to Richard Casey, Minister for External Affairs, in rather more forceful terms than he used with Dulles, saying that he found the Korean “situation ... very disturbing”, not because of the UN/US “inability to reach any agreement with the Communists” which while frustrating was not surprising, but because the UN “nations serving in Korea, apart principally” from Australia, “appear to have left the running almost wholly” to the US. Spender was not “very happy about the way” Korean War policy was “been handled” by the US and her allies, and informed Casey he was “preparing an appreciation on the whole [Korean] situation”.<sup>38</sup>

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On June 24, Spender sent Casey a lengthy memorandum highly critical of the American attitude towards their UN allies, notably the absence of an effort to create policy co-ordination among them. Spender wrote the “present machinery for the coordinated planning” of political and military “policy for Korea is quite unsatisfactory”. UN members with forces in Korea are “‘consulted’ from time to time, some Governments also present views” to the US on “their own initiative, but their impact on the development” of US policy is “scattered because of lack of coordination and for this reason oftentimes ineffective.” Spender described the “16 nation group” in Washington representing US allies with forces in Korea, as “quite useless partly because the Governments represented are not disposed to give their representatives any authority ... and partly” because the US “is not prepared to give other than very limited information to this group, a circumstance not unconnected” with South Korea’s inclusion. Spender said this meant the “nature and direction” of US Korean policy is “frequently not capable of any precise determination” and UN policy “becomes, when it does succeed in expressing itself, a matter of ad hoc and often very hasty consideration.”<sup>39</sup>

Spender argued there was an “urgent need” for an “agreed” Korean policy by the US, UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and “perhaps” France. He proposed that a “secret meeting of senior representatives of these Governments on the political or ambassadorial level, *assisted by top level military and economic advisers*, should be held in the *very near future* with a view to determining policy” on three key questions. First, what was “*now*” the allied “objective in Korea and what means are open to us and should be pursued to achieve the agreed objective?” Second and third, what would be the allied responses if the truce talks “prove abortive” and the “enemy

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initiates an all out offensive?” Spender told Casey the prospects of an armistice would “depend upon the enemy’s desire for such an agreement.” He judged there was “nothing” the UN could “do to produce an armistice, except by some qualifying” of voluntary repatriation and “even so the Communists would still find other reasons for stalling if it suited them.”<sup>40</sup>

Spender reasoned it was “unlikely” the Communists “would launch an all out offensive” in Korea “unless” they were “prepared to risk” a global war, and there were “no indications” they wished to “take this risk.” Spender was also sure that “at least until after the Presidential elections”, the Americans “would not wish to launch an offensive in Korea (even if they were able to which in my opinion they are not) since this would entail considerable loss of life and risk extending the war.” However, “these considerations might undergo a substantial change” if a Republican was elected in November, “particularly” if MacArthur “exercised any influence on policy as he certainly would” if Taft became President.<sup>41</sup>

There were three Korean War policy questions Spender believed America’s allies needed to consider. First, there was clarification of allied policy: “despite our stated objective of the unification of Korea, it is clear enough” this was “not capable of achievement except by the commitment of vast forces and the risk of a larger war.” Given the political realities and “available military forces”, Korean unification was unattainable. Second, Spender wanted the UN/US to secure an “end to the hostilities on honourable terms”, telling Casey “any longer range objective is not within the realm of practical politics today.” Third, while recognising that voluntary repatriation of POWs had deadlocked the “present armistice discussions”, Spender believed the

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“Communists may well stall on this issue, even if any further concession were made, until the meeting of the General Assembly with the hope that they may extract a better political bargain or achieve a stronger political position there.” Spender noted there was “no reliable appreciation” on whether the Communists “genuinely desire an armistice” although the British and Major-General William Harrison, Head of the UNC Korean Armistice Delegation, “believe they do.”<sup>42</sup>

Spender also saw three possible consequences if the Panmunjom talks continued to remain fruitless. The US could “*increase military pressure*” on the Communists and “*extend the war*” by bombing China, blockading the Chinese coast, and launching a “*frontal offensive*” against North Korea “*accompanied by amphibious operations.*” Or the Truman Administration could intensify the pressure on US allies “*for increased and complete sanctions against China.*” Spender noted that John Hickerson, Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs, was foreshadowing that US allies would be asked to impose a “complete embargo on trade with China”, and support the “freezing of overseas assets”, the “rupture of diplomatic relations”, and the “severance of telegraphic and postal services.” Spender said it would be unlikely many American allies, most notably the British, would support these policies, and despite the tensions they would cause, he was “by no means satisfied” the US would not pursue them. Finally, Spender surmised “*an explicit policy designed to bring about a de facto cessation of hostilities in Korea much as existed before the aggression in 1950*” was possible. If this eventuated, Spender told Casey the UN “would probably need to ... warn” the Chinese and North Koreans “publicly that if a further act of aggression occurred”, the UN “would in all probability be unable to restrict their retaliation to the area” of the Korean peninsula. Also, the “training and

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strengthening of the ROK Army would have to be quickly encouraged.” However, Spender observed this did “not appear practicable at present”, and a “de facto cessation of hostilities would” not mean the POW impasse would be immediately resolved.<sup>43</sup>

Were the Communists to launch a full scale ground offensive, Spender told Casey that irrespective of whether the UN/US “forces were placed in jeopardy, it would probably be difficult to restrain” the US from “striking back against China proper.” Although the US had “indicated” it “would only retaliate against China proper if there were a massive enemy air attack which jeopardised the safety” of UN/US forces, Spender urged the Americans to exercise caution. He noted the June 23 UN/US air attacks on the Yalu River dams and power plants, ostensibly carried out to hasten the truce negotiations, signalled “how unwise it would be to place too much reliance on this policy” because a repetition of any “such attacks” could indeed “provoke a massive” Communist air offensive which the UN/US was seeking to prevent. Spender emphasised American policy regarding the bombing of Yalu River infrastructure and responses to Communist attacks required “further consultation” between the US and its allies. He surmised that US “military opinion”, likely “supported” by the State Department, “probably” had “already crystallised” on this. Spender foresaw that if the UN/US launched an offensive against North Korea, the Communists “would doubtless fear a possible push up to the Yalu River and perhaps even further, and, to meet this possible threat, introduce even greater forces” into North Korea. Spender wrote this “would considerably increase the risk of an extension of the war and would almost certainly indefinitely postpone any possibility of a cessation of hostilities.”<sup>44</sup>



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Spender told Casey it was “important to have [UN/US] policy determined at a high level.” He said the “absence of any representative from any Commonwealth nation at the armistice discussions, the absence of any political advisers of our own” with the UNC, that the “conduct of military operations is directed solely” by the US, and the “lack of any effective” UN allied “machinery to condition and determine common objectives and policy places a heavy handicap upon other nations in the whole Korean question.”<sup>45</sup> Spender’s objective was to maximise Australian strategic and security interests. US Korean policy impacted on Australian interests. Certainly, Spender sought an Australian voice in determining that policy.

More than any other Australian, Spender wanted to align Australian strategic and security policy with the US. Nevertheless, Spender’s affinity with the Americans did not temper his criticism of their policies. Spender was critical of the Americans but hoped to influence US policy to benefit Australian interests. Spender wanted US allies to be more assertive but US domination reflected the reality of the power imbalance between the Americans and their allies. Indeed, Spender’s criticisms of US policy were a reluctant recognition that the Americans would always do what was in their best interests, irrespective of allied protestations and interests.

### **Spender advocates for voluntary repatriation of POWs**

Spender had virtually no influence on US China policy because Cold War politics and the anti-Communist political climate in Washington and Canberra made it impossible to even consider diplomatic engagement with China. Australia and other US allies had minimal impact on US Korea policy because the UN/US effort in the Korean War was overwhelmingly American, a point realists like Spender understood and accepted. However, Spender’s support for the US insistence on the voluntary

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repatriation of POWs enabled him to exercise considerable influence when the UN debated this issue in November and December 1952.

Spender asserted himself, wholly backing the US, despite the ambivalence of the Menzies government which wanted to support the Americans but did not want a prolongation of the war. As US Ambassador and leader of the Australian UN Delegation, Spender brokered the negotiations between the US and her allies that facilitated the passage of the Indian Resolution on the Korean War POWs which reaffirmed the UN/US commitment to voluntary repatriation. The Communist acceptance of voluntary repatriation enabled the signing of the Korean War armistice in July 1953.

In October 1952, with the truce talks at Panmunjom still deadlocked over voluntary repatriation of POWs, the UN sought to break the impasse. The Korean War dominated the debate at this seventh session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Dean Acheson and Richard Casey reaffirmed US and Australian insistence on non forcible repatriation of POWs. The First Committee of the UNGA accepted Casey's suggestion to prioritise Korea in the ensuing session. Acheson then introduced the 21 Power draft resolution reaffirming the UN/US commitment to voluntary repatriation of POWs.<sup>46</sup> Acheson's resolution was opposed by Krishna Menon, India's UN Ambassador, who argued it would never be accepted by the Communists. Much to Acheson's annoyance, Menon's position received British and Canadian support. Australia, however, did not support the Indian objections.<sup>47</sup>

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A senior Indian diplomat, Menon was High Commissioner to Britain, 1947-1952. He was India's representative on UNTCOK, 1947-48 and the UN, 1952-1962. In 1952, Menon was a key player during the UN debate on Korean War POWs. The UN adoption of the Indian resolution on Korean War POWs authored by Menon, helped facilitate the armistice that ended the conflict. Menon had an antagonistic relationship with US officials who perceived his anti-colonial, non-aligned stance as being pro Soviet. However, Menon was able to utilise Russian and Chinese contacts in his diplomacy.<sup>48</sup>

Menon proposed a cease-fire, the exchange of all prisoners wanting to return to their country of origin, and the formation of a repatriation commission of four neutral powers to determine the status of the remaining POWs refusing to return home.<sup>49</sup> Menon's proposal exposed Australia's ambivalence. Casey wanted to support Acheson but believed Menon's "moderate compromise" would be "acceptable" to the allies and could end the war. Acheson's strong opposition to Menon's proposal dashed Casey's hope that the Americans "might accept" it.<sup>50</sup>

Casey left New York on November 12, leaving Spender to lead the Australian UN delegation. Although the Australian government remained ambivalent over whether to support either the American or Indian proposals, Spender's opposition to Menon's proposal put him in sync with Acheson. Indeed, Spender wanted to align Australia's stance as closely as possible to the American viewpoint. The concerns of Acheson and Spender were in contrast to the positive reactions by many of the other 21 nation co-sponsors of Acheson's resolution. Most of these nations now favoured Menon's proposal over Acheson's but Spender stood steadfast with the Americans.<sup>51</sup>

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At the November 13 meeting of representatives of the co-sponsors of the 21 power resolution affirming voluntary repatriation, Lester Pearson, the Canadian Minister for External Affairs, strongly supported India's attempt to break the Panmunjom impasse. Conversely, Spender was concerned aspects of the Indian proposal undermined the clarity of the 21 Power resolution insistence on non forcible repatriation. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, reminded Spender that Casey had also expressed support for Menon's proposal. Spender retorted he was "aware of this" but intended to pursue the issue with the Australian government. Despite its doubts about the efficacy of insisting on voluntary repatriation, the Menzies government was reluctant to contravene the US. Canberra's ambivalence and Spender's clarity enabled him to align Australia with the US.<sup>52</sup>

While Spender was adamant the UN/US must stand firm on unambiguously voluntary repatriation, he urged the UN to be flexible, arguing the representatives of the 21 nation co-sponsors should consider amending their draft resolution instead of discarding and replacing it with Menon's proposal. Spender reasoned and "hoped" this approach would "obtain large majority support" at the UN. Ernest Gross, the US UN delegate, voiced America's endorsement of Spender's argument that the "basic principle of non-forcible repatriation" must not be weakened. Spender sought a merger of the 21 power resolution and the Indian proposal that would attract widespread support without weakening the UN/US stance on voluntary repatriation.<sup>53</sup>

On November 15, 1952, Spender said an armistice in Korea could only "come about as a result of the military negotiations" at Panmunjom. Spender argued

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although the General Assembly was not a “negotiating committee”, it could play a constructive role by “laying down certain principles which might assist the negotiators” pursuing an armistice at Panmunjom. Spender noted that despite opposition from the Soviet bloc, a large majority of delegations supported the principle that “force should not be applied to compel prisoners of war to return to their homeland or to death and imprisonment against their will.”<sup>54</sup>

The November 17 meeting of the representatives of the 21 Power resolution co-sponsors reflected the exasperation among US allies over the interminable peace talks. Although all the delegates were adamant they would not compromise on non-forcible repatriation, the meeting “disclosed strong desires” among most of the participants “to go to great lengths to meet [the] Indian initiative, in [the] hope that this might lead to [an] armistice or at least to unanimous non-Communist support for” UNGA affirmation of voluntary repatriation. This meeting also established an eight member Subcommittee (US, Britain, France, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark and Turkey) of the representatives of the 21 Power resolution co-sponsors to consider the Indian proposal and “amendments which might make it acceptable.” Spender’s appointment as Subcommittee chair was an endorsement of his and Australia’s standing at the UN.<sup>55</sup>

Acheson certainly welcomed Spender’s election as chairman: “I found an ally in” Spender who, having assumed the leadership of the Australian UN delegation from Casey, was “instructed, however, to support” Menon’s resolution, “with which Spender did not agree.” Spender “decided to construe his instruction broadly, agreeing with me to try to get Menon amended before we supported him”.<sup>56</sup>

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Menon presented his draft resolution to the UN First Committee on November 19. Leading the Subcommittee response, Spender stated Australia could not accept the Indian resolution in its “present form”. Concerned about the fate of POWs handed over to a commission tasked with their welfare and repatriation, Spender said it was unacceptable that POWs could possibly be detained for a lengthy period. He was especially concerned that the disposition of any POWs still in detention after being held by a repatriation commission for 90 days would be determined by the political conference on Korea following the armistice. While all of the 21 Power resolution co-sponsors agreed on the need for a proposal that would gain the broadest possible UN support, the US was adamant on its insistence on voluntary repatriation. This created tensions among some US allies, notably Britain and France, who believed the Indian proposal would attract more UN support than the 21 Power resolution and thereby offered the best hope of resolving the POW issue and ending the war. Spender steadfastly supported the US position, arguing that while broad support was “important”, it was equally as “important that co-sponsors not reveal open differences” with the US, and the “task” of the Subcommittee was to “mould” the Indian resolution “to meet essential US points.”<sup>57</sup>

Spender and the Americans sought a resolution that would attract broad support without compromising on voluntary repatriation. Spender said Menon’s proposal “could be modified” and it “would be [a] tragedy if difference(s)” over the final status of non repatriated POWs “divided” the 21 co-sponsors. Gross then proposed amending Menon’s resolution to stipulate that any POWs who still refused to return to their homeland “within 90 days from the signing” of an armistice, would

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be released by the repatriation commission. Spender urged the 21 co-sponsors to focus on amending the Indian resolution, stressing he would “recommend” Australia not support Menon’s draft unless it included the appointment of an umpire for the repatriation commission and stipulated the ultimate status of non repatriated POWs.<sup>58</sup>

Acheson acknowledged and praised Spender’s diplomacy supporting the US position on POWs. On November 21, Acheson informed Truman that “Spender of Australia” was “taking a strong initiative behind the scenes to solidify support among the 21 powers for a series of modifications of the Menon resolution.” Acheson said Spender intended to propose amendments addressing US concerns and was “hopeful” these would be accepted. Acheson told Truman that Spender was “firm” on the necessity for a repatriation commission umpire and that un-repatriated POWs must be released after a finite period. Spender’s resolve was being appreciated by the Americans.<sup>59</sup>

Spender gave Australia’s formal response to the Indian proposal in the First Committee of the UN on November 21, 1952. He stated:

the great majority of nations here believe in human freedom and it is inconsistent with their concept of humanity – indeed inconsistent with the concept of human rights set down in the [UN] Charter – that force should be applied to compel a prisoner of war to return home. In short, there is a principle of human freedom ... a belief that the individual has an existence and a dignity apart from the state whose citizen he is.

Spender said despite the ideological and political gulf between the UN/US and the Communists at the core of this seemingly intractable and interminable POW impasse, “either one principle gives way to the other in relation to Korea or some solution must be found which will bridge the divide between us.” Spender was committed to reaching an agreement guaranteeing voluntary repatriation.<sup>60</sup>

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Both the UN/US and the Communists argued the 1949 Geneva Convention justified their respective stance on POWs. Spender said there should be no assumption this Committee would “determine the fate of a specific number of men – namely, the precise number who are said to have elected to resist repatriation even to the extent of resisting by force.” The issue, Spender argued, was if any POWs “would forcibly resist repatriation”, whether the UN “should stand steadfast and not repatriate them by force.” This was “complicated” by the Communists’ awareness of “those who are said to have elected not to be repatriated.” The Communists argued the Geneva Convention obligated warring states to release and repatriate without delay all POWs upon the cessation of hostilities. Their interpretation of the Geneva Convention was that states had obligations to each other, rather than to individuals. They insisted all POWs were subject to the jurisdiction of the country of which they were citizens and therefore were under the control of their state of origin.<sup>61</sup>

The contrary view argued by the US and endorsed by Australia and other UN members, was that the Geneva Convention clearly stipulated the necessity to protect POWs. Spender told the UN First Committee these provisions were “founded on respect for the individual and for his dignity; they embody the principle of selfless relief, without discrimination to human beings in distress ... and thus defenceless and no longer to be regarded as enemies.”<sup>62</sup> Spender told the First Committee the Geneva Convention contained provisions

designed to ensure that no detaining power by any device or stratagem or means of any kind may diminish these *minimum obligations* .... To accord what amounts to asylum to a prisoner of war who genuinely seeks it in fear of reprisal against himself, to refrain from compelling him by force to be repatriated, to refrain from handing him over to in some cases certain death, in others grave deprivation of liberty – is to accord to the prisoner further *benefits* and a protection to which otherwise he would not, under the Convention, be entitled.



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Spender argued although there was “an obligation” under the Convention “to release and repatriate” POWs, there was “no obligation ... to do so by force.” The “use of force”, he said, “not only appears clearly incompatible with ‘releasing’” POWs, “but could result in death or injury of those whom the Convention is designed to protect.”<sup>63</sup>

Spender emphasised there was “nothing in the Convention which precludes the well established right ... of the granting of political asylum to a prisoner of war who seeks it and who refuses to be repatriated except through force.” The Geneva Convention allowed for “special agreements” to “be made between States affecting” the “release and repatriation” of POWs “provided only ... that such special agreement does not adversely affect the situation” of POWs or “restrict the rights which it confers’ not upon the enemy State but ‘upon them’.” In “such circumstances” Spender contended “additional protection ... ought to be afforded” to POWs. Spender asked the First Committee whether anyone doubted “what the fate of many” of the POWs in UN “hands would be if they were refused the right of asylum and forcibly compelled against their will to be repatriated”. Forcible repatriation, Spender argued, was a “strange kind of a right to be conferred upon” a POW by a “humanitarian convention designed to protect him.”<sup>64</sup>

Spender and the Americans were adamant the UN/US assert the “right of all” POWs “to be released and repatriated in accordance with” the stipulations of the Geneva Convention, and the “right of any” POW “to seek and be granted asylum if he genuinely and reasonably fears that if he is released and repatriated, he is in danger of his life, his limb or his liberty.” Spender told the First Committee that Australia was “anxious to find common cause with other nations” who thought “it advisable and

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necessary not only to lay down the principles on which” they all stood “but to embody them in concrete proposals for a settlement.” Most of the governments represented on this Committee, Spender noted, had “stated without equivocation” their opposition to “the application of force to compel prisoners of war, who might suffer death, imprisonment or ill-treatment, to be repatriated against their will.” Spender wanted the Indian proposal amended to include voluntary repatriation. He said although there was not “unanimous agreement on this humanitarian principle”, the “vast majority” of this Committee supported voluntary repatriation and this “should be incorporated in any resolution which this Committee adopts.”<sup>65</sup>

Spender noted a “considerable” number of Committee members favoured the idea that POWS “should be received in a neutralised area by an impartial Commission” whose “function ... would be to give prisoners of war an unrestricted opportunity to be repatriated.” Indeed, the Committee would accept a resolution based on the twin principles of voluntary repatriation of POWS and the creation of a neutral repatriation commission. Australia’s position, Spender declared, was that negotiations on voluntary repatriation and the proposed repatriation commission be left in “the hands of the negotiators” at Panmunjom “with a clear statement of the principles and general provisions” of the UN. However, if the Committee decided it was “better to submit some detailed proposals” Australia would co-operate.<sup>66</sup>

Next, Spender presented six proposals, arguing their inclusion in an agreed resolution would attract “the greatest support” in the UN Assembly. Spender accepted ideological differences and political perceptions could mean the allies and Communists would never agree on voluntary repatriation. Nevertheless, he was

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adamant a UN resolution needed “a clear acknowledgement that all prisoners of war should be released and repatriated.” Spender insisted both sides needed to “provide all facilities for such release and repatriation” and could not “use force to screen nor detain a prisoner of war, or ... use force to compel him to be repatriated.” A “neutral body” needed to be created “whose purpose it should be to take charge of the prisoners of war and to carry out their repatriation in accordance with the above principles.” Spender said the “whole process of release and repatriation should be completed within a specified time so that all men shall have been returned to their country except for those who have forcibly resisted or who it is known would forcibly resist.” Finally, “the last mentioned category of people should be disposed of under conditions which would ensure that they would not be employed in military service against the country whose citizens they previously were.”<sup>67</sup>

Spender warned the Committee a resolution on voluntary repatriation and the formation of a repatriation commission, whether accepted or rejected by the Communists, did not mean the elimination of all obstacles to a Korean settlement. However, Spender was optimistic this Committee would draft a resolution on voluntary repatriation and a repatriation commission that would receive broad UNGA support. Although the proposed resolution should not “present any difficulties” for the “disputant parties”, Spender identified two potentially contentious issues. One was the “nature” of the repatriation commission that would facilitate the “release and repatriation” of all POWs. The other was the “safe disposition” of POWs who would not be “repatriated” in accordance with the principles of the proposed resolution and the necessity of ensuring their “personal liberty”.<sup>68</sup>

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Having co-sponsored the 21-Power draft resolution, Spender now announced that Australia would support an amended Indian Resolution. He told Committee delegates that “with certain amendments”, the Indian proposal would reflect Australian “wishes.” Spender said the Indian Resolution offered “a suitable basis upon which we might proceed” and he concurred with Menon who said his proposal could be the “way to a way out” of the POW impasse. Spender recognised that Menon sought broad support among UN members and was willing to accept “different viewpoints in the ultimate presentation of his resolution.” Therefore, Spender suggested the Committee “consider” the Indian resolution and any “suitable amendments” that would have broad support in order to “ascertain whether agreement in Korea can be reached on the basis of this resolution.”<sup>69</sup>

Spender concluded it had “become self-evident”, even to the Soviets, that the “very great majority” of UN delegations, “are behind” the UNC “on non-forcible repatriation” of POWs. He said the UN/US had “taken a stand on this principle which we regard not only as humanitarian, but also as being in accordance with the practice of international law as laid down” in the Geneva Convention. Spender argued that throughout the truce talks, the UN/US had “made many concessions” to the Communists and on voluntary repatriation, had even addressed their objections “as far as humanly possible without prejudice to the fundamental principle.” Praising the “patience and flexibility” of the UN negotiators, Spender said the UN/US was “anxious for peace in Korea” and was “confident” the Communists also wanted to end the war. He believed “no one has anything to gain” by continuing the hostilities, “except possibly” the Soviet Union, who for “purely reasons of influence”, and as it was “losing no men, would be prepared to see the struggle continue, thereby

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underlining the dependence of China on it for armaments and other supplies, and thereby prolonging the enmity and suspicion with which we are regarded by China and which we all wish to see dissipated.”<sup>70</sup>

Despite Spender’s efforts, Warren Austin, the US UN Ambassador, was not very hopeful of obtaining the unanimous agreement of the 21 co-sponsors for the “necessary amendments” for American backing of the Menon resolution. The US wanted the Indian resolution amended to clearly stipulate an umpire would be appointed to ensure the proposed repatriation commission would not be deadlocked and that all POWs who refused repatriation would be released within a reasonable time following the signing of an armistice. Austin informed Acheson that Spender had asked the UN First Committee to urgently “consider” the Indian resolution, “which the committee can mould to its agreed will with suitable amendments.” The Americans acknowledged that Spender sought to amend the Indian resolution to ensure voluntary repatriation would not be compromised, thereby making it acceptable to the US.<sup>71</sup>

On November 23, the representatives of the co-sponsors of the 21 Power resolution considered an amended version of Menon’s proposal. Chairing the meeting, Spender noted Menon’s revised resolution “had moved perceptibly toward recognition of criticism of [the] earlier draft”. Spender was confident the 21 co-sponsors would unanimously agree with the principles of the Menon resolution. Austin largely concurred with Spender’s remarks but noted that while the revised Indian resolution was “an improvement” regarding the “appointment of [an] umpire” for the repatriation commission, the US was still concerned about the fate of POWs

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who refused repatriation 90 days after an armistice. The Americans were concerned the remaining POWs would be held in indefinite detention and were unwilling to agree to have the issue referred to the proposed political conference on Korea following an armistice which, based on the experiences of negotiating with the Communists at Kaesong and Panmunjom, would be unlikely to reach any conclusive agreements.<sup>72</sup>

Austin reiterated America's insistence on a "definite end point" to the detention of all POWs. So while Austin agreed with Spender on the "importance of reaching [an] agreement with [the] Indians", he made it clear US support for Menon's resolution hinged on the proposal including a clear finite time period for the release of all remaining POWs. Following the Kaesong and Panmunjom experiences, Austin now made it clear that the US wanted no Communist involvement in determining the POWs' final disposition. Whereas the Indian resolution proposed all POWs remain under UN control until their release, the US wanted the POWs placed under the jurisdiction of a "specific agency" created to handle them. Spender acknowledged the ambiguity in Menon's revised draft regarding who would handle the POWs but believed this would not be a problem as the UN "would set up such an agency." However, Austin said he "attached more importance" than Spender to the "designation" of a "specific UN agency."<sup>73</sup>

Tensions arose among the 21 co-sponsors, because some of them, namely Britain, France and Canada, were willing to settle for a more flexible response to Menon's proposal than the US. The Americans were adamant about a specific time period after which all POWs remaining in custody would be released, and on the

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appointment of a repatriation commission umpire to prevent the Communists derailing its capacity to function. Spender thought Menon broadly referred to UN responsibility for the POWs because any specific reference to any UN agency would likely be rejected by the Communists and some non-aligned nations who regarded the UN as an instrument of the US. Like the Americans, Spender had no faith that the proposed political conference following the armistice would resolve the Korean problem or the final disposition of the remaining POWs. Spender concurred with the Americans in preferring “no reference to [the] political conference” in the Indian resolution, but judged this was not “so important a matter of principle as to insist” on this “over Menon’s objections.” While some of the 21 co-sponsors were willing to have the status of all POWs still refusing repatriation 90 days after an armistice determined by the political conference, there was widespread agreement the conference “should not have jurisdiction over [the] POWs for an indefinite period.” However, as Spender noted, the question was whether the political conference “should have such jurisdiction” over the POWs “at all”. The Americans were emphatic that it should not.<sup>74</sup>

When Spender declared that the 21 co-sponsors were in “agreement on giving priority” to the Menon proposal over their own resolution, Austin “interjected” that US “priority” for the Indian resolution was “conditioned on acceptance of [the] necessary changes” the Americans wanted. Spender then suggested the 21 co-sponsors discuss with Menon further amending the Indian proposal to ensure all POWs would be repatriated or released 90 days after the armistice. Indeed, Menon’s resolution was amended to the satisfaction of the US and her allies and Spender had played a central role in securing the agreement.<sup>75</sup>

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The Indian Resolution on the voluntary repatriation of POWs was tabled in the UN First Committee on November 26, 1952. The following day, Spender outlined the reasons for Australia's support for the resolution. Despite "some doubts", Spender said Australia was "prepared to lay these reservations aside in our earnest quest for peace and a cessation of armed conflict." Spender said the "initiative of the Indian delegation ... seems to hold out some chance for agreement" and, in a direct challenge to the Soviet representatives, he noted the resolution would "certainly give this Committee the opportunity of showing what it thinks of any reasonable proposal which might lead to peace in Korea."<sup>76</sup>

Downplaying his effort, Spender was uncharacteristically modest, saying the Australians "have tried to play what little part we could in bringing divergent views on this matter towards a common understanding." However, Spender noted the Australians had "reason to feel our contribution has not been a minor one." Spender explained the Australians were especially concerned the original draft of the Indian resolution "contained in it the possibility that prisoners of war might by indeterminate detention be forced by a process of attrition to seek repatriation." Spender said this aspect of the resolution had now been amended "in a form" the Australians were "prepared to accept." The US and its allies did not believe the revised resolution was "perfect." Nevertheless, Spender said Australia was "prepared to agree to it, in the hope that this effort will lead to peace in Korea ... which may last."<sup>77</sup>

Spender was optimistic the Korean impasse could be overcome. Paraphrasing what he had privately told Dulles in January 1952, Spender said there was "one ray of hope", that "it ought not to be assumed by us, great though may be the weight of



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evidence for the assumption, that in everything Soviet Russia speaks for Communist China.” Spender said the passage of the Indian resolution would signify the UN had done all that it could “consistent with the humane principles for which we stand to bring to an end the devastation of war” in Korea. He stated the UN could “only hope – even though the hope may presently seem faint – that our proposals will be seen” by the Chinese and North Koreans as a “sincere attempt to solve this troubled problem. The decision now passes to others.”<sup>78</sup>

On December 1, 1952, with US support, the Indian Resolution on the Korean War POWs was adopted by the UN First Committee, 53 votes in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention. The resolution contained the amendments and clarifications Spender had proposed and negotiated and the Americans had steadfastly insisted upon. These included stipulations that force could not be used against POWs “to prevent or effect their return to their homelands”, that an independent umpire would have the “deciding vote” on matters in which the Repatriation Commission could not agree on a “majority decision”, and that any POWs remaining in custody 90 days after the signing of an armistice would be held for a further 30 days whereupon those still in detention would be placed under the authority of the UN which would facilitate their release “strictly in accordance with international law.”<sup>79</sup>

With American support, the UN General Assembly adopted the Indian Resolution on the Korean War POWs on December 3, 1952. The vote was 54 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention. Spender told the UNGA that despite “certain reservations and doubts” about the resolution, Australia voted for it because of “its desire for peace.” The POW issue was the “sole obstacle” to an armistice and the

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widespread view among UN members was that the resolution offered the best chance of ending the Korean War as soon as possible. The UNGA adoption of the resolution raised hopes for an imminent ceasefire in Korea. However, Spender made it clear the UN/US position was that an “immediate cease-fire was conditioned on” Communist “acceptance” of an armistice agreement and the Indian proposal.<sup>80</sup>

The passage of the Indian resolution marked the culmination of the formal UN debate on the Korean War POW issue. Although the Communists initially rejected the resolution, in February 1953, they accepted the UN/US offer to exchange sick and wounded POWs and this was completed in April. Stalin’s death in March was followed by the resumption of the peace talks at Panmunjom in April. The Communists accepted the voluntary repatriation of POWs in June and the Korean War armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. Under the terms of the armistice, all POWs who chose to return home were exchanged. Those who refused repatriation were handed over to the custody of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC). All POWs who still refused to be repatriated after UN/US and Communist screening under NNRC supervision were subsequently released.<sup>81</sup>

Spender’s alignment with the US on voluntary repatriation of POWs enabled him to exercise considerable influence in the negotiations to secure UN/US support for the Indian resolution. Though Stalin’s death was decisive in enabling the USSR and the Chinese to accept voluntary repatriation, the POW issue was the greatest obstacle to the UN’s conclusion of the Korean War. Spender’s strong support of the American position helped strengthen the wider US-Australia relationship. Spender was able to shape Australian policy and facilitate UN/US support for the Indian

resolution without compromising on voluntary repatriation and the release of all POWs within a finite period after an armistice. Spender had a great affinity with the Americans and they, in turn, welcomed his advocacy on voluntary repatriation. Spender's contribution during the UN debate on the Korean War POWs further enhanced his central role in the evolution of the US-Australian relationship throughout their Korean engagement.

### **Conclusion**

Spender's public and private diplomacy on China and the voluntary repatriation of POWs showed that while the American-Australian relationship had evolved considerably since the beginning of their Korean engagement, Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests was limited and problematic. Spender's primary goal was to ensure the maintenance of Australia's strategic and security interests. He sought to achieve this by having Australia align itself as closely as possible with the US. Hence, Spender's criticism and frustration of the American policy inflexibility towards China which he argued was detrimental to the strategic and security interests of the US, Australia and China. Conversely, Spender's commitment to the principle of voluntary repatriation of POWs wholly resonated with the Americans and was in sync with US policy. Thus, Spender played a crucial role in the negotiations between the US and its allies that led to the adoption of the Indian resolution on POWs without compromising on voluntary repatriation.

Spender was gravely concerned the Chinese intervention in Korea and the belligerent American response would lead to an expanded war that would threaten Australian strategic and security interests. While strongly concurring with the Americans on the need to confront Chinese aggression, Spender also argued that

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diplomacy offered the best avenue to reduce tensions and avert an expanded war. Spender urged the US to adopt a more flexible approach towards China and never wavered from his belief that a diplomatic accommodation was in the best long term interests of the US, China and Australia.

Indeed, Spender privately told Dulles a more flexible and conciliatory approach to China would promote American and Chinese strategic interests by lessening Chinese dependency on the USSR, hastening the end of the Korean War, and increase prospects for peace and security in the Asia-Pacific. While Dulles accepted Spender's reasoning, the Cold War political reality in Washington and Canberra ruled out a rapprochement with China. Thus, Spender's attempt to influence US and Australian China policy at this broad level proved fruitless.

Spender wanted Australia to be as closely aligned to the US as possible because he believed it best served Australian strategic and security interests. He was convinced that if Australia consistently demonstrated it was a strong and reliable ally, American policy would consider Australian interests. Spender also wanted an Australian voice in the formulation of US policy that impacted on Australian interests. Spender's impatience with the rigidity of American China policy and frustration with US domination of Korean policy, was perhaps tacit recognition that the US would always act in its own interests and that Australia's capacity to influence American policy was at best limited and problematic.

However, with the support of the Truman Administration, Spender took advantage of the ambivalence of the Menzies government to align Australia with the

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US on the voluntary repatriation of POWs, and played a crucial role during the UN debate on the POW impasse. Spender was a strong advocate for the American stance arguing the UN/US was morally obliged to ensure the principle of voluntary repatriation remained inviolable. Spender proposed and facilitated crucial amendments to the Indian resolution on POWs that bridged the divide between the US and its allies and enabled them to support the resolution without compromising on voluntary repatriation.

Spender's public and private diplomacy on China and the voluntary repatriation of POWs further demonstrates the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement in the evolution and strengthening of their relationship. Spender was the Australian with the greatest affinity towards the US. Throughout the US-Australian Korean engagement, Spender was the most important of the Australians who shaped the nature of the relationship and forged the formal alliance between the two nations. However, Spender's diplomacy also shows that despite the alignment of US and Australian China and Korea policy, the relationship between the two nations remained nuanced and problematic. Spender's diplomacy was a paradoxical reminder that despite the growing US-Australian strategic and security alignment and collaboration, Australia's capacity to influence American policy remained limited.

### Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Spender was Australia's Minister for External Affairs, 1949-51 and Ambassador to the US, 1951-58. While serving as Ambassador, Spender also often acted as Head of the Australian UN delegation. The best analysis of Spender's time as Ambassador is David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington: An Ambassador's Vision of Australian-American Relations, 1951-58", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 2, 1996, pp 278-295. See also David Lowe, "Percy Spender and the American Century", *The Trevor Reese Memorial Lecture 2002* (Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, King's College London, University of London, 2002) pp 1-37. Perhaps surprisingly, Spender did not write about his ambassadorship and Korean War diplomacy in his memoirs, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969) and *Politics and a Man* (Collins, Sydney, 1972). Even the only full length biography of Spender, David Lowe's, *Australian Between Empires: The Life of Percy Spender* (Pickering & Chatto, London, 2010), contains scant references to his service as ambassador and his Korean War diplomacy. Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) provides an extensive analysis of Spender's impact on Australian Korean War policy whereas my focus is the significance of Spender's Korean War diplomacy on the evolving US-Australian relationship. Chapter 22 of O'Neill's official history which sketches Spender's diplomacy on the voluntary repatriation of POWs is especially pertinent to this chapter. David Lowe, "Percy Spender, Minister and Ambassador", in Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making, 1941-1969* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003) pp 62-87, is a very good analysis of Spender's impact on the making of Australian foreign policy. Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War: Communism in the Far East and the American Struggle for Hegemony in the Cold War* (I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2014) examines US and Commonwealth diplomacy during the Korean War. Barnes's analysis (see Ch 5 on the Indian Resolution, especially pp 155, 164 and 166) that Spender was only concerned about pleasing the Americans is a too simple and rigid interpretation of his diplomacy on voluntary repatriation. It overlooks Spender's success in facilitating amendments to the Menon resolution that made it acceptable to the US and its UN allies. Barnes's portrayal of Spender as an American sycophant ignores Spender's criticisms of US China and Korea policy examined in this chapter. Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War: The Case of Korea* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2004) analyse Australian diplomacy in Korea throughout the period covered by this thesis. However, their concern is the level of Commonwealth, primarily Canadian, influence on US Korean policy. Chapter Four of their study recognises Australia's and Spender's contribution to the Commonwealth's influence on the US during the UN POW debate. However, similar to Barnes, their analysis that Australia and Spender were only concerned with pleasing the US is a little too simplistic.
- <sup>2</sup> David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington", p 285. Lowe recognised but did not analyse Spender's Korean War diplomacy.
- <sup>3</sup> David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington", p 282.
- <sup>4</sup> David Lowe, "Percy Spender and the American Century".
- <sup>5</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995) Chapters 7 and 8; Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1990) Chapters 5-6; Charles Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (Oxford University Press, 2014); Charles Young, "POWs: The Hidden Reason for Forgetting Korea", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 317-332.
- <sup>6</sup> Neville Meaney, "Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 38, 3, 1992, pp 316-33.
- <sup>7</sup> Transcript of Spender's remarks, June 8, 1951, Spender Papers, National Library of Australia (hereafter NLA), Box 1, Folder 5, MS 4875.
- <sup>8</sup> Statement by Minister for External Affairs (Spender) in the House of Representatives on Chinese Intervention in Korea, November 29, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875.
- <sup>9</sup> Spender sought to prevent further escalation of tensions by reiterating the four key UN/US goals in Korea: "successful action against [North Korean] aggression", the "establishment of machinery for creating at the earliest possible date a unified Korea", with a government "freely chosen by the people of the whole of Korea", the "withdrawal" of UN troops upon completion of "their task", and limiting the "area of the present conflict" to the Korean peninsula. Labelling these as "positive objectives", Spender also said it was "important" to emphasise the UN/US "had no intention of using Korea as a spring-board for an attack on Manchuria", it had "no desire to interfere with the supply of electric

power from North Korea to Manchuria” and, “in general”, the UN/US “did not wish to interfere with the internal affairs of China.” Spender said the “limitations” of UN/US “objectives in Korea” needed to be made clear because “certain fantastic statements” by Chinese officials in Peking and the UN “suggested” China “might really believe” the UN “proposed to use Korea ... to threaten the territorial integrity of China or hamper its economic development.”

Press Release by Spender on the Communist Chinese intervention in the Korean War, December 2, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875. Emphasis in above quote in original.

Spender’s remarks on China’s border concerns were similar to British viewpoints. See Peter Farrar, “Britain’s Proposal for a Buffer Zone South of the Yalu in November 1950: Was it a Neglected Opportunity to End the Fighting in Korea?”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 2, 1983: 327-351.

<sup>10</sup> Press Release by Spender on the Communist Chinese intervention in the Korean War, December 2, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875.

<sup>11</sup> Spender “emphasised the continuing consultation” between Australian and other UN/US officials, especially in London, Washington and New York. Spender indicated the Australian government’s “views” on China’s entry into the Korean War, “had been conveyed personally” to Attlee before his departure to meet with Truman in Washington. Spender outlined five “broad principles of policy”, each emphasising the diplomacy and restraint that underpinned Australia’s position. These were “to give effect to the principles and purposes” of the UN Charter “in accordance” with which UN members “had sent forces to Korea to resist aggression”; confining the “area of conflict” to the Korean peninsula; distinguishing an Australian perspective “as distinct from a purely European point of view, in determining what action was necessary in order to prevent or resist aggression in the Far East”; consideration of all possible options regarding “peaceful negotiation before undertaking new and irrevocable commitments in the military field”; focussing on the “best methods of giving effect to these great principles.”

Press Release by Spender on the Communist Chinese intervention in the Korean War, December 2, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875.

<sup>12</sup> Press Release by Spender on the Communist Chinese intervention in the Korean War, December 2, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875.

<sup>13</sup> Spender’s New Year’s Message, December 31, 1950, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 13, MS 4875.

<sup>14</sup> Press Statement by Spender, January 18, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>15</sup> Press Statement by Spender, January 18, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>16</sup> Press Statement by Spender, January 21, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>17</sup> Spender dismissed suggestions the aggressor resolution would have “dangerous consequences”, and that the UN would now have to impose sanctions on China. He said “further measures” would be a matter for each UN member to consider. Spender did say that “deliberations” on additional measures would be “deferred” if the UN Good Offices Committee reported “satisfactory progress in its efforts” to arrange negotiations with Chinese representatives “to bring about a cessation of hostilities and achievement” of UN “objectives by peaceful means.” Responding to criticism that China’s reaction to the aggressor resolution would be to reject all attempts to negotiate an end to hostilities in Korea, Spender said the UN “had no alternative” to taking this action “since to do otherwise would paralyse” the UN “in this and similar future incidents.” Spender said that “in no circumstances could” the UN “be diverted by any implied threat that its standing offer of negotiation will be rejected merely because the great majority” of UN members “pronounce facts as they exist, namely that Communist China, has by its acts in support of the North Koreans, engaged in aggression.”

Press Statement by Spender, January 31, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>18</sup> Press Statement by Spender, January 31, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>19</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>20</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875. Sandra Penrose, “Recognising the People’s Republic of China: A Reappraisal of Australian Foreign Policy During the First Menzies Ministry 1950-51”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 44, 2, 1998, pp 209-24 and E.M. Andrews, “Australia and China, 1949: The Failure to Recognise the PRC”, *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 13, 1985, pp 29-50, provide two substantive and nuanced analyses of why the Menzies government did not recognise China.

<sup>21</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875. Emphasis in original.

<sup>22</sup> Spender stated that if the UN “had not had the courage to pass a resolution of this kind, in the face of the open defiance of the Chinese Communists and their refusal to accept reasonable offers of peaceful

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settlement, the moral strength” of the UN “would have been seriously weakened and the resulting lack of confidence in its integrity might well have proved fatal.”

Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>23</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>24</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>25</sup> Statement by Spender in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>26</sup> Press Statement by Spender, April 10, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>27</sup> Press Statement by Spender, April 10, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>28</sup> Press Statement by Spender, April 10, 1951, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875.

<sup>29</sup> Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 14, MS 4875. The quotations are from Press Statement by Spender, April 10, 1951.

<sup>30</sup> Priscilla Roberts, “Hickerson, John D.”, in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Korean War: A Political, Social and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 246-247.

<sup>31</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, Briefing of Ambassadors on Korea, June 8, 1951, Papers of Harry S Truman, Harry S Truman Library (hereafter HSTL), Independence Missouri: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3. Folder: Memos on Briefings of Ambassadors, April 11-July 12, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, Briefing of Ambassadors on Korea, June 8, 1951, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Document File Subseries: Memoranda on Briefing of Ambassadors, January 12-April 10, 1951 to World Reaction to Korean Developments [2 of 3: July 10-28, 1950] Box 3. Folder: Memos on Briefing of Ambassadors, April 11-July 12, 1951.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum by Spender, “Tentative Thinking on Gromyko’s Reply”, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 8, Folder marked Miscellaneous Papers and documents – General, MS 4875, undated but very likely written at some stage between June 23, 1951, when the Soviets announced their proposal for negotiations for an armistice and a ceasefire and June 25, 1951, when the PRC accepted this proposal. This document was certainly written before June 30, 1951, when the UN/US announced its acceptance of the Soviet proposal. Emphasis in original.

<sup>34</sup> The Korean War armistice talks began in Kaesong on July 10, 1951, and immediately stalled because of the Communist’s insistence on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and the 38th Parallel as the demarcation line between North and South Korea. Whereas, the UN/US wanted the demarcation line to align with the current battlefield positions of the opposing forces marked by a demilitarised zone, the Communists continued to insist on the 38th Parallel. The Communists suspended the negotiations on August 23, 1951, accusing the UN/US of violating the Kaesong neutral zone. The talks resumed at Panmunjom on October 25, 1951. Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, remains the most substantive analysis of the Korean War truce talks. Charles Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate* (Macmillan, New York, 1955) and William H. Vatcher, *Panmunjom: The Story of the Korean Military Armistice Negotiations* (Praeger, New York, 1958) are useful accounts of the truce talks by two participants.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from Spender to Dulles, January 31, 1952, John Foster Dulles Papers (hereafter Dulles Papers), Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University (hereafter SML), Box 65: Folder: Spender, Percy, 1952. A copy of this letter is also in the Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 8, MS 4875.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Spender to Dulles, January 31, 1952, Dulles Papers, SML, Box 65: Folder: Spender, Percy, 1952, SML. A copy of this letter is also in the Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 8, MS 4875.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Spender to Dulles, January 31, 1952, Dulles Papers, SML, Box 65: Folder: Spender, Percy, 1952, SML. A copy of this letter is also in the Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 8, MS 4875.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Spender to Casey, June 2, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>39</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>40</sup> Spender noted the British Foreign Office had raised the possibility that “a formula could be worked out which would enable” voluntary repatriation to be “preserved whilst providing a ‘face saver’” for



the Communists. The British hope was premised on the belief that the Chinese prisoners were the “hard core of the problem”. Spender thought this possibility was worth exploring but was not optimistic, noting the British “did not develop” this idea and on “no occasion offered to seek clarification.”

Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875. Emphasis in original.

<sup>41</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>42</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>43</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875. Emphasis in original.

<sup>44</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum on Korea, Spender to Casey, June 24, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 1, Folder 3, MS 4875.

<sup>46</sup> The 21 Power draft resolution was so named because it was agreed upon at a meeting chaired by the Americans of 21 UN members who were “contributing forces, goods or services” to the UN/US effort in Korea. India did not participate so it could maintain its neutrality. See Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War*, Ch 5 especially pp 157-161. The quotation is on page 158. See also Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 315- 316; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4; William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, Chapters 7 and 8; Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, Chapters 5-6; Charles Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (Oxford University Press, 2014); Charles Young, “POWs: The Hidden Reason for Forgetting Korea”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33, 2, 2010, pp 317-332.

<sup>47</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 315-16; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4.

<sup>48</sup> Priscilla Roberts, “Menon, V.K. Krishna”, in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*: (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 430-31.

<sup>49</sup> Department of State Telegram, Acheson to US Delegation at UN, September 19, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of armistice question in the UN, 1952 [1 of 2: May 24, 1951-Oct 30, 1952]: and Department of State Telegram, Austin to Acheson on Indian Proposals re POWs and Korean armistice, Nov 6, 1952, Folder 51: Consideration of armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. For biographical details of Menon, see Priscilla Roberts, “Menon, V.K. Krishna”, in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*: (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 430-31.

<sup>50</sup> Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 316.

<sup>51</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson, on Indian proposal for POWs, November 7, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. See also Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 317; Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War*, p 164; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4.

<sup>52</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson on discussions regarding the Indian peace proposals, November 13, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. See also Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 315-322; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4.

<sup>53</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson on meeting of the representatives of the co-sponsors of the 21 power resolution to consider the Menon proposal, November 14, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>54</sup> Keen to “emphasise that sincere efforts are being made by very many” UN members “to assist in bringing about an armistice” in Korea, Spender said whether this could ultimately be achieved would

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depend “on the attitude of the Chinese Communists and the North Koreans to what finally comes out of our present discussions. They know that peace in Korea is possible on honourable and just terms.”  
Press release by Spender, November 15, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>55</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson on meeting of the representatives of the co-sponsors of the 21 power resolution to consider the Indian resolution, November 17, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>56</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969) p 703. See also Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War*, p 166.

<sup>57</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson on meeting of the 8 member subcommittee to consider amendments to Menon’s proposal, November 20, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. See also Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War*, p 166; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4.

<sup>58</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson on meeting of the 8 member subcommittee to consider amendments to Menon’s proposal, November 20, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>59</sup> Telegram, Acheson to Truman, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1952-1954, Korea, vol XV, Part 1 (United States Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1952-1954) p 664.

<sup>60</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>61</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>62</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875. This was a quote Spender used from an article by Jean S. Pictet, “The New Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims”, *The American Journal of International Law*, 45, 3, 1951, pp 462-475. The quote Spender used is on page 462. Pictet was then the Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

<sup>63</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875. Emphasis in original.

<sup>64</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>65</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>66</sup> Spender wanted to avoid ambiguity cautioning the Communists could interpret detailed proposals as “equivalent to an offer.” Although improbable, should the Communists accept the UN/US proposals, the POW “impasse” would end, making it possible to finalise an armistice that would end the war. However, Spender was concerned the Communists would reject the proposals and interpret them as signalling an allied willingness to relent on voluntary repatriation. Nevertheless, although Spender feared the UN would be “made a bargaining counter for further concessions”, he said it was “probably a risk we must take” to reach an agreement that would break the POW impasse and end the conflict.  
Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>67</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>68</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>69</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>70</sup> Statement by Spender on Korean War POWs, November 21, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>71</sup> Department of State Telegram, Austin to Acheson, November 21, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952

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[2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. See also *ibid*, Department of State Telegram, Washington DC to US Embassy, New Delhi, on Indian resolution, November 22, 1952.

<sup>72</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson, on discussion of meeting of 21 co-sponsors regarding amended Indian resolution, November 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>73</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson, on discussion of meeting of 21 co-sponsors regarding amended Indian resolution, November 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>74</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson, on discussion of meeting of 21 co-sponsors regarding amended Indian resolution, November 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. In an ABC broadcast on December 1, 1953, Spender offered what proved to be a remarkably prophetic assessment of the situation regarding the Korean peninsula. He was cautious about the capacity of the UN to resolve the Korean deadlock and division despite the July armistice. Spender said referring the Korean issue to the UN would not “necessarily provide any solution or any progress in the solution. Korea represents in microcosm and in many ways the vast and as yet unbridgeable political schism which presently divides the world. It presents a problem thorny with very many difficulties.” However, Spender did express cautious optimism stating that “perhaps the best we can hope for is a continued armistice in which the alleviating influence of time may reduce antagonisms and permit fruitful discussions to take place, or give us a de facto answer for a problem which appears at the moment to defy de jure resolution.” See Transcript of Spender’s broadcast on the ABC, December 14, 1953, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 17, MS 4875.

<sup>75</sup> Department of State Telegram, US UN delegation to Acheson, on discussion of meeting of 21 co-sponsors regarding amended Indian resolution, November 24, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952].

<sup>76</sup> Statement by Spender on the Indian Resolution regarding the Korean War POWs, November 27, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>77</sup> Statement by Spender on the Indian Resolution regarding the Korean War POWs, November 27, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875. See also Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, pp 321-322.

<sup>78</sup> Statement by Spender on the Indian Resolution regarding the Korean War POWs, November 27, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875. See also Robert O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 322.

<sup>79</sup> UN General Assembly, UNCURK Report, Text of Draft [Indian] Resolution adopted by the First Committee at its 535th Meeting on December 1, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. The vote for this Resolution is recorded in *ibid*, UN, Department of Public Information, Press Release GA/921, December 3, 1952.

On the same day but before the UN vote, Spender spoke to the Economic Club of Detroit. He reiterated some of the themes he had espoused during the UN debate on the Indian Resolution. Spender was characteristically forthright, telling his audience a fundamental “clash of ideas” between nations like the US and Australia who believed in the freedom of the individual, and the Communist nations led by the USSR who believed individuals belonged to the state, was at the core of the POW impasse. Spender offered a considered and realist appraisal of the stalemated Korean War truce talks, noting this “clash of ideas in microcosm” was evident in the UN Korean debate. The POW impasse “revealed the basic conflict which cleaves the world.” Spender declared “those who expect some simple solution in respect of Korea should understand that basic conflict to realize how difficult a solution is.” See Address by Spender, “The Place of Pacific Security in the Struggle for World Peace”, Economic Club of Detroit, December 1, 1952, Spender Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 15, MS 4875.

<sup>80</sup> UN, Department of Public Information, Press Release GA/921, December 3, 1952, Papers of Harry S Truman, HSTL: SMOF: Selected Records Relating to the Korean War: Department of State: Topical

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File Subseries: Folders 51-52, Box 12, Folder 51: Consideration of the armistice question in the UN, 1952 [2 of 2: Nov-Dec 1952]. For the text of the Indian Resolution, see UN General Assembly, UNCURK Report, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its 399th plenary meeting on December 3, 1952, A/Resolution/18, December 4, 1952.

<sup>81</sup> The five member Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) consisted of India as umpire and chair, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Poland. India provided a brigade, approximately 6,000 troops, the Indian Custodian Force (CFI), to guard the POWs.

The Communists held approximately 13,000 UN/US and South Korean POWs. Of these there were 3,000 Americans and 29 Australians. 359 POWs (23 Americans, 1 British and 335 South Koreans) refused repatriation. During the screening period, only 10 opted to return home.

The UN/US held approximately 132,000 Communist POWs. 14,702 Chinese and 7,890 North Korean POWs refused repatriation. 137 decided to return home during the screening period.

Approximately 49,000 Chinese and North Korean POWs refused repatriation. This figure includes the 27,000 POWs in South Korean custody released by Rhee in June 1953. Rhee vehemently opposed the armistice and freed these POWs rather than turn them over to the NNRC.

See Sunghun Cho, "Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission", in Spencer Tucker (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002) pp 482-83. See also Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, p 378; Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, p 191; Graeme Mount, with Andre Laferriere, *The Diplomacy of War*, Ch 4.

## CONCLUSION

The alignment of American and Australian interests and the engagement of their officials in Korea, 1947-53, were significant elements in the evolution of the relationship between the two countries and the making of the ANZUS military alliance in the formative years of the Cold War. Key US and Australian officials – John Foster Dulles, diplomat and Special Representative of the President; Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs and Ambassador to the US; James Plimsoll, diplomat and member of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK); Samuel Jackson, member of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), Lieutenant-General John Hodge, Commander of the United States Army Forces in Korea; Joseph Jacobs, political advisor to Hodge; Arthur Jamieson, member of UNTCOK and the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK); Patrick Shaw, Head of the Australian Tokyo Mission and member of UNCOK; John Muccio, Ambassador to South Korea; and Allan Lightner, Charge d’Affaires at the US Embassy in Pusan – were pivotal in establishing during their Korean engagement, the foundation for the intricate cooperation between the two nations that has since defined their continually evolving relationship.

Despite the eventual convergence of their strategic interests on the Korean peninsula in the aftermath of World War Two, the US and Australia had similar rather than identical geo-interests. Both nations sought to co-opt the other into shaping their relationship and alliance to benefit their respective strategic and security interests. Their relationship during this period was much more nuanced and problematic than

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has been commonly perceived, and is also a cautionary reminder of the limits of Australian influence on US policy.

The Americans established a presence in Korea in 1945 when they divided the peninsula at the 38th Parallel with the Soviets to prevent a power vacuum in the wake of the Japanese defeat. The first phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement began in 1947 when Australia involved itself in Korea because it sought to exercise some influence on the Japanese peace settlement. Korea had been under Japanese rule since 1910 and Australia saw Korean independence and a post war settlement with Japan as synonymous. Despite its defeat, Japan was still perceived as a major security threat by Australia. The Chifley government was determined to ensure Japan remained subjugated and unable to again threaten Australia.

World War Two exposed Britain's inability to defend Australia but there was no American intent or expectation that the strategic necessity that spawned their cooperation with Australia in the war against Japan would evolve into a formal defence alliance once the Pacific war ended. However, Australia sought its post-World War Two security under the US geo-strategic umbrella. Canberra's strategic and security objectives were to ensure American engagement in the region and a weakened Japan.

Herbert Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, 1941-49, and the Department of External Affairs (EA) wanted an independent and unified Korea to help contain the possible resurgence of Japanese power. By 1947, American and Australian strategic and security interests converged in Korea but the two nations had divergent goals.

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While Australia was in Korea to engage with the US to prevent a resurgent Japan, the US was in Korea to prevent Communists filling the power vacuum. This was the key point of divergence for much of the US-Australian Korean engagement leading up to the ANZUS Treaty. The US was only concerned about the Communist threat, whereas Australia was more concerned about a resurgent Japan than communism.

At the start of their Korean engagement from January to May 1948, the US and Australia pursued divergent policies and the relationship between their officials was acrimonious. There were differences over having the 1948 election for a Korean Assembly only in southern Korea, over UNTCOK's role in that election, over eventual Korean unification, and over support for Syngman Rhee, the Korean nationalist leader. The US sought to have southern Korea and Japan as strategic allies containing communism, whereas Australia's interest was much more limited: it wanted a unified Korea as a bulwark against Japan and communism. These policy differences exacerbated the tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs and made the Americans and Australians wary of each other.

Both the US and Australia wanted a free and united Korea. However, the Americans grasped that worsening US-Soviet relations and deepening Cold War politics meant the prospects for Korean unification were evaporating. Hence the US resolved to keep southern Korea free even if the peninsula remained divided; the election for a Korean Assembly in the southern part of the peninsula implied the creation of a new government and state. The US wanted a stable and legitimate anti-Communist government in southern Korea. Hence, the Truman Administration supported Rhee despite his authoritarian tendencies.

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Evatt and EA opposed holding an election for a Korean Assembly only in southern Korea arguing it would leave Korea indefinitely divided. A united Korea helping to contain Japan was much more critical to Canberra's perceived security interests than America's desire to create an anti-Communist bulwark in southern Korea. Thus Australian policy prioritised Korean unification whereas the US focussed on denying southern Korea to the Communists.

Despite the tensions between Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs, their regular direct contact led to a familiarity amongst them. Jackson exasperated the Americans but gave Australia a voice and Hodge and Jacobs acknowledged his tenacity. Although Canberra was unable to influence US policy, the Americans could not ignore the Australians because regional allies were crucial to the Truman Administration's Communist containment strategy. US officials were concerned Jackson could influence other American allies whose support Washington needed but the US needed Australian and other allied support to have the new South Korean government recognised and supported by the UN.

Australia also had concerns about UNTCOK observation of the 1948 election because, having been tasked with facilitating Korean unification, the Commission would then be seen as accepting the division of Korea and, it lacked the resources to observe an election. In the end, Australia decided to support the Commission majority which voted to hold and observe the election, thereby accepting US policy. Evatt and EA reasoned it was in Australia's best interests to remain on UNTCOK and continue to engage the Americans. Although Australia was unable to influence the



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US on holding the 1948 southern Korean election or on UNTCOK's role in the process, by remaining on the Commission, Canberra hoped to perhaps influence future US Korean policy. Evatt and EA calculated that if Australia withdrew from UNTCOK, it would lose an avenue to engage with the US.

Evatt and EA set a precedent. Throughout their Korean engagement, Australia always continued engaging the Americans even when it had concerns about their policies. Canberra sought to maximise every opportunity to directly engage the US, believing this was its only real hope to influence US geo-strategic policy to benefit Australian interests.

In these ways, the respective overlapping but divergent geo-strategic and security interests of both nations converged in Korea. Thus, paradoxically, their Korean engagement suited both Washington and Canberra.

From the May 1948 election to the October 1949 Communist victory in the Chinese civil war, the US-Australian Korean engagement saw an alignment of the geo-strategic interests of the two nations and a marked improvement in the relationship between their officials engaged in Korea. Jackson's departure from UNTCOK heralded a noticeable reduction in tensions between US and Australian officials. Arthur Jamieson replaced Jackson on UNTCOK and with Patrick Shaw, formed a cordial relationship with Hodge and Jacobs. Also, the collaboration between John Foster Dulles and James Plimsoll at the UN, led to an opportunity for Australia to have some influence on US Korean policy. The growing importance of the US-Australian Korean engagement in the evolution of their relationship can be attributed

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to two factors: the amenable relationship between Jamieson, Shaw, Hodge and Jacobs, and the alignment of US and Australian Korean policies in response to changed events in Korea and the Cold War.

Nevertheless, policy differences between the US and Australia remained. Evatt and EA disagreed with their American counterparts about the status of the newly elected South Korean Assembly, about Korean unification and about the function of UNTCOK and its successor UNCOK. Australia still regarded Japan as a major threat to its security but the Berlin Blockade and Airlift led Canberra to re-evaluate its perception of the Soviet danger and nature of the Cold War. Together with the ascendancy of the Communists in the Chinese civil war and the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb, these European events heightened the geo-political significance of Korea for the US and Australia which led to a closer alignment of their Korean policies and created a greater potential for co-operation. This convergence of US and Australian security interests in Korea which was intertwined with Australia's strategic reliance on the Americans, continued to position the US relationship as Canberra's foreign policy priority.

Nevertheless, Australia opposed the US move to recognise the new South Korean Assembly elected in the May 1948 election as the national government for the entire Korean peninsula, arguing it would perpetuate the division of Korea. Evatt and EA accepted the legitimacy of the Assembly but insisted its jurisdiction was limited to South Korea where the election took place. Canberra would not accept the Assembly was a national Korean government. The Truman Administration sought UN support for international recognition of South Korea hoping this would strengthen its security

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against a North Korean incursion. The collaboration between John Foster Dulles and James Plimsoll which produced the US-Australia-Chinese joint UN resolution in December 1948 was the result of the conciliatory US approach. This resolution recognised the Assembly as the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea), it did not require the UN to recognise the ROK, and it created UNCOK to succeed UNTCOK to facilitate the stability and security of South Korea and continue advocating for Korean unification. In turn, Australia accepted the formation of the ROK which meant the indefinite division of Korea. The American acceptance of the Australian position that the Assembly was solely the government of the ROK, rather than a Korean national government, showed Australia could exert some influence on US Korean policy.

While US and Australian Korean policies were aligning on tactical matters, geo-strategic differences between them remained. The US position on Japan and South Korea as regional bulwarks against communism firmed whereas Australia continued to regard Japan as a security threat and wanted a unified Korea to curb the potential resurgence of Japanese power. Canberra wanted the Korean impasse resolved as part of the Japanese peace settlement. It is revealing that Evatt and EA had posted Jamieson, Shaw and Plimsoll to Japan and Korea because they were Japanese experts, and were meant to signal Australia's determination to have a voice in shaping the Japanese peace settlement.

The Communist ascendancy in the Chinese civil war throughout 1949 and the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb in August that same year prompted another re-evaluation of Australian strategic policy. The global and regional turn of events made

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Canberra very ambivalent about its Korean presence whereas the US wanted Australia to remain. This materialised in Shaw's lukewarm stance about Australia remaining on UNCOK which superseded UNTCOK in December 1948, and his warning to Canberra against committing itself too deeply in South Korea because there was a high probability the fledgling new nation would not survive.

However, like Shaw himself, the Chifley government could not separate its strategic and security interests in Korea from cultivating the US relationship because a withdrawal from Korea risked weakening the American relationship. The Korean engagement was crucial to Evatt's and External Affairs' objective to secure a US presence in the region to safeguard Australia's security. Again and again, this strategic goal led Australia to accede to US actions which it opposed. Australia's presence in Korea meant direct access to American officials and an avenue to influence US policy to benefit Australian interests.

Throughout 1948-49, the significance of the US-Australian Korean engagement in the evolution of their relationship was growing. The importance of individual relationships to the deepening connections between the two nations was also increasingly apparent. Korean policy differences had been exacerbated by the tensions among Jackson, Hodge and Jacobs. Jackson's departure from UNTCOK was a clear turning point. The mutual respect among Jamieson, Shaw, Hodge and Jacobs resulted in a noticeable improvement in the tone of the US-Australian Korean engagement. The collaboration between Dulles and Plimsoll on the US-Australian-Chinese joint resolution on Korea further signalled that the US-Australian Korean engagement was fostering an alignment between the two nations.

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By October 1949, the nature of the US-Australian Korean engagement had evolved considerably. The US and Australia were now closely aligned in Korea and the Chinese Communist victory and Soviet possession of the atomic bomb increased the geo-political importance of the peninsula for both nations and cast it in a new, and shared, light.

From 1947-49, the US-Australian engagement in Korea situated the peninsula at the epicentre of their evolving relationship. Australia's continued presence in the Korean peninsula was itself remarkable: the US, Soviet Union and Australia were the only three nations that maintained a continuous (diplomatic) presence in Korea from 1947-49. Australian officials served on UNTCOK and UNCOK through to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Understanding this stage of the US-Australian Korean engagement is essential to explaining its course and nature during the Korean War, notably the context of the origins of the ANZUS alliance.

The second phase of the American-Australian Korean engagement, 1950-51, saw the US go to war to defend South Korea with Australia and its other UN allies, and the making of the ANZUS Treaty that established the formal alliance between the two nations. The outbreak of the Korean War again altered the American-Australian relationship. Both nations had a renewed interest in cooperation: America's search for allies in Korea together with Australia's pursuit of a security treaty with the US meant Korea assumed added significance in the evolution of the US-Australian relationship. However, the war also created new points of disagreement. Australia's continued ambivalence towards South Korea, the fortuitous circumstances in which

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Australia sent armed forces to the Korean War, Australia's opposition to US designs to bomb Manchuria following the Chinese intervention in the conflict, and Australian criticism of General Douglas MacArthur's leadership of the UN/US forces, were a reminder that the trajectory of the US-Australian Korean engagement remained problematic. Once again the outcome rested significantly on the resolution of these policy differences by Australian and American diplomats.

At the beginning of 1950, South Korea's overtures for diplomatic and economic links with Australia presented Canberra with a dilemma. The Menzies government and External Affairs were willing to consider greater economic ties to the ROK but were wary of becoming too deeply involved with a regime they regarded as unstable, unsavoury and unlikely to survive. However, Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs and EA, determined to attain a security treaty with the US, were never going to close an avenue that gave them direct access to the Americans.

Australia established limited diplomatic and economic links with the ROK despite US encouragement for stronger ties. Not wanting to reject US wishes outright, Australia managed to accommodate the Americans without involving itself too deeply in the ROK. Australia recognised the ROK and agreed to expand trade links but refused to open full diplomatic relations. Australia also maintained its presence on UNCOK because it saw Korea as an avenue to maintain direct engagement with the Americans. Spender and EA calculated this was essential to the pursuit of a defence agreement with the US.

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The Truman Administration promoted stronger relations between Australia and South Korea because it wanted the ROK to become a secure and stable bulwark against communism in the region. Links between Australia, other US regional allies and South Korea, served American geo-strategic interests. The US argued Australian aid to the ROK would benefit all three nations. A stable South Korea containing communism was in Australia's security interests too. Washington did not convince Canberra. Australia's concern was its relationship with the US, not South Korea. The US wanted Australia to help the ROK whereas Australia wanted to engage the Americans. Aiding the ROK was not Canberra's priority.

When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Australia began to reap some dividends from its presence in Korea vis-à-vis the US. The Truman Administration responded immediately to the North Korean invasion of South Korea, deploying UN authorised forces to defend the ROK. Australia again proved fortuitously instrumental in this development for the US used the report of Major Francis Peach and Squadron Leader Ronald Rankin, the two Australian UNCOK observers who had witnessed the situation at the 38th Parallel days before the outbreak of war, to declare North Korea the aggressor and attain UN authorisation for a military intervention. Australia's immediate commitment of air and naval forces based in Japan drew American attention and gratitude. Canberra had made itself visible when Washington sought allies, this time military rather than just diplomatic and economic, as in past events. Indeed, Dean Acheson, Secretary of State, cited Australia's contribution in his efforts to persuade other UN allies to contribute forces to Korea.

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Nevertheless, Australia's rapid deployment of forces masked its wariness about an extensive Korean involvement. The Menzies government regarded Malaya, South East Asia and the Middle East as much more strategically important to Australia.

Spender was the exception, seizing the opportunity the Korean War presented to Australia to gain traction and leverage in Washington in pursuit of a security treaty with the Americans. Spender argued for a strong Australian commitment to Korea and was determined to ensure the US saw Australia acting independently of Britain. Spender was not deterred by Prime Minister Robert Menzies' opposition to sending Australian ground forces to Korea. In Menzies' absence and contrary to his express wishes, Spender forcefully persuaded the acting Prime Minister, Arthur Fadden, to commit Australian ground forces to Korea before the British. Spender's bold judgement enhanced Australia's standing in Washington. A measure of the US welcoming of Australia's Korean commitments was the invitation to Menzies to address a joint session of the US Congress. Ironically, Menzies, having instructed Spender that Australian ground troops would not be sent to Korea, was feted by the Americans because Spender ignored the directive.

The proximity to Korea of Australian troops stationed in Japan gave Canberra's commitment an additional impetus that significantly elevated Australia's status in Washington. The overlapping of immediate actions once again diminished the divergence of American and Australian strategic interests. The US wanted allied support in Korea. Australia wanted a security treaty with the Americans.



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Policy differences remained. Australia cautioned the Truman Administration over the deployment of the US 7th Fleet to protect Formosa and opposed Chiang Kai-shek's offer of Nationalist Chinese troops for Korea, warning of the risk of an expanded war with China. The US ultimately rejected Chiang's offer because it did not want to aggravate tensions with Beijing and because of the questionable quality of the Nationalist troops. Australia's pursuit of a security treaty with the US did not prevent strenuous criticisms of the American response to the Chinese intervention in Korea and Douglas MacArthur's leadership of UN/US forces.

Australia and other allies cautioned against labelling China an aggressor following its intervention in the Korean War and opposed US designs to bomb Manchuria, arguing these moves risked expanding the war beyond the Korean peninsula into a regional or global war no one wanted. Concerned the conflict could escalate and critical of MacArthur's leadership of UN/US forces, Australia pressed the Truman Administration to consult with its allies on responses to China's intervention. Reluctant to act unilaterally, the US sought allied support and this enabled Australia and other allies to moderate the American response to China's intervention. Australia and other allies urged the Americans to exercise caution and utilise diplomacy in dealing with China, arguing belligerence would make a negotiated settlement to the war considerably more difficult. The US relented over bombing China but with lukewarm Australian and allied support, it succeeded in having the UN label China an aggressor.

Although their Korean policies were now aligned, the US and Australia maintained similar rather than identical strategic and security interests. ANZUS

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became possible and was created within this context. In February 1951, John Foster Dulles led an American mission to Australia to secure Australian support for a soft Japanese peace treaty and Australian participation in a regional anti-Communist alliance system that included Japan. The three day meeting in Canberra between the Dulles mission and the Australian and New Zealand delegation led by Percy Spender produced a draft of the ANZUS Treaty. It also marked the beginning of the Dulles-Spender friendship which became a core factor in shaping and strengthening the nature of the US-Australian relationship and new alliance throughout the 1950s.

ANZUS happened because by 1951, the US concluded that a security alliance with Australia and New Zealand suited its strategic interests, not because, as the Australian ANZUS mythology says, Spender persuaded a reluctant US to agree to a security treaty in return for Australian support for a lenient Japanese peace treaty. Four key events during 1949-50 – the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb, the Communist victory in China, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the Chinese entry in that conflict – resulted in an American re-evaluation of its Asia-Pacific Communist containment strategy. ANZUS was one of the three linked defence treaties the US entered into; the other two were with the Philippines and Japan. Dulles was the central figure in the making of this regional “hub and spokes” alliance system with the US at its core.

This re-evaluation of US strategy led the Truman Administration to conclude a moderate peace treaty with Japan and include her in a regional anti-Communist containment alliance with the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. With the memory of Japanese aggression and brutality during World War Two still raw,

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Australia opposed a benign peace with Japan fearing a resurgence of its power. Only the US could contain Japan and Australia looked to America to ensure Japan would never again threaten regional security. However, whereas Australia still saw Japan as a potential enemy, the US now saw Japan as an ally against communism. It was the US desire to have Japan, Australia and New Zealand in this new regional security framework that led to the ANZUS Treaty.

Dulles was pivotal to the re-evaluation of US Asia-Pacific geo-strategy and its constituent parts: the soft Japanese peace treaty, ANZUS, the security treaties with the Philippines and Japan, and the creation of the US anti-Communist regional alliance system. Dulles saw ANZUS as part of this “hub and spokes” regional security system. He concluded the US would have to agree to a security treaty with Australia to ensure Australian acceptance of a lenient peace with Japan and Australian participation in a regional security framework that included Japan. Dulles regarded Australia as crucial to America’s geo-strategic security framework to contain communism in the region. Hence, the US agreed to ANZUS to ensure Australian and Japanese inclusion in its regional anti-Communist strategy.

This analysis of Dulles’s central role in the making of ANZUS, challenges the largely uncontested Australian narrative that Spender persuaded Dulles to agree to a treaty in return for Australian acceptance of a soft peace with Japan. Whereas the US regarded ANZUS as one element of its overall Asia-Pacific anti-Communist containment strategy, Australia considered the treaty as an American security guarantee. Notwithstanding the Communist threat, Australia remained more concerned about a resurgent Japan than it was about communism. ANZUS

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immediately became a pillar of Australian foreign and defence policy whereas for the US it was one link in its regional anti-Communist security chain.

The Americans decided on a soft peace treaty with Japan because they wanted a re-vitalised Japan integrated into an Asia-Pacific anti-Communist alliance. The Americans were focussed on the present and future Communist danger, not the extinguished Japanese threat. Although the US wanted Australian and other allied support for a benign Japanese peace treaty, this was not essential to the Truman Administration. However, the US needed allied support for Japan's inclusion in a regional security alliance. Australia was important to this US security system because of its geo-strategic location. Hence, the Truman Administration entered into ANZUS because it wanted Japan and Australia included in its regional Communist containment strategy. From Washington's perspective, ANZUS assuaged Australian and New Zealand fears of a resurgent Japan but, most importantly, allowed for the inclusion of these three nations in a regional defence alliance. ANZUS would protect Australia from communism, not Japan.

The Truman Administration finalised its Japanese and regional anti-Communist security policy before Dulles met with Spender and Frederick Doidge, New Zealand's Minister for External Affairs, in Canberra in February 1951. Indeed, Truman tasked Dulles with securing Australian and other allied support for this containment strategy on US terms. The US would enter into a defence alliance with Australia and New Zealand only if they accepted a lenient peace with Japan *and* her inclusion in a regional anti-Communist alliance system. This was non-negotiable.

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Dulles's UN experience, especially US efforts to resolve the division of Korea, led him to conclude the Americans needed to be fully engaged in Europe and Asia too, if communism were to be contained. Truman, Acheson, George Marshall (Secretary of State, 1947-49 and Secretary of Defense, 1950-51), senior State and Defense Department officials, MacArthur, and the Council on Foreign Relations came to the same conclusion. Truman appointed Dulles to negotiate the Japanese peace treaty and authorised him to make security agreements with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan to facilitate the US regional Communist containment strategy. Hence, ANZUS came into being and Dulles was its principal architect.

Dulles always saw ANZUS as a link in the anti-Communist alliance system he created. He understood the limits of US power and recognised the Americans needed allies to implement their containment strategy. Dulles also envisioned ANZUS and the other related defence treaties as the foundation of an evolving regional security system that would contain communism albeit, while also deepening existing relations among the signatories.

Since the convergence of American and Australian security interests in Korea in 1947, the peninsula had been pivotal to the growing relationship between the two nations. ANZUS formalised the evolving US-Australian relationship. The Dulles-Spender friendship which symbolised the evolution of the US-Australian relationship in the 1950s began during the ANZUS negotiations in Canberra in February 1951. As Dulles hoped, the US-Australian alliance continued to strengthen after ANZUS came into effect.

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Korea continued to remain at the epicentre of the deepening US-Australian relationship. Indeed, the diplomatic collaboration between American and Australian officials during the third phase of their Korean engagement, 1952-53, further strengthened the relationship between the two nations. During the 1952 South Korean political crisis, Canberra supported Washington's decision not to intervene in the ROK. Australia also backed the American stance on China and its insistence on the voluntary repatriation of POWs. However, the diplomacy of James Plimsoll, Australia's representative on UNCURK, and Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs and US Ambassador, during this phase of the US-Australian Korean engagement, demonstrated the growing strength of the relationship between the two nations but also the limits of Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests.

Under the 1948 constitution, the South Korean Assembly elected the president. In 1952, Rhee's opposition were in the majority in the Assembly, making his re-election unlikely. Determined to remain in power, Rhee triggered the 1952 South Korean political crisis when he moved to change the ROK constitution to have direct election of the president. Rhee's control of the security forces and the absence of a real alternative candidate ensured he would win a popular election. Rhee's use of coercion and intimidation created a dilemma for the US and her allies. Allowing Rhee to proceed unchecked would undermine the authority of the UN/US claim it was fighting to defend freedom and democracy in South Korea. Similarly, directly intervening in the domestic politics of the ROK and removing Rhee would also weaken the moral authority of the UN/US cause in Korea.

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Plimsoll's prominence in the political crisis reflected the intricate level to which the US-Australian relationship had evolved since the beginning of their Korean engagement and, was instrumental in shaping and strengthening the new alliance between the two countries. Plimsoll was highly regarded by the Americans, having worked closely with US officials, notably Dulles, at the UN, and in Korea on UNCURK. Plimsoll's leadership on the Commission, his Korean expertise, and his strong personal rapport with Rhee and the Americans, meant he was at the forefront of US attempts to resolve the crisis diplomatically. American officials sought Plimsoll's counsel and were impressed by his capacity to exert some restraining influence on Rhee.

US respect for Plimsoll's expertise meant that although the Truman Administration and Canberra rejected his advice to remove Rhee, his conduct during the crisis enhanced his reputation in External Affairs and among the Americans. Plimsoll collaborated closely with his US counterparts, Allan Lightner, Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Pusan, John Muccio, Ambassador to South Korea, Lieutenant-General Mark Clark, UN/US commander, and Lieutenant-General James Van Fleet, US Eighth Army Commander.

Plimsoll advised Dean Acheson, Secretary of State, to sanction UN/US intervention to remove Rhee, yet simultaneously sought to find a compromise to the crisis created by Rhee's move to summarily alter the ROK constitution and his intimidation and arrest of opposition Assemblymen. Although Acheson, Clark and Van Fleet opposed intervention, they too sought Plimsoll's advice about a diplomatic resolution to the crisis. Indeed, Acheson regarded Plimsoll's involvement as essential

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to facilitating a negotiated resolution to this crisis provoked by Rhee's pursuit of power which threatened to undermine the UN/US effort in Korea. Plimsoll's diplomacy sustained American goodwill towards Australia, maintained Australia's visibility in Washington when the US again sought allied support in Korea, and gave Canberra direct access to US thinking throughout the crisis.

The US regard for Plimsoll was again evident at the end of the crisis and its aftermath. Disillusioned with Rhee, most UNCURK members saw the Commission's position as untenable and wanted to leave Korea. Plimsoll and the Americans argued UNCURK's continued presence was necessary for the stabilisation of the ROK. When Casey signalled Plimsoll's transferral from Korea, Acheson pressured Canberra to keep him there, arguing his presence was crucial to UNCURK's effectiveness.

Coming so soon after ANZUS was activated, the collaboration among Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio helped lay the foundation for the practical functioning of the new US-Australian alliance. Plimsoll's crisis diplomacy was another example of the significance of personal connections between US and Australian officials and their importance in developing diplomatic channels to manage policy differences and the broader relationship between the two nations. The trust, respect and friendship between Plimsoll, Lightner and Muccio pioneered what has become a defining feature of US-Australian diplomacy since ANZUS. Their collaboration reflected the extent of the evolution of the US-Australian relationship since the beginning of their Korean engagement and signalled that the new alliance was based on a strong foundation.



## Conclusion

Whereas during the first two phases of the American-Australian Korean engagement there were policy differences between the two nations, their relationship had evolved to the extent that throughout the third phase of their Korean engagement, there was a Korean and China policy alignment between them and close collaboration between their officials. Plimsoll, Muccio and Lightner (and Percy Spender on China) gave advice that contravened the official policies of the Truman Administration and the Menzies government but the US-Australian relationship was now strong enough and flexible enough that the internal expression of alternative policy options was evidence of the foundational strength of the alliance. An appreciation of their Korean experience helps in understanding the rapid evolution of the affinity between American and Australian positions.

However, Percy Spender's public and private diplomacy on dealing with China's intervention in the Korean War and future relations with Beijing, and his tireless efforts to ensure the voluntary repatriation of POWs after the war, were cautionary reminders that although the US-Australian relationship had evolved considerably because of their Korean engagement, Australia's capacity to influence US policy to benefit its interests remained limited and problematic. Spender's primary goal was to safeguard Australia's strategic and security interests by seeking to have Australia as closely aligned to the US as possible.

Spender was frustrated and critical of US China policy because he believed American inflexibility was detrimental to the strategic and security interests of the US, China and Australia. Yet, because Washington and Canberra refused to consider political and diplomatic engagement with China, Spender had no influence on US and

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Australian China policy. Conversely, Spender's commitment to the voluntary repatriation of POWs was wholly in sync with US policy. Hence, with American backing, Spender played a crucial role in the negotiations between the US and its allies that led to the UN adoption of the Indian resolution on POWs in December 1952 that included voluntary repatriation.

Spender was deeply concerned that Chinese intervention in Korea and the belligerent US response would result in an expanded war that no one wanted and which would threaten Australia's strategic and security interests. While wholly supporting the US on confronting Chinese aggression, Spender argued diplomatic accommodation was the best avenue to reducing tensions and, in turn, this would further the long term interests of the US, China and Australia.

Although Australia followed the US in refusing to recognise China, Spender was privately urging the US to keep diplomatic channels open. Spender and Dulles recognised that the Chinese and Soviets were not natural allies and a split should be encouraged. Indeed, in 1952, Spender privately told Dulles that a more flexible and conciliatory approach to China would promote US and Chinese strategic interests by loosening Chinese dependency on the Soviets, ending the Korean War, and increasing regional peace and security prospects. Twenty years before Henry Kissinger's and Richard Nixon's rapprochement with China in 1972, Spender was telling the Americans to consider diplomatic overtures to Beijing. Dulles accepted Spender's reasoning but the Cold War political reality in Washington and Canberra ruled out a thaw with China.

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Spender expressed impatience with what he saw as the rigidity of American China policy and its parallel pattern of dominating Korean policy and allowing only minimal allied input. Washington expected its allies to accept their reduced influence. Spender's frustration was perhaps a tacit recognition that the US would always act according to its own interests and that the concerns of a junior ally on matters of high strategic policy were not likely to be seriously considered by Washington. At this grand strategy level, Australia's capacity to influence US policy was, at best, limited and problematic.

Nevertheless, despite being a minor ally, Australia could have some influence on American policy, always of course depending on the circumstances. It was precisely to take advantage of such favourable circumstances that, despite often not being heard, Evatt and Spender argued Australia needed to continually engage with the US. Such an opportunity arose during the UN debate on voluntary repatriation of POWs from October to December 1952.

With the support of the Truman Administration, Spender, reminiscent of his decisive move in July 1950 to force the commitment of Australian troops to the Korean War, took advantage of the Menzies government's ambivalence to align Australia with the US on voluntary repatriation of POWs at the end of the war. Spender was in sync with Washington on the POW issue which enabled him to exercise a great deal of influence during the UN debate. Spender proved to be a strong advocate for the US stance, arguing the UN/US was morally obliged to uphold the principle of voluntary repatriation. He proposed and facilitated two crucial amendments to the Indian resolution that made it acceptable to the US and its allies

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without compromising on voluntary repatriation – the appointment of an umpire for the repatriation commission that would hold and screen POWs after an armistice, and ensuring no POWs would be held in custody indefinitely.

Spender was the most influential of the Australian officials who shaped the US-Australian relationship throughout their Korean engagement. However, Spender's diplomacy was a reminder that despite the alignment of US and Australian China and Korea policy, and the shared strategic and security interests between the two nations, Australia's capacity to influence US policy remained limited.

### **The Legacy of the American-Australian Korean Engagement**

The strong legacy of the US-Australian Korean engagement was a visible factor in the strengthening of their relationship after the Korean War. Primarily focussed on containing communism, the US continued to regard Australia as an important link in its regional security strategy. In turn, Australia continued to perceive its security was dependant on US engagement in the region.

Australia's presence in Korea continued after the war. US pressure for the Commonwealth contingent to remain meant the last Australian troops were not withdrawn until 1957. Australia maintained its membership of UNCURK until the Commission was disbanded in 1973. For twenty-six years, Australia was continuously and directly involved in UN attempts to reunify Korea via UNTCOK, UNCOK and UNCURK.<sup>1</sup>

The Korean issues analysed in this thesis established the framework and tone in which American-Australian foreign policy issues were discussed, and resolved,

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long after the Korean War. World War II was of course important, but the relationship was then wholly based on the military needs of both nations. The Korean issues were policy driven and strategic in their focus. The pattern established during the Korean engagement continued: the end of the Korean War was not the end of policy differences nor was it the end of the balance by which these differences were resolved. Some of the personal chords established throughout the Korean engagement remained evident in US-Australian diplomacy.

The 1954 Indochina crisis again demonstrated that America and Australia maintained similar rather than identical geo-strategic interests. The precarious French position in Vietnam prompted President Dwight Eisenhower and Dulles, now Secretary of State, to push for military intervention by an American led coalition. Britain strongly opposed Dulles's proposal and argued for a negotiated solution. On April 4, Dulles met at his home with Spender and Leslie Munro, the New Zealand Ambassador to the US, to request Australian and New Zealand support for intervention, even without British participation. Spender and Munro were sympathetic, agreed to notify their governments but remained non-committal. On May 20, Dulles again asked Spender if Australia would join a coalition. Spender, knowing Menzies and Casey also opposed military intervention, remained taciturn which frustrated Dulles. On June 4, Canberra, caught between its two closest allies, and determined to avoid another regional conflict, especially one potentially involving the US and China, reluctantly told the US it would not support military intervention and urged Dulles to seek a diplomatic solution. Informed that Australia would not join a coalition, Eisenhower and Dulles, unwilling to act unilaterally, now said the US would seek a negotiated solution.<sup>2</sup>

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Canberra's opposition to intervention may have influenced Eisenhower and Dulles to pursue a diplomatic solution but the crisis exposed divisions among Australian officials. Spender, wanting Australia aligned as closely as possible with the US, was non committal with Dulles but urged Menzies and Casey to support the Americans. Alan Watt, Secretary of External Affairs, 1950-54, a member of the Australian quartet that negotiated ANZUS, and now Commissioner for South-East Asia, also advised Canberra to support the US. Spender and Watt were also likely influenced by their respective personal connections with Dulles.<sup>3</sup> During the US-Australian Korean engagement, Spender and Watt had been instrumental in shaping the evolving relationship between the two nations. Post the Korean engagement, the primacy of the US-Australian relationship remained paramount to both men.

In his memoir, John Allison recalled first meeting Alan Watt and Lawrence McIntyre when, he was part of the Dulles mission to Australia in February 1951 which negotiated the ANZUS Treaty. The three men struck a rapport and later served together as Ambassadors. Allison and Watt were Ambassadors in Japan in 1956, and Allison and McIntyre were Ambassadors in Indonesia, 1957-58.<sup>4</sup> The personal connection they established during the ANZUS negotiations were cultivated and strengthened in the ensuing years as the US and Australia maintained their engagement and regional presence.

The only real tense period thus far in US-Australian relations since World War Two came in 1973-74, when President Richard Nixon, furious over Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's criticism of the American "Christmas bombing" of Hanoi in 1972

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and Canberra's establishment of diplomatic relations with Hanoi in 1973, considered breaking the ANZUS Treaty. For almost eighteen months, Nixon "froze" US-Australian relations.<sup>5</sup>

However, James Plimsoll, now Ambassador to the US, 1970-74, was instrumental in sustaining the enduring relationship. The strong and deep American connections Plimsoll had cultivated since first going to the US in 1945, now proved crucial to sustaining the alliance during the Nixon-Whitlam confrontation. Marshall Green, an Asia expert and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 1969-73, and soon to be Ambassador to Australia, had likewise established a close relationship with Plimsoll. Indeed, Green sought Plimsoll's views on drafts of US policy.<sup>6</sup> Despite Nixon's instructions to "freeze" Australian officials, Green and Secretary of State, William Rogers, agreed to maintain contact with the Australians. With Rogers's consent and without telling Nixon, Green visited Plimsoll at night at his residence. James Curran says for a period of almost five months in 1973, the "only substantive communication" in the US-Australian alliance "occurred under the cover of darkness in the inner suburbs of Washington DC."<sup>7</sup>

Green and Rogers deemed the US-Australian relationship and alliance too important to allow its diminution because of the antagonism between Nixon and Whitlam. Rogers considered Plimsoll the "best informed diplomat in Washington on several key United Nations issues and strategy." Rogers later told Plimsoll that "he and Green were not going to stop talking to him." Two other Nixon Cabinet secretaries, Attorney-General Elliot Richardson and Secretary for Health, Education and Welfare, Caspar Weinberger, openly maintained contact with Plimsoll. Nixon

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was being warned: “Don’t boycott Australia, or you won’t have even your conservatives supporting you.”<sup>8</sup> When it was announced in 1974 that Plimsoll would be sent to Moscow as Ambassador, Kissinger himself told Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister, Lance Barnard: “You’re mad to move Plimsoll. He’s got contacts here and great influence, and you’re mad to move him.”<sup>9</sup>

Plimsoll was also US Ambassador when Whitlam moved to recognise North Korea in 1973. Thus, at this juncture when, similar to 1948, Australian Korean policy diverged sharply from that of the US, Plimsoll, with his extensive US contacts and Korean experience, was fortuitously stationed in Washington. Green and South Korean foreign minister, Kim Dong-Jo, who also knew Plimsoll well – his tenure as ROK Ambassador to the US overlapped with Plimsoll’s Ambassadorship – voiced their displeasure with Australia’s move to normalise relations with North Korea. Kim said he was “very hurt” that Australia, “an old friend and ally” was going to recognise North Korea. Green told Plimsoll the US opposed Australia’s move to open “diplomatic relations” with North Korea or “even saying it was an objective.” Plimsoll advised Canberra to move “cautiously” and allow “contacts” with North Korea to “grow rather than be created overnight.” Plimsoll noted that “earlier” (1947-53) Australian Korean policy had been “bipartisan”, as in Evatt’s support of the Menzies government commitment of Australian forces to Korea in 1950. Plimsoll told Canberra Australia “was well respected” in Seoul and that was “not something that should be lightly cast aside.”<sup>10</sup>

Plimsoll’s collaboration with Dulles on Korea at the UN in 1948 and his diplomacy during the 1952 ROK political crisis helped establish the bedrock of an



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enduring foundation of trust. Two decades later, the Green-Plimsoll connection sustained the alliance. Indeed, ANZUS proved strong enough to survive Nixon and Whitlam and the US-Australian relationship continued to mature.

Like Spender, Plimsoll was a fervent advocate of the advantages of ANZUS for Australia. In Melbourne in 1974 upon his return from Washington, Plimsoll expressed his concern that “ill considered actions” could make the “future” of ANZUS “uncertain.” Plimsoll said Australia must “hang on” to ANZUS and his reminder that it was “achieved in a climate that might be impossible to rediscover”, and that it “is like a precious vase, it could be broken into pieces, it is irreplaceable”, was a prescient reminder of the convergence of circumstances in that finite time period in 1949-51 that made the Treaty possible.<sup>11</sup> Plimsoll’s remarks were also a reminder that there was no certainty here: what had been achieved was because of circumstance and the skill and knowledge of diplomats, sometimes operating quite independently from their political masters.

An understanding of the US-Australian Korean engagement sheds more light on how this was achieved and provides a deeper and broader perspective on how the American-Australian relationship grew and became foundational. It is easy to deride talk of shared values and trust created through a shared history. Yet the Australia-US relationship demonstrates the truth and power of that pattern of interaction. The US-Australian Korean engagement shows the relationship has invariably been nuanced and problematic and that both nations have sought to cultivate their relationship and alliance to further their common but separate interests. Washington and Canberra have always had different vantage points but overlapping horizons. The Korean

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engagement shows that individual relationships between US and Australian officials have been pivotal to the evolution and shaping of the relationship between the two nations.

Notwithstanding the evolution of their relationship throughout their Korean engagement, this study also offers a cautionary insight into the limits of Australian influence in shaping US policy to benefit its interests. The American-Australian Korean engagement shows that despite the Cold War alignment of their geo-strategic and security interests, they maintained similar rather than identical interests and they always will.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Chapter 25.

<sup>2</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 25; Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, New York, 2012) pp 470-71, 565 and 569-71; Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992) Chapter 8; David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington: An Ambassador's Vision of Australian-American Relations, 1951-58", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 2, 1996, p 285. See also Gregory Pemberton, "Australia, the United States, and the Indo-China Crises of 1954", *Diplomatic History*, 13, 1989, pp 45-66, and Hiroyuki Umetsu, "Australia's Response to the Indochina Crisis of 1954 Amidst the Anglo-American Confrontation", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 52, 3, 2006, pp

<sup>3</sup> Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 25; Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War*, pp 470-71, 565 and 569-71; Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crisis and Commitments*, Chapter 8 especially p 138; David Lowe, "Mr Spender Goes to Washington", p 285. See also Gregory Pemberton, "Australia, the United States, and the Indo-China Crises of 1954" and Hiroyuki Umetsu, "Australia's Response to the Indochina Crisis of 1954 Amidst the Anglo-American Confrontation".

<sup>4</sup> John Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairie or Allison Wonderland* (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1973) p 159.

Allison was US Ambassador to Japan, 1953-56, and Indonesia, 1957-58.

Watt was Australian Ambassador to Japan, 1956-59.

McIntyre was Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, 1957-1960.

<sup>5</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2015), especially Chapters 6-8, and Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim: Ambassador Extraordinary: A Biography of Sir James Plimsoll* (Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat, 2015) Chapter 8.

<sup>6</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury*, Chapter 8 and Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim*, p 231.

<sup>7</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War*, p 206.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim*, pp 241-42.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim*, p 254.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim*, pp 242-43. Australia opened formal diplomatic relations with North Korea in 1974. North Korea inexplicably cut diplomatic relations in 1975. Australia and North Korea resumed diplomatic contact in 2000. This is another point of divergence with the US. Australia has twice established formal diplomatic contact with North Korea, whereas the US has never had such contact with Pyongyang.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Hearder, *Jim Plim*, p 254.

## **Coda**

### **Richard Casey (1890-1976)**

Minister for External Affairs, 1951-1960; Governor-General of Australia, 1965-69.

### **General Mark Clark (1896-1984)**

Signed the Armistice Agreement on behalf of the UN/US that ended the Korean War on July 27, 1953. President of the Citadel Military College, 1954-1966.

### **John Foster Dulles (1888-1959)**

Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-1959.

### **Lieutenant-General John Hodge (1893-1963)**

Commander V US Corps, 1948-50; Commander US Third Army, 1950-52; Promoted to General, 1952; Chief of Army Field Services, 1952-53.

### **Joseph Jacobs (1893-1971)**

Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1948-49; Special Assistant for Mutual Defense Assistance Affairs, US Embassy, Rome, 1950-54; Advisor Far Eastern Affairs, UN General Assembly, Paris, 1948; Ambassador to Poland, 1955-57.

### **Arthur Jamieson (1910-1991)**

First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Tokyo, 1952-56, Rome, 1958-1960; Counsellor, Australian Embassy, Djakarta, 1961-62, Tokyo, 1962-65; Counsellor for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo, 1966-68; Consul-General, Milan, 1969-1972, Osaka, 1973-75.

### **Allan Lightner (1907-1990)**

Consul General, Munich, 1953-56; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, 1956-59, Assistant chief, US Mission, Berlin, 1959-1963; US Ambassador to Libya, 1963-65; Deputy Commandant for international affairs, National War College, 1967-1970.

### **John Muccio (1900-1989)**

US Delegate UN Trusteeship Council, 1952; Envoy Extraordinary to Iceland, 1954-56; Ambassador to Iceland, 1956-59 and to Guatemala, 1960-61.

### **James Plimsoll (1917-1987)**

Assistant Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1953-59; Permanent Representative to UN, 1959-1963; High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to Nepal, 1963-65; Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1965-1970; Ambassador to US, 1970-74, to Soviet Union, 1974-77, to Belgium, Luxembourg and the

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European Communities, 1977-1980; High Commissioner to Britain, 1980-82; Governor of Tasmania, 1982-87.

### **Patrick Shaw (1913-1975)**

Consul-General, Switzerland, and Permanent Delegate to UN, Geneva, 1951-53; Assistant Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1953-56; Ambassador to West Germany, 1956-1960, and to Indonesia, 1960-62; Deputy Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1964-65; Ambassador to UN, 1965-1970; High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to Nepal, 1970-73; Ambassador to US, 1974-75.

### **Percy Spender (1897-1985)**

Ambassador to US, 1951-58; Leader, Australian Delegation, Second Suez Conference, 1956; Judge, International Court of Justice at the Hague, 1958-67 (President, 1964-67). Spender is one of only two Australians to have been appointed to the International Court of Justice.

### **Lieutenant-General James Van Fleet (1892-1992)**

Commander, US Eighth Army, Korea, 1951-53; Special Ambassador to the Far East, 1954; Consultant on Guerrilla Warfare to Secretary of the Army, 1961-62.

These biographical details are from Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Vol 1, Strategy and Diplomacy* (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981) Appendix B, pp 420-461, and Spencer Tucker, (ed), *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Checkmark Books, New York, 2002).

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