Coming to South Korea's Aid: The Contributions of the UNC Coalition

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ABSTRACT

Soon after the North Korean invasion on June 25, 1950, the United Nations Security Council called for assistance to defend the South. Though South Korea and the United States carried the vast majority of the responsibility and costs of the war, 15 countries provided direct military assistance to the UN effort in Korea. This article examines the motivations and contributions of these 15 countries that joined the United States and South Korea in the United Nations Command.

Keywords: Korean War, United Nations Command, NATO, South Korea

Introduction

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops and tanks rolled across the 38th parallel in a bid to reunify the peninsula. After receiving word of the invasion, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution that called for a halt to the hostilities and for North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea – DPRK) to withdraw its forces back across the 38th parallel. When it was clear that Pyongyang would not heed the UN call, the Security Council passed another resolution that called on members to provide assistance to repel the North Korean attack and restore peace and security in Korea. Subsequently, the UN formed the United Nations Command (UNC) to organize member contributions for the UN response to North Korean aggression, and authorized the United States to take the lead of the UNC. Many countries offered assistance of some type, but in the end, a total of 16 countries sent military assistance to join the UNC in defending South Korea. Five others sent medical units and other countries contributed financial support along with assistance in the implementation of a trade embargo on North Korea.

Why did these states join the UN effort to defend South Korea? What was the degree of their involvement and what impact did their assistance have on the outcome of the war? What challenges did a 16-member coalition face as an operational force? What impact did this coalition have on the UN's first major effort at cooperative security since the creation of the organization? These are important questions whose answers provide a better understanding not only of the Korean War but also of the benefits and challenges of fighting any major conflict with a coalition, particularly if it is an ad hoc coalition rather than an established alliance or multilateral security organization.

Many works have been published on the United States and its involvement in the Korean War.[2] This article examines the motivations and contributions of the other 15 countries that joined the United States in defending South Korea. Though the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States carried the vast majority of the responsibility and costs of the war, the participation of other countries provided some combat assistance and were significant contributions for some contributors, particularly considering the size of some of these countries, the other responsibilities they had, and the fact that the suffering they endured during World War II was only five years in the past. In addition, the political implications of their contributions were also important, demonstrating that this was an international effort at collective security, not an example of U.S. imperialism as some alleged. However, for most who contributed to the UNC effort, their motivations had little to do with

protecting South Korea, a distant land with few interests at stake. More often, their participation was an effort to advance other priorities that they believed were linked to the conflict or could be advanced by their participation in a war where they had few intrinsic interests. The remainder of this article will review the events that led to the formation of the UNC, the motivations of the 15 non-ROK, non-U.S. participants for offering assistance to the UNC, the specific contributions made by each, and the implications of participation by these states.

Forming the Coalition

After the North Korean invasion began, U.S. officials soon notified UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie. Lie believed the issue should be brought before the UN Security Council since this was a serious violation of the UN Charter and its prohibition of military aggression. The UNSC passed Resolution 82 with a vote of nine in favor, none opposed, and one abstention from Yugoslavia. Prior to the formal deliberations of the UNSC, Secretary-General Trygve Lie discussed the invasion with the Security Council delegates from Egypt, India, and Norway who had not received formal instructions from their government. Secretary-General Lie believed that on the strength of his arguments, the delegates from Egypt and India decided to vote in favor of the resolution. Later, upon receiving formal instructions, the delegates changed their subsequent votes to abstentions regarding UN actions in Korea.[3]

Resolution 82 recognized that "the Government of the Republic of Korea is a lawfully established government having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea." It called for an immediate end to the hostilities, and for a complete North Korean withdrawal to the 38th parallel.[4] The resolution concluded with an appeal to UN members to "render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities."[5] A key player missing during these Security Council deliberations was the Soviet Union. The Soviets were boycotting the Council over its refusal to seat the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Soviet representative, Jacob Malik, was thus unavailable to veto this and subsequent resolutions on the Korean War. Yugoslavia had offered a different resolution for UNSC consideration but it merely invited North Korea to participate in talks. This measure was defeated by a vote of 6 to 3.

For many at the UN as well as for U.S. leaders, the need for a prompt response to this aggression recalled memories of World War II, Czechoslovakia, and the appeasement that occurred at the Munich conference in 1938. According to President Harry Truman:

> This was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted. … If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war.[6]

Lie, a Norwegian national, concurred and noted: "this to me was clear-cut aggression—apparently well calculated, meticulously planned, and with all the elements of surprise which reminded me of the Nazi invasion of Norway—because this was aggression against a 'creation' of the United Nations."[7] Truman maintained that the DPRK invasion made "it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war."[8] In the end, Truman provided an unvarnished assessment to U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, "we'v [sic] got to stop the sons of bitches no mater [sic] what."[9] Truman was also determined that the efforts taken to defend South Korea come under UN authority. UN leadership, at least in name, would blunt criticism that Washington was undertaking this operation unilaterally and simply as an act to advance U.S. interests. Moreover, UN participation meant Washington would receive help from UN member states and would not have to carry the military burden alone. However, despite these early indications that it would be a UN effort, General Douglas MacArthur's contacts with the UNC in the early months of the war were minimal, and the UN rarely interfered with UNC operations.[10] Thus, the war effort was largely a U.S.-ROK operation.

When it was clear North Korea would not heed the call to cease hostilities and withdraw to the 38th parallel, the UNSC passed a second resolution. On June 27, 1950, UNSC Resolution 83 called on UN member states to "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."[11] A rapid response was becoming exceedingly crucial as Seoul would fall to the DPRK invasion the following day. President Truman had already responded by ordering U.S. troops into action and Secretary-General Lie believed U.S. actions were "fully within the spirit of the Council's resolution of June 25."[12] The June 27 resolution passed by a vote of seven in favor and one opposed. Yugoslavia provided the only "nay" while Egypt and India chose not to cast a vote —present but not voting— since they were still awaiting instructions from their home government. Surprisingly, the

Soviet Union continued its boycott of UN proceedings and again, it was not present to veto the resolution. At the time, there were eleven members on the UNSC, five permanent members and six non-permanent members. (The number of non-permanent members was increased to 10 in 1965.) Seven "yes" votes with a "yes" or abstention from all permanent members was required for a measure to pass. Moscow criticized the validity of Resolution 83 given that Taiwan/Republic of China was casting the seventh and deciding vote instead of the PRC. As a result, the Soviet Union maintained the resolution had only six legitimate votes, which was insufficient for passage. Moreover, some argued that Moscow's absence from the Council was equivalent to a veto which would have voided both Resolution 82 and 83. These arguments carried little weight in the UNSC. Taiwan/Republic of China was the recognized holder of the UNSC seat and Secretary-General Lie noted that Moscow's absence did not automatically constitute a veto. Instead, consistent with UN practice, he maintained it was equivalent to an abstention.[13]

After passage of the June 27 resolution, UN Secretary-General Lie notified member governments of the need to assist South Korea in its struggle to defend itself. On June 29, President Truman ordered General Douglas MacArthur to send naval and air forces from his Far East Command in Japan to assist ROK troops. It soon became evident that the UN would need to create some type of organization to coordinate any military assistance that member states would provide to South Korea. On July 7, the UNSC passed another measure, Resolution 84, which established the United Nations Command under the leadership of the United States. The resolution also called on Washington to designate a U.S. officer as UNC commander and authorized the unified command to fly the UN flag during its operations in Korea. The following day, the United States designated General MacArthur, who was commanding U.S. Army Forces Far East in Japan, as commander of the UNC. In July, ROK President Syngman Rhee signed the "Pusan Letter" that gave the UNC operational control (OPCON) of all South Korean forces. While technically the military forces that came to South Korea's defense were under the UN flag, the troops were largely under the control of the United States military. Even during the extensive combined operations of World War II, the troops remained under their individual national command authority though extensive coordination occurred among commanders. Thus, the command arrangements of the Korean War were unique in modern warfare.[14]

The Korean War caught most in the international community off guard and occurred only five years after World War II had ended. Many

governments had already begun to draw down their armed forces after several years of bloody conflict. The militaries of some governments were deeply immersed elsewhere such as British involvement in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong along with its occupation duties in Germany. The French were similarly busy with occupation duties in Austria and Germany in addition to conflicts in Algeria and Indochina.

When the call went out for UN support, there was reluctance in the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) for broad, international participation. President Truman wanted as many UN members as possible to contribute to the effort. However, the JCS wanted forces that would be more than token gestures and would truly add to the military effectiveness of UNC efforts. There were also concerns that language, dietary restrictions, culture, and a lack of equipment could detract from the ability to integrate these forces into larger U.S. units. Egypt and Afghanistan made early offers to contribute forces but were turned down due to these concerns.[15] Taiwan also made an early offer of over 33,000 troops but was rejected for fear their participation might spark PRC involvement in the conflict. Taiwan's forces were poorly trained and lacked proper equipment, and the United States would need to provide transportation for these troops. This was problematic since moving them would tie up planes and ships that could be better used elsewhere.[16] The U.S. State Department challenged the Pentagon's reluctance to use foreign forces, especially if countries from Asia could be convinced to participate. Criticism from the communist world was already surfacing against the U.S./UN operation. International allies demonstrated that this was a global effort at collective security that helped to bolster the legitimacy of the UN. Thus, even if these foreign contingents added minimal military benefit, the political value of these allies was considerable.

Eventually, the JCS set a list of criteria for participation. Ground units had to be at least the size of a battalion and possess the appropriate support units. The battalion needed to be fully equipped and arrive in the field with 60 days of supplies.[17] The State Department wanted Washington to assume the cost of outfitting and transporting these troops to Korea if countries offered units, but the Defense Department opposed this plan, fearing the precedent it might set. In the end, State and Defense compromised agreeing to help fund the contribution of troops if the countries agreed to repay the U.S. Treasury later.[18] After the war, collecting these payments often became a sensitive political issue that took years to resolve.

These restrictions eliminated many smaller countries that were willing to provide forces, including several from Latin America generating a fair amount of resentment in the region.[19] Eventually, 29

countries provided some type of help to the UNC effort, including military and medical assistance, economic aid, or the imposition of a trade embargo. Of the countries that offered to help in some form, 16 provided direct military assistance to South Korea via the UNC: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Motivations for Joining the UNC

Member states offered to assist the UN's efforts to defend South Korea for a variety of reasons including political, economic, and security motives. Many of the motivations were also unique to the individual country. These contributions were tempered by constraints on the resources they had available along with the need to fulfill other commitments. Most importantly, states joined based on a careful assessment of their national interests at stake which often had very little to do with protecting South Korea.

One of the primary motivations for joining the UNC was security. Though the communist threat for UNC members varied from domestic insurgencies to fears of a Soviet or Chinese invasion, many states saw the North Korean attack in a similar light as the United States. This was global communism on the move, and it required a collective security response to halt its expansion. Concern for the spread of communism was an important motive for Greece and Turkey. From 1946 to 1949, the Greeks, aided by the United States and Britain, fought a civil war against communist insurgents who were supported by Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. Government forces prevailed and became a staunchly anti-communist government in Athens. Turkey similarly felt threatened by communist subversion and Soviet interference. Both Athens and Ankara became a focal point of U.S. containment strategy under the Truman Doctrine that provided assistance to countries that were resisting the spread of communism. Turkey and Greece were so important to U.S. containment efforts that, according to Spalding, "If Greece was lost, Turkey would become an untenable outpost in a sea of communism. Similarly, if Turkey yielded to Soviet demands, the position of Greece would be extremely endangered."[20] To address these security concerns, both countries had tried to obtain entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but were unsuccessful. In Turkey's case, the Pentagon had been reluctant to extend the NATO security guarantees to this region. Both countries believed that responding to the U.S./UNC call for assistance would improve their chances of eventually being admitted to NATO. In fall 1950, both were given associate status to the

organization and after further pressure, Turkey and Greece were admitted as full NATO members in October 1951.

Related to the concerns for communist expansion, there were those who desired increased security ties with the United States to address these fears and believed providing assistance to the UNC would help them obtain this goal. An example was Australia, which was one of the closest in the UNC to Korea and was very anxious to secure a formal security agreement with the United States. Canberra was determined to have a pact with Washington that did not include the British in an effort exert some degree of independence from London. The Korean War also exacerbated the potential threats to Southeast Asia, especially to Malaya from communist expansion, that were closer to home. In fact, before committing units to Korea, the Australian government sent bombers to Malaya and Singapore to shore up defenses there. K.C.O. Shann, the head of the Australian delegation to the UN argued:

> It is proper that the Australian people should understand that, if southern Korea falls under the domination of Communist imperialism, the strategic picture of Asia as it affects Japan and the whole of the area of the North-West Pacific will undergo a radical change and will increase the dangers to the whole of South and South-East Asia. The Australian Government, in recent months, has directed attention to the need for a Pacific Pact. This need becomes more urgent in the light of what is now taking place in Korea.[21]

In fact, Australian leaders argued that had a pact been in place prior to the Korean War, Washington would have been in a far better position to respond since it would not have to deal with the conflict alone. Australia hoped that a quick response to the U.S./UN request for troops would help curry favor with Washington. Consequently, Australia's efforts had less to do with helping South Korea than it was largely for the interests of Australian-U.S. relations. Canberra was one of the first to pledge troops to the UNC and hoped that as a result, the United States would be more willing to move toward a formal alliance and provide more aid. Percy Spender, Australian ambassador to the United States, told Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies that "any additional aid we can give to the US now, small though it may be would repay us in the future one hundredfold. My personal view is that we must scrape the bucket to see what we can give"[22] As a result, Gavan McCormack maintained: "ANZUS has been for Australia the most conspicuous and long-lasting fruit of the Korean commitment. … and it is clear the Australian case [for a security agreement] only began to be treated seriously in

Washington after the Australian troops had been committed in Korea. … The pact thereafter constituted the central plank of Australian foreign policy for the ensuing decades. Its origin in the Korean War is often forgotten."[23]

New Zealand was also interested in a security deal with the United States and had a similar desire to demonstrate its independence from Britain but also from Australia. According to McGibbon, "New Zealand's Korean War effort was seen as secondary to its primary defence role of preparing an expeditionary force for deployment in the Middle East, in case outright war broke out with the Soviet Union."[24]

If Australia and New Zealand wished to establish a regional security alliance with the United States, participation in the UNC effort in Korea was almost mandatory. However, the Korean War may also have been crucial in increasing U.S. awareness of the threat of communist expansion in Asia, and hence, the importance of a pact with Canberra and Auckland. Indeed, Trevor Reese notes: "Although the Australian and New Zealand governments were in accord with the United States regarding the North Korean attack as part of communism's grand design in Asia and the Pacific, they attempted to use the Korea war to apprise the United States of their value as allies in the Pacific pact for which they were working."[25] But it is not clear that their military performance so impressed Washington that U.S. leaders felt the alliance was a necessity.[26] In any event, the three parties concluded the ANZUS treaty in September 1951.

For those who were already members of the NATO, providing assistance to UN efforts in Korea also had security and political benefits. The NATO treaty was signed on April 4, 1949 and its twelve founding members included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. NATO's priority was the defense of Europe, but the attack in Korea, which NATO members also assumed was orchestrated in Moscow, demonstrated the increased danger of communist expansion, not only in Europe but globally. According to Robert Osgood, "The outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950, temporarily destroyed the West's confidence in the assumption that America's atomic striking power would deter the Soviet Union from instigating overt military aggression."[27] Communism also threatened the Asian interests of some NATO members. While the organization was not obliged to respond to aggression in Korea under NATO, many of its members believed they had a duty to respond. In addition, the leaders of NATO countries believed this was a test of collective defense, and providing assistance to the U.S./UN effort in Korea would help to ensure

greater U.S. support for Europe. Thus, according to Osgood, "momentarily, Western Europe shared America's drastic reappraisal of Soviet intentions."[28] However, as the war dragged on, NATO leaders also began to fear that U.S. strength was being sapped by the Korean conflict and might hurt Washington's ability or willingness to defend Europe. The major players in NATO, especially the United Kingdom and France, also hoped that involvement in Korea would give them greater influence in the prosecution of the Korean War effort.[29]

Thailand and the Philippines had similar motives in trying to improve their standing in Washington's eyes. Manila wanted a formal security commitment from Washington along with greater financial assistance. The Philippines and the United States have a long relationship that dates back to 1898 and the Spanish-American War. During World War II, the Philippines experienced a brutal occupation by Japanese forces. Philippine leaders hoped to secure a formal security agreement with the United States to ensure Washington would come to its defense if attacked again, perhaps next time by communist China. Philippines President Elpidio Quirino had another goal in mind. The Philippine economy was in desperate straits and needed continued U.S. aid. However, President Quirino had been receiving extensive criticism from the U.S. Congress and press that it was squandering the aid it had already received. Thus, contributions to the U.S. effort in Korea could mollify the criticism, increase the aid flow the Philippine economy desperately needed, and cement a formal security guarantee with the United States.[30] On August 30, 1951, U.S. and Filipino representatives signed the mutual defense treaty that remains in effect today.

The North Korean invasion and subsequent participation by China raised fears in Bangkok as well for the dangers of communist expansion in the region. Consequently, the Korean War quieted domestic opposition in Thailand that was resisting closer ties with Washington. Thai leaders sent ground troops to the fight along with 40,000 metric tons of rice for relief efforts in Korea. It was hoped that these gestures would prompt the United States to furnish a formal security guarantee along with more military and economic aid. It was not long before U.S. aid to Thailand picked up and on October 17, 1950, officials from both countries signed the U.S.-Thai Mutual Defense Treaty.[31]

South Africa had perhaps one of the most unique reasons for offering assistance to the UNC. In 1948, elections in South Africa had brought the National Party and Prime Minister Daniel Malan to power. Soon after, Prime Minister Malan proceeded to implement the racial segregation policy of apartheid throughout the country. South African leaders believed that a contribution to the UNC might ease criticism that

was building in the UN along with calls for economic sanctions. Malan also believed that a South African contribution to the UNC would provide greater influence in the UN to assert its claim to Southwest Africa, the former German colony. Known today as Namibia, after World War I, the Treaty of Versailles declared Southwest Africa to be a League of Nations mandate territory to be administered by South Africa. Following World War II, the region became a UN Trust Territory after all League mandates were transferred to the UN. South Africa opposed the transfer to the UN and refused to recognize the country's independence, claiming it as South Africa's fifth province. Though South Africa's contribution of an air force fighter squadron was an effective fighting force, it did little to advance Pretoria's political goals in the UN or elsewhere.

Ethiopia's motivation for joining the UNC was also somewhat unique among the other members. In October 1935, Italy under Benito Mussolini invaded Ethiopia from Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, Rome's colonial possessions in Africa. Both Italy and Ethiopia were members of the fledging League of Nations that was created after World War I. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie appealed to the League for aid. Though the League unanimously condemned Italy for the attack, it failed to do anything but pass a resolution. A year later, Emperor Selassie gave a speech before the League of Nations where he pleaded again for help and when exiting the podium after the speech lamented, "It is us today, it will be you tomorrow."[32] For Ethiopia, its participation in the Korean War was a statement of its view of the importance of collective security.

However, Ethiopia also had other reasons for joining the UNC. At the time, the UN was deliberating over the future of Somaliland and Eritrea, and Ethiopia was very interested in acquiring Somaliland. Assistance to the UN might increase its influence in future UN deliberations over this issue. Emperor Selassie also hoped his offers of support would result in the equipping of two to three Ethiopian divisions by the United States that would also improve his leverage in future discussions over these regions in East Africa.[33]

Contributions of the Coalition Members

The contributions made by the individual members of the UNC were as varied as their motivations. Most provided infantry units but others also contributed ships and a few contributed fighters and air transport planes. The remainder of this section will provide a brief overview of the individual state contributions made to the Korean War coalition. In most cases, the original soldiers and ships committed to the war did not serve during the entire length of the conflict as assets were rotated

through the Korean theater on a regular basis. For example, New Zealand sent a total of six frigates to help with UNC naval duties but only two were in action in Korean waters at any given time.[34]

Australia. With the exception of the United States, Australia was one of the first countries to respond to the UN call for assistance and provided the greatest commitment in proportion to its population. Canberra sent one infantry battalion, a naval force that included its only aircraft carrier, two destroyers, and one frigate, and one fighter squadron and one air transport squadron. The Royal Australian Air Force No. 77 Squadron, a fighter squadron that flew the P-51 Mustang was the first to arrive. The squadron made up the bulk of Australian fighter strength and was a welcome contribution to UNC air power. These forces were stationed in Japan and were working with the U.S. 5th Air Force, making them familiar with U.S. tactics and procedures.[35] Upon arrival, these aircraft supported the defense of the Pusan perimeter. North Korean forces were already having difficulty maintaining their long logistics lines into the south; along with U.S. aircraft, the Australians were instrumental in making matters worse for the North Koreans and blunting their offensive around Pusan.[36] General Walton Walker, the commander in charge of defense of the perimeter declared afterward, "that if it had not been for the air support that we received from the Fifth Air Force we would not have been able to stay in Korea," and Australians were part of this effort.[37] According to another source, "there can be little doubt that the air forces probably exercised greater influence on the outcome of the war during the perimeter period than at any time between 1950 and 1953."[38] Throughout the war, Australian air support provided an important boost to UNC airpower.[39] Australia's contribution of air power increased further with the arrival of the aircraft carrier HMAS Sidney in October 1950 and its contingent of British Hawker Sea Furies and Fairey Fireflies.

Australian ground troops arrived in September 1950 and were attached to the U.S. 24th Infantry Division until they became part of the Commonwealth Division that included Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. India was also part of the division but provided a medical unit and no combat troops. The Australian battalion was assigned to the Pusan perimeter and was part of the breakout that continued on across the 38th parallel. They had their first major combat operation in November 1950 near Pyongyang and later, participated in the Battle of Gapyong Valley where it earned a U.S. Presidential Citation. Australian soldiers also fought in Operation Commando in October 1951 where they captured two hills after suffering heavy casualties. As the war ground into a stalemate, Australian troops held a

series of trenches along the Imjin River for the remainder of the war. Australian forces had 339 killed and 1,200 wounded during the Korean War. (See Table 1)

Belgium/Luxembourg. The Belgian government raised an elite, volunteer unit, the 1st Belgian Battalion consisting of over 900 men. The battalion was supplemented by a 44-man platoon from Luxembourg to form the BELUX battalion. The unit saw its first action in March 1951 and its heaviest fighting at the Battle of the Imjin River where it was cut off and surrounded by Chinese forces. After a failed rescue attempt, the BELUX battalion was able to slip past Chinese lines. The battalion received a presidential unit citation for its actions during this engagement. The unit also participated in the failed attempt to rescue the British Glosters in April 1951. In addition to the ground units, Belgium also supplied seven DC-4 transport aircraft to the war effort. For Belgium, 101 lost their lives in action with 350 wounded and five missing while Luxembourg had two killed in action.

Canada. After initially hesitating to join the UNC, Canada opted to send several units to support the defense of South Korea: the 25th Army Infantry Brigade consisting of three infantry battalions, one artillery regiment, and one armored regiment; three destroyers; and one air transport unit. The destroyers and air transport planes were the first to arrive in July 1950 and quickly joined the defense of the Pusan perimeter. The destroyers bombarded enemy positions on the perimeter and protected sea lanes while the air transport planes brought supplies from Japan to Pusan. Later, the destroyers provided escort duty during the Inchon landing and the No. 426 Transport Squadron flew long-range supply missions throughout the war from McCord Air Force Base in Washington State to Haneda Airport in Japan. Canadian fighter pilots also flew with the 5th U.S. Air Force and downed 20 enemy planes.

The infantry brigade arrived in December 1950 and later became part of the Commonwealth Division. Canadian troops fought their first engagements in spring 1951 at the Battle of Gapyong Valley during the Chinese spring offensives. Canadian troops received a U.S. Presidential Citation for their help protecting U.S. soldiers during Gapyong. Canadian soldiers established a good record in Korea and were largely self-sufficient, possessing their own engineers, medical personnel, and logistics, though they did receive Sherman tanks from the United States.[40] In spring 1952, Canadian troops, along with British soldiers were sent to bring order to the UNC prison camp on Koje Island. The Canadian and British officers were appalled by what they saw and protested to UNC officials regarding the poor conditions in the camp. Moreover, Canadian officers were not pleased that their soldiers were

even used for this kind of duty and argued that prior authorization from Ottawa should have been sought before sending them to Koje. Estimates vary, but between 300 and 500 Canadians were killed in combat in Korea and 1,200 were wounded.

Colombia. The only contributor from Latin America, Colombia sent one infantry battalion, the 1st Colombian Battalion, and one frigate, the Almirante Padilla. The frigate was the first to be sent, leaving in November 1950 and arriving in Korea in February 1951 after refitting in San Diego. The ship participated in coastal blockade duty on the West coast as part of a contingent of British, Canadian, and U.S. ships.[41]

Soon after, the Colombian government offered an infantry battalion of 1,000 men and 83 officers. The government later told UN officials that if needed, it would provide an entire division that could be equipped with arms purchased from the United States.[42] The battalion arrived in Korea in June 1951 and was attached to the U.S. 24th Infantry Division. The following year, the unit was transferred to the U.S. 7th Division where it saw its heaviest action during the Kumsan offensive and in the defense of Old Baldy (Hill 266). During the defense of Old Baldy in the Winter/Spring 1953, the 3rd Colombian Battalion, a relatively inexperienced unit that had rotated to Korea in November 1952, was overrun by a full Chinese division. The battalion was later reinforced by a U.S. company but still had to fall back in the face of this onslaught.

Colombian forces acquitted themselves well, earning 18 U.S. Silver Stars and 25 Bronze Stars with V. along with other decorations.[43] These soldiers also received numerous honors from the Colombian government. Colombian casualties, mostly from the defense of Old Baldy, included 141 killed, 610 wounded and 69 missing in action.

Table 1: Military Contributions of the Member States to the UNC

	Ground Troops	Other Assistance	Killed/Missing	Wounded
Australia	1 infantry battalion	1 aircraft carrier 2 destroyers 1 frigate 1 fighter squadron 1 air transport squadron	339	1,200
Belgium	1 infantry battalion	1 air transport unit	101/5	350
Canada	1 infantry brigade *	3 destroyers 1 air transport wing	300-500	1,200
Colombia	1 infantry battalion	1 frigate	141/69	610
Ethiopia	1 infantry battalion	---	122	526
France	1 infantry battalion	1 frigate	287/9	1,350
Greece	1 infantry battalion	1 air transport squadron	196	543
Luxembourg	1 platoon	---	2	
Netherlands	1 infantry battalion**	1 destroyer/frigate	122	645
New Zealand	1 artillery regiment	2 frigates	46	79
Philippines	1 regimental combat team	---	112/16	299
South Africa	1 fighter squadron	---	34	---
Thailand	1 regimental combat team [2,100]	4 frigates 1 cargo ship 1 air transport squadron 3 medical service units	134	959
Turkey	1 infantry brigade	---	750/173	2,068
United Kingdom	2 infantry brigades 2 artillery regiments 1 armored regiment	1 aircraft carrier 2 cruisers 8 destroyers 1 hospital ship	700	4,000***
United States	7 Army Divisions 1 Marine Division	Army and corps HQs Logistical and support forces 1 tactical air force 1 combat cargo command 2 medium bomber wings 1 naval fleet	53,686/4,759	92,134

Source: T. R. Fehrenbach, This Kind of War, p. 305 and Sandler, The Korean War, pp. 154-163; and Varhola, Fire and Ice, pp. 127-150.

* The Canadian brigade consisted of 3 infantry battalions, 1 artillery regiment, and 1 armored regiment.
** The Netherlands battalion was undersized containing only 636 men.
*** The number of wounded for the United Kingdom also includes those taken prisoner of war.

Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie sent one infantry battalion to Korea—the Kagnew Battalion or Conquerors Battalion. The unit was formed largely by volunteers from the Emperor's personal bodyguard.

These soldiers were a welcome addition because they were British-trained and most were fluent in English. The troops trained during their three-week ocean journey to reach Korea. The Kagnew Battalion did not arrive in Korea until June 1951 and were attached to the U.S. 7th Division, 32nd Regiment. According to one Ethiopian veteran of the Korean War, "we went with Americans to the front line and fought together. From that, we helped a great nation, Korea, to survive. When we were in the frontline, I admired the American Army. They were very good Soldiers. When they fight, they fight. When they enjoy, they enjoy. I liked that."[44] Two fresh Kagnew battalions rotated into Korea during the conflict at different times. The unit contributed to important engagements at Triangle Hill during Operation Showdown in late 1952 and at Pork Chop Hill in spring-summer 1953. The unit claimed to never have had a member taken prisoner or left behind on the battlefield.[45]

The Kagnew battalion earned a solid combat record and was well-known for its close combat skills. The unit did have some difficulties. A number of the officers were Ethiopian elites whose arrogance sometimes meant they worked poorly with the UNC. These individuals were eventually removed and returned home, allowing those that remained to excel on the battlefield. The Ethiopians had 122 killed and 526 wounded.

France. Though the French were already busy in Indochina and with occupation duties in Germany, Paris sent a volunteer battalion of well-trained reservists and active duty soldiers who had significant combat experience. The battalion was commanded by a highly-decorated general who accepted a reduction in rank from general to lieutenant colonel to command the unit. The group arrived in November 1950, equipped with U.S. weapons and equipment, and later reinforced with a ROK company. The battalion was attached to the U.S. 23rd regiment of the 2nd Division and fought major engagements at Wonju, Twin Tunnels, Heart Break Ridge, the Iron Triangle, and during the 1951 spring Chinese offensive among others. The unit received three U.S. presidential unit citations for its work at Chipyong-ri and Hongchon with two presented personally by General MacArthur. The battalion was well known for its tenacity and prowess with the bayonet. A particularly effective tactic entailed the following: "Digging two parallel lines of ditches, the Frenchmen would allow the communists to take the first ditch, then before their enemy could consolidate, the French troopers would leap from the second in a surprise mass thrust, skewering the communists with their needle-sharp bayonets."[46]

The French also sent one frigate, the FMS La Grandiere. Upon arrival to Korea in September 1950, the ship participated in Task Force

90 that supported the U.S. amphibious landing at Inchon. In November, the French ship left Korean waters and returned to Indochina to support French operations there. French casualties were disproportionally high at 262 killed, 1,008 wounded, and 9 missing. Ten Frenchmen were taken prisoner but survived relatively well during the war since their Chinese guards chose most of them to be camp cooks.

Greece. The Greek government sent two contingents, one infantry battalion (named the Royal Hellenic Expeditionary Force), and an air transport unit, the 13th Hellenic Air Force Squadron. The infantry battalion was composed of conscripts and volunteers from the regular Greek army. Many of these individuals, particularly the officers, were veterans of the 1946-1949 Greek Civil War that pitted the Greek government that was supported by the United States and the United Kingdom against communist insurgents. The troops arrived in December 1950 and were attached to the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division. The Greek troops earned a respected combat record and received several citations. According to one source, "In their first major action, the Greeks repelled an attack on Hill 381 using grenades, rifle butts, bayonets and bare hands when their ammunition was exhausted. They held the hill, preventing the Chinese from surrounding nearby UNC troops."[47] The Greek unit was valued by the UNC because interoperability was relatively easy since it used U.S. weapons and already had U.S. advisers in addition to its officers having good command of English. Greek soldiers were also accustomed to the rough terrain and cold winters of Korea; for many of them, Korea was just like home. In spring 1952, a company of the Greek troops was sent to join the Canadians and British in helping put down the prison riots in the UNC POW camp on Koje Island.

Greece also sent an air transport unit, the 13th Hellenic Air Force Squadron, that flew eight C-47 aircraft. The squadron arrived in late 1950 and flew its first mission in December, evacuating 1,000 wounded Marines from the 1st Division near the Chosin Reservoir. Their performance in this action earned them a presidential unit citation for their bravery. Greek forces had approximately 196 killed and 543 wounded.

Netherlands. Providing support for the defense of South Korea was a difficult proposition for the Netherlands. The small military was already involved in fighting a difficult guerrilla insurgency in Indonesia so there were few forces it could spare. Consequently, the government shifted an undersized infantry battalion of 636 soldiers from operations in Southeast Asia to Korea. The unit arrived in late 1950, was attached to the U.S. 38th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Division, and saw its first action at Wonju in December. At this engagement, the Dutch forces

made a determined stand against a Chinese assault that earned them a presidential unit citation. The battalion later fought in Operation Roundup in February 1951, helped to stop the spring Chinese offensive in 1951, and the following year, fought in the Iron Triangle along the 38th parallel. The unit was also sent to Koje Island to help suppress the prison riots. Despite going from the tropical climate of Southeast Asia to the Korean winter, Dutch forces fought well and built a solid reputation, earning a number of citations from its own government along with those from South Korea and the United States.

In addition to these ground forces, the Dutch government decided that it could spare one navy destroyer for operations in Korea. The HNLMS Evertsen arrived in Korean waters in July 1950 and proceeded to participate in screening duty during the Inchon landing. Two other destroyers and three frigates rotated through Korea during the war performing a number of duties on both the east and west coasts including patrols, blockades, bombardment, and carrier escort duty. Several of the ships received ROK presidential unit citations and two ships received the honor twice. The Dutch contingent suffered approximately 122 killed and 645 wounded with most of these born by the land forces.[48]

New Zealand. The government of New Zealand provided both land and ground units to the defense of South Korea. The first to arrive in July 1950 were two frigates and in September, these ships assisted in the Inchon landing as a screening force. After Inchon, the New Zealand ships served on the west coast providing shore bombardment and blockade duties. The ground forces consisted of an artillery regiment, which was an all volunteer force that arrived in December 1950 and later became part of the Commonwealth Brigade. Australia had pressed New Zealand to commit an infantry battalion but it did not do so, partly in an effort to avoid more casualties.[49] The unit, also known as "Kayforce," fought well in the Battle of Gapyong, providing highly accurate artillery fire in support of UNC operations, despite the fact that the unit had little experience. The unit's contributions to the engagement were important in blunting the Chinese assault. In the end, the Kayforce "came together to produce a fighting machine which achieved high standards of efficiency and competence."[50] In addition, "they earned the respect, and more often than not the admiration, of the men, both Commonwealth and American, who served alongside them in Korea."[51] New Zealand casualties were relatively light, 46 killed and 79 wounded, since it provided no infantry units.

The Philippines. The contribution from Manila, one motorized battalion combat team (BCT), arrived in Korea in September 1950, one of the earliest ground units to reach the peninsula. The unit of 1,500

soldiers was one of the better equipped including Sherman tanks, howitzers, and their own trucks. They were attached to several U.S. units and later to British and Canadian units. The Philippine BCT saw heavy action during the 1951 Chinese spring offensive and during the battle of Gloster Hill where their tanks attempted to relieve the British Gloucester Regiment from its desperate predicament but failed. The unit received various unit and individual citations for its actions during the war with 112 killed, 299 wounded, and 16 missing.

South Africa. The other country from Africa to provide military support for the defense of South Korea was South Africa. Unlike Ethiopia, South Africa did not provide ground forces and instead, sent a fighter squadron, the 2nd Squadron, also known as the "Flying Cheetahs." The squadron arrived in Korea in November 1950 in Pyongyang, which was now held by UNC forces after the reversal that followed the Inchon landing. The unit's early assignments included supporting UNC troops as they advanced through North Korea and then to protect those soldiers and Marines in the retreat that followed China's entry into the war. The weather conditions during this period were extremely harsh and made flying very difficult. Since the 2nd Squadron was relatively small, and unable to conduct independent operations, it was attached to the U.S. Air Force 18th Fighter Bomber Wing of the 5th USAF. Upon arriving in Korea, the Flying Cheetahs flew P-51D Mustangs, an earlier and slower version of the plane that restricted the unit to largely ground support missions.[52] Later, they transitioned to the F-86 Sabre and relocated to Osan Air Base, helping to fly raids on Pyongyang in the last five months of the war.

The 2nd Squadron established an excellent reputation during the war receiving presidential unit citations from South Korea and the United States. In addition, some members received individual decorations for bravery from South Africa and the United States. In all, over 800 Flying Cheetah pilots flew more than 12,000 sorties during the war. Thirty-four personnel were killed and nine taken as POWs with all repatriated at the end of hostilities.

Thailand. The Thai government was the first country from Asia to offer assistance and sent several units to help in Korea. For ground forces, they sent a regimental combat team (RCT) from the Royal Thai Expeditionary Force. The RCT, consisting of approximately 2,100 soldiers and later nicknamed the "Little Tigers," arrived in Korea in early November 1950 and were assigned to the US 1st Cavalry Division. The Thai ground troops that arrived in Korea were lacking in training and equipment. Later, the Thai forces helped to cover the UNC retreat from Seoul after Chinese forces entered the war. In spring 1951, the Little

Tigers saw heavy action during two Chinese offensives and in October-November 1952, they seized and then held Pork Chop Hill from an assault by the Chinese 39th Army in November. Eventually, Thai forces turned the hill over to units from the U.S. 7th Division, which found scrawled on bunker walls by Thai troops, "Take good care of our Pork Chop."[53] The troops were not considered particularly aggressive but earned several citations for bravery.[54]

Thailand also contributed other units including four frigates, a cargo ship, an air transport squadron consisting of three C-47s, and three medical service units. The four frigates arrived in early November 1950 and operated out of Japan furnishing escort and patrol duty on the east coast of Korea. The air transport unit also operated out of Japan flying multiple missions with the C-47 Skytrain. Finally, the medical units consisted of a group stationed in Pusan, a mobile surgical hospital, and an air medical team that conducted medical evacuations. Thai troops had 134 killed and 959 wounded.

Turkey. The Turkish government sent an infantry brigade of approximately 5,200 men, one of the largest UNC contributions. The unit arrived in October 1950 and was equipped largely with U.S. weapons. Attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, the Turkish brigade developed a reputation as fierce fighters who were adept at hand-to-hand and bayonet combat.[55] As a result of their proficiency with a bayonet, General Matthew Ridgeway is reported to have ordered all UNC infantry to affix bayonets during combat. The brigade fought its most intense engagement in November 1950 when it was hammered by a Chinese offensive around Kunu-ri. Commenting on the Turkish performance, then 8th Army Commander, General Walton Walker maintained:

> The Turkish Brigade … has, by the great courage it has displayed and the delaying actions it fought continuously for 4 days, prevented the defeat and annihilation of the Army. In the 2 days' fighting … the strength of the enemy forces in the sector held by the Turkish Brigade was 6 divisions. Despite this, the enemy was unable to penetrate our lines. The Turkish Brigade, together with the 2nd U.S. Division, secured the necessary time to avert the complete encirclement of the whole 8th Army.[56]

The unit was in a difficult position yet refused to fall back suffering over 1,000 casualties. After this engagement, only a few of the brigade's companies were combat-ready.[57] A refurbished unit fought again in spring 1951 against the Chinese spring offensive. In 1952, the brigade patrolled the area around Heart Break Ridge and in May 1953 did some

heavy fighting around Munsan-ri.

The Turks provided the 4th largest contingent of troops after South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The troops were well known for their ability to withstand hardship, especially as POWs in Chinese camps. Despite their reputation as ferocious fighters, Turkish troops were reported to lack discipline and organization.[58] In addition, language difficulties often complicated Turkish involvement in UNC operations. Approximately 750 Turks were killed in action, 2,068 wounded and 173 were missing in action.

United Kingdom. After South Korea and the United States, the United Kingdom was the largest contributor to the Korean War effort. London sent 2 army brigades that included some of its most famous units, such as the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, known more commonly as the Glosters. In addition, the British ground force contingent included two field artillery regiments and one armored regiment. Some of these units began arriving in August 1950 and were sent immediately to fortify the Pusan perimeter. After the breakout at Pusan, British units advanced north and when China entered the war in November 1950, they helped the U.S. 2nd Division to fight its way back south. Later in the war, they were reinforced by the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, and Indian medical units to form the Commonwealth Division. British soldiers saw ferocious combat on many occasions in Korea. One of the most well-remembered examples was the stand of the Glosters on Hill 235 during the spring Chinese offensive in April 1951. Severely outnumbered, the Glosters held the hill, now known as "Gloster Hill," for several days during the Battle of the Imjin River before only a remnant of the unit was able to escape. General James Van Fleet praised the Glosters, noting that it was "the most outstanding example of unit bravery in modern warfare."[59] Their effort along with that of others helped to blunt the Chinese offensive.

Soon after the UNSC authorized military assistance for South Korea, the United Kingdom dispatched naval units to Korea that included one light aircraft carrier, two cruisers, and eight destroyers along with Marine and support units. Later, the British also sent a hospital ship. Throughout the war, the Royal Navy conducted a variety of operations that included attacking North Korean torpedo and patrol boats, escort and patrol duties, air attacks on inland targets, and submarine patrols. The UK and U.S. navies had a good record of cooperation and the British force was given much of the west coast to patrol independently. The Royal Navy conducted several dangerous naval operations including sailing up the Taedong River in bad weather to evacuate troops in spring 1951.[60] British forces on land and at sea suffered approximately 700

killed and 4,000 wounded or taken prisoner.

Five countries —India, Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Sweden— declared their neutrality in the conflict but sent medical units to assist the UNC while providing far less assistance to North Korea. (See Table 2). India sent the largest non-U.S. medical unit, the 60th Field Ambulance and Surgical Unit that served with the Commonwealth Division and accompanied them on their operations during the war. The Indians conducted helicopter medevac operations and parachuted into combat zones to provide medical assistance. According to Sandler, "the Indian doctors and medics, each airborne-qualified and a veteran of the bitter fighting in Burma during the Second World War, provided such good service that troops from Allied units that had their own perfectly adequate medical support facilities would often attempt to obtain treatment from the 60th."[61] In August 1953, the Indians left the Commonwealth Division to oversee the screening of DPRK and Chinese POWs who were refusing repatriation.

Table 2: Medical Contributions to the UN Effort

	Contributions
India	Field Ambulance and Surgical Unit
Italy	77 Red Cross personnel
Norway	Mobile Surgical Hospital
Sweden	Medical Detachment
Denmark	Medical Detachment Red Cross Hospital Ship

Denmark provided the next largest commitment, contributing a 100-person medical detachment and in March 1953 sending a Red Cross Hospital Ship. The Danish contingent initially treated only UNC personnel but later, began serving ROK civilians as well. Norway contributed a mobile surgical hospital, NorMASH, that arrived in June 1951. The unit operated a 200-bed field hospital north of Seoul near Tongduchon. Sweden sent a 154-person medical team in September 1951 that set up a field hospital in Pusan that eventually grew to hold 450 beds. Similar to Denmark, both Norway and Sweden began the war treating exclusively UNC casualties but by the end, also served civilians. Finally, Italy contributed 77 Red Cross personnel in November 1951 who spent their time operating a hospital in Seoul.

Three countries pledged support: Iran—two ambulance units; Pakistan—one infantry regiment; and Lebanon—one infantry battalion. However, these countries did not fulfill their commitments. In the case of Pakistan, its leaders argued that UN support for their position on Kashmir would have been helpful in obtaining Karachi's assistance.

In October 1950, when victory over the North Koreans appeared imminent, there were doubts that UN members needed to provide further support to the war effort. UNC members that had initially pledged certain levels of support began to question whether all of it was needed since the war would soon be over. For example, the British considered holding back an armored regiment, the 8th Hussars, from deploying with the British 29th Infantry Brigade believing that amount of armor would no longer be necessary in these last phases of the war. However, U.S. military leaders were able to convince the British that the war was far from over and the armor was still needed.[62]

Yet others continued to hesitate about providing a larger contribution to the UNC. By late October 1950, there were approximately 9,000 troops from five countries serving in the UNC with US and ROK forces. When pledges came in from other countries, the number could increase to 36,000, a number Major General Charles Bolté believed was too high. In his view, 15,000 would be sufficient because "the problem is to reduce logistic burdens on the United States and at the same time retain the political advantages of multinational United Nations representation."[63] The Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred, supporting a request for the cancelation of offers to send battalions from Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, the New Zealand artillery battalion, an additional Australian battalion, along with reductions to the forces sent by Canada and Greece. However, China's entry into the war and the rapid change in fortunes on the battlefield for UNC troops reversed the calls to reduce UN support for the war. By January 1951, a number of complaints surfaced that UN members were not doing enough, and the JCS recommended to the Department of State to increase its efforts to obtain more assistance.[64]

As the war dragged on, the U.S. military and Congress began calling for more assistance from U.S. allies and UN members. The lack of increased UN help was partly Washington's fault. The United States had imposed criteria that for some countries was very difficult to meet. The momentum for international support in the early days of the war was squandered by awkward handling of early offers to come to South Korea's assistance. When the war began to go well in the fall of 1950, the United States relaxed its efforts to recruit assistance, believing the war would be over soon and no further help would be necessary. For example, the Greeks had offered a brigade at the start of the war but the Defense Department discouraged the full deployment so that in the end, despite the initial offer, Athens sent only a battalion.[65]

In February 1951, the United States began to push for more help from its allies. By then, however, the initial enthusiasm for the war effort had dwindled as the casualties mounted and the conflict became

more controversial internationally and in many of the potential donor states, making it far more difficult to acquire additional support. In addition, there were other reasons why enlisting help for the war effort was difficult. First, World War II was hardly a distant memory. Many countries were overcoming the economic devastation of years of conflict in Europe and Asia, and their publics were tired of war. Supporting a war effort that for many was far off and did not pose a direct threat to their security evoked little enthusiasm. Second, many of the countries that might have been sufficiently strong to provide greater assistance had serious commitments elsewhere. The European allies had responsibilities to the newly formed NATO alliance while Britain and France had occupation duties in Germany and Austria. Moreover, some of these European states remained mired in conflicts against various insurgencies in their former colonial possessions. These states and others had their own problems that made it difficult to contribute more or contribute at all to the defense of South Korea. Third, most of these potential contributors were plagued by the "tyranny of distance" located far from the Korean peninsula. Transportation and logistics were daunting propositions for even the more powerful states. Finally, some countries were sympathetic to the U.S. position but for various reasons could not support Washington openly. For example, Yugoslavia had been leaning toward the U.S. position but had maintained a policy of independence toward Washington and Moscow. Given its proximity to the Soviet Union and some of its allies, Yugoslavia could not openly support U.S. efforts to defend South Korea.[66]

The United States also exerted considerable effort to recruit more support from Latin American countries. Colombia had been an early volunteer but Washington hoped it could coax others into joining Bogota. However, this was a difficult undertaking from the start. Most of these countries were poor with few resources to train, equip, and transport units thousands of miles away. Some countries requested large amounts of U.S. military aid in return for sending troops to Korea. The U.S. offer to fund military units while expecting reimbursement later galled many Latin American leaders and did little to make joining the Korean War effort appealing to these countries. Hemispheric relations had often been difficult with Latin American leaders feeling neglected by Washington. Many felt there was little reason for them to join the U.S. call for military operations that seemed to have little to do with their own security concerns. In the end, Washington was able to obtain only a few additional commitments, such as Canada's increase from a battalion to a brigade and New Zealand's strengthening of its artillery regiment. The United States and South Korea continued to bear the lion's share of the

war effort.

The coalition took one more united effort in conjunction with the Korea War. After hostilities ended and the armistice was signed, the sixteen countries that fought in Korea concluded the "Greater Sanctions Agreement" which stated that any further unprovoked Communist aggression in Korea would not be tolerated. If the peace were broken again by North Korea, "the consequences of such a breach of the armistice would be so grave that, in all probability, it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea."[67] Though an ominous threat, it is not clear what these countries would have been willing to do, if anything, to implement the agreement should the armistice be violated.

Assessing the Coalition's Efforts

The overall contribution of military forces provided by the non-Korean, non-U.S. portion of the UNC was relatively small in numbers. By July 9, 1951, these elements of the UNC furnished approximately 6.3 percent of UNC forces while South Korea and the United States provided 23.3 percent and 70.4 percent respectively.[68] U.S. leaders believed that international support for the UN collective security action was an important substitute for a plethora of individual security commitments. Since both the United States and the UN played a major role in the creation of South Korea, both had a responsibility to defend the ROK.[69] We now turn to an assessment of the impact of the non-ROK, non-US participation in the following areas: forming the coalition; military effectiveness; political importance; and changes to NATO.

Forming the coalition. The birth of the UNC was in many respects new ground being explored in international politics. For the first time, a young organization mobilized under the banner of collective security to protect a state that, while not a member of the UN, had been created under a UN resolution and UN guidance. Yet, in other ways, the UNC was an old concept where states band together to confront an adversary based on a common threat perception or common interests. Indeed, many of these states had only recently participated in the intense coalition warfare of World War II. As was the case with the formation of previous coalitions, the process and motivations were intensely political. States had a variety and often, multiple reasons for joining the UNC. In some instances, states believed it was proper to support a fellow state that was assaulted by overt aggression, particularly since the invasion was a dangerous signal of communist expansion. States were also ready to support the fledgling UN and the collective security it stood for in its first major test since its formation after World War II. The UN

was still in its infancy and hopes remained high for the organization's success. However, for most in the UNC coalition, including the United States, participation was based on an assessment of the national interests at stake and often this had little or nothing to do with Korea.

In the United States prior to June 1950, Korea per se had been relatively low on Washington's list of interests because the stakes –an assessment of the costs and benefits—was not sufficiently high. The war suddenly raised Korea's standing and the stakes involved because this was the location where communist forces chose to test containment. Thus, "Korea was now on the front line of American efforts to halt the spread of Communism."[70] Perhaps typical of the motivations for aiding the UNC were those of New Zealand as summarized by McGibbon:

> New Zealand responded to the crisis not out of any direct interest in the Korean situation but rather in support of its international obligations under the United Nations Charter. Like all the sixteen states which contributed to the United Nations command, New Zealand had its own motivations and reasons for fulfilling those obligations, not all of which had to do with the more elevated precepts of international order.[71]

This is an important concept of a collective security organization. States may not always have vital interests at stake yet are obligated to provide support nonetheless. The responsibility is part of the membership in the organization and because, as Haile Selassie lamented, "you may be next."

In a number of instances, states joined the UNC to curry favor with the United States while strengthening its security ties with Washington and obtaining larger amounts of U.S. financial and military assistance. In the cases of Greece and Turkey, their leaders believed its assistance would improve relations with the United States to facilitate their efforts to join NATO. Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand also believed participation was an important path to obtaining a formal security treaty with the United States. Others like South Africa and Colombia had little at stake in South Korea but viewed participation as a way to advance other goals. In the end, it was a complex mix of interests, both political and security that explained the formation of the UNC coalition.

For today's security environment, building international coalitions remains an increasingly necessary task to address transnational security challenges. The CTF-151 counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, U.S./NATO operations in Afghanistan, and ongoing international peacekeeping operations all point to the continued need for

international coalitions supported by the procedures and institutions to make them function smoothly and effectively. A U.S. officer noted the following regarding the coalition during the Korean War:

> [Korea] furnishes a great testing ground for inter-allied relationships, a problem we will continuously meet at all levels in any future war. These experiences and lessons gained and formed should be passed on as soon as possible … We certainly have many favourable instances of inter-allied cooperation in Korea. We have to depend on our allies — let us learn how now before it is too late.[72]

Military effectiveness. Grey notes that there are five important operational variables for coalition warfare that require agreement for the proper and effective functioning of the coalition: strategic policy; command of the forces in the field; combat effectiveness; supply and logistics; and the financing of military operations.[73] In these areas, the results of the Korean War were somewhat mixed, as one might expect. Given the relative numbers of the UNC contribution, the ROK and the United States carried the majority of the military load. Most of the infantry contributions from UNC members, the most valued in a ground-centric conflict, were battalion size or less. Only the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Canada contributed larger units, though some also provided naval forces in addition to their ground contingents. However, relative to the size of some of the countries, their contributions were greater than might initially appear. Despite the relative size of some units in comparison to South Korea and the United States, some international forces played important roles in particular battles and suffered significant casualties, most notably the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, and Turkey, though the casualties of others were not insignificant either. Several studies maintain that U.S. soldiers had relatively high regard for their UNC allies. According to one source, "Their praise of the allies—the French, Thais, Turks, and Abyssians [Ethiopians]—was far removed from the grousing about allies that had marked most previous wars. Most Americans, privately, would admit the U.N. troops were better than they were."[74] A study of the Commonwealth contribution to the war maintained, "In Korea it was US Army units which attracted the most criticism for failure in combat and which led to the small formations from the Commonwealth and other UN forces continually being placed in dangerous tactical situations above and beyond that which they should have been called upon to face."[75]

However, a U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff report in 1964 providing advice to President Johnson during the Vietnam War cautioned against

too much reliance on allies. The report maintained the United States "had NO significant support in Korea, other than verbal. Except for the South Koreans themselves, the US did essentially all the fighting, took all the casualties and paid all the bills."[76] After being relieved of command, General MacArthur maintained in a Senate hearing that ending the military contributions of the UNC allies "would have no material effect upon the tactical situation."[77] Many members of the Senate during these hearings concurred with this assessment. Despite these criticisms, the UNC allies made important contributions and suffered significant casualties relative to the size of their units.

While generally helpful in UNC operations, the international forces often complicated logistics and support. With the exception of the British and Canadian units, most UNC forces relied on the United States for supplies, transportation, weapons, and ammunition. Maintaining supply lines was sometimes difficult and Washington had to foot most of the bill. Arrangements were made prior to the war for each UNC member committing troops to reimburse the U.S. Treasury after the war. However, it often took years for the final settling of these debts. Thus, the benefits of coalition support often came at considerable financial cost to the United States. Language was another issue that sometimes made operations problematic. For those countries from the Commonwealth Division or NATO, this was less an issue, but for others, this complicated the conduct of combat operations and international units were sometimes on their own as a result.

Another dimension of the military effectiveness of the UNC was the speed at which the coalition needed to be put together. The North Korean invasion caught almost everyone by surprise. North Korea had launched the invasion in hopes the conquest would succeed before any help could arrive for the South, providing the U.S. and the UN with a fait accompli. Following on the heels of 5-6 years of fighting during World War II, few countries were prepared to send a significant amount of military support to Korea and there was no structure or institution in place to coordinate the international response. As a result, even among those countries that were willing to send ground combat units to Korea, it took six months or more to organize, train, equip, and transport the units to the theater. Given the early success of the North Korean invasion and the desperation around the Pusan perimeter, the international assistance almost came too late. The UNC response in Korea demonstrated the difficulty of piecing together an ad hoc coalition on short notice. Consequently, the Korean War helped to show the importance of having standing alliance relationships and procedures in place to respond to international crises. In fact, when contemplating the importance of

international participation in the defense of South Korea, General Maxwell Taylor believed that the assembling of a UN force of the size of a division from several countries would be a good testing ground for NATO both in the areas of organization and in conducting operations.[78]

Political importance. The contributions of the 15 non-ROK and non-US members of the UNC provided less than seven percent of the military forces for the war effort, but the political importance of their contribution was a significant element of their participation. According to William Stueck:

> Material support from other nations would relieve the United States of some of the burdens in Korea, would bind friendly nations to the U.S.-initiated venture, and would have a deterrent effect on Moscow. Furthermore, it would undermine Soviet claims that the U.S. effort in Korea had little support among the masses worldwide and would ensure ongoing support within the United States for a collective approach to U.S. foreign policy.[79]

Of the 16 UNC countries that did provide military assistance to South Korea, nine were from NATO or the British Commonwealth, putting a decidedly western face on the intervention. However, the handful of countries that were non-NATO and non-Commonwealth—Colombia, Ethiopia, Greece, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey—did provide important political cover in portraying the effort as an international collective security operation. Greece and Turkey later became NATO members but at the outset of the war were not. In the case of Latin America, Colombia's contribution of an infantry battalion and frigate provided some military support along with the political implications of a state from the developing world joining the U.S./UN coalition. Colombia's participation provided a rebuttal to the arguments of communist states and other neutral nations that the intervention in Korea was largely an imperialist, Western affair. However, one assessment has argued that all Latin American states provided an important contribution to the war effort noting: "In evaluating the overall situation of Latin America with respect to the Korean conflict, it should be remembered that the embargo of strategic commodities imposed [on North Korea] by all nations probably had as much practical effect as the sending of troops by all nations could have had."[80]

Changes to NATO. Finally, the Korean War also had important implications for the NATO alliance. Prior to the Korean War, NATO had been at something of a crossroads. It was unclear how broad its membership should be, the level of assistance the United States and

others were willing to provide to the organization, and whether German rearmament needed to occur for a truly robust NATO defense capability. The Korean War helped to demonstrate the importance of all of these issues.[81] There was also far greater appreciation of the linkages of U.S. and Western interests in Europe and globally. Communist expansion in Asia mattered to Europe. The impact of China's fall to communism in 1949 and the dangers it posed to the interests of NATO members were clear. Thus, the Korean War demonstrated that the interests of NATO members were connected not only in Europe but also in Asia.[82]

Conclusion

When the call went out to UN member states to come to South Korea's defense in a U.S.-led UN coalition, 15 countries joined the United States to provide military assistance. Others provided medical and economic support. Countries joined the UNC more often to support their own interests that in many cases had little to do with South Korea. Many states felt obligated to support the young UN and the collective security stipulations present in the UN Charter. Getting to the war often took time, particularly when needing to train, equip, and transport ground units, and money which many of these states did not have. Moreover, World War II was only five years in the past; leaders and their people were tired of war and still recovering from the devastation of this conflict.

Their military contributions relative to South Korea and the United States were small. Yet, most units performed well as individual units and made important contributions in numerous engagements. In addition, their overall participation helped to demonstrate the international nature of the UNC effort. Crafting the coalition and making it work was a difficult task, particularly given the haste needed to assemble the group, the relative infancy of the organization that sponsored it, and the lack of established institutions to coordinate a response. Ad hoc coalitions are difficult to construct and point to the ongoing utility of formal alliance relationships and multilateral security organizations where combined training and procedures exist that facilitate effective military operations. Moreover, the greater the number of participants, the more beneficial it is to have these prior arrangements in place. Thus, the institutions, planning, and preparation that go into maintaining the ROK-U.S. alliance are important measures that help to provide for South Korea's security. In the end, the UNC coalition effort provided a valuable lesson in the importance of conducting military operations with well-known partners.

Notes:

[1] The views expressed in this report are the author's alone and do not represent the official position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

[2] For example, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987); Bruce Cumings (ed.) *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983); Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Glenn Paige, *The Korea Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[3] Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 329.

[4] United Nations Security Council, "82 (1950). Resolution of 25 June 1950 [S/1501]," available at available at http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1950/

scres50.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Harry S Truman, *Memoirs, Volume Two: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 332-333.

[7] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p. 329.

[8] "Truman's Statement on the Korean War, June 27, 1950," in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents in American History*, vol. II (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), pp. 560-561.

[9] Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1973), p. 266.

[10] Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 27.

[11] United Nations, "83 (1950). Resolution of 27 June 1950 [S/1511]," available at http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1950/scres50.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

[12] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p. 332.

[13] Ibid., p. 335.

[14] Stanley Sandler, *The Korean War: No Victor, No Vanquished* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), pp. 151-152.

[15] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 57.

[16] James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988), p. 116.

[17] Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[18] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 72.

[19] "Help MacArthur?" *Newsweek*, September 11, 1950, p. 40.

[20] Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), p. 64.

[21] Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950-1953 Vol I.: Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1981), pp. 47-48.

[22] As quoted ibid., p. 65. See also Dennis Phillips, *Ambivalent Allies: Myth and Reality in the Australian-American Relationship* (New York: Penguin, 1988).

[23] Gavan McCormack, *Cold War, Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1983), pp. 102-104.

[24] Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, Combat Operations (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 365.

[25] Trevor R. Reese, *Australia, New Zealand, and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 157.

[26] Ibid., p. 118.

[27] Robert Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 68.

[28] Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance*, p. 69.

[29] Stueck, *The Korean War*, pp. 73-74.

[30] Milton, W. Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1965), pp. 89-96.

[31] R. Sean Randolph, *The United States and Thailand: Alliance Dynamics, 1950-1985* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1986), p. 13.

[32] "ETHIOPIA: The Lion is Freed," *Time*, September 8, 1975, available at www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,917777,00.html (accessed May 12, 2010).

[33] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 74.

[34] Much of the information for this portion of the paper came from Sandler, *The Korean War*, pp. 149-169; Michael J. Varhola, *Fire and Ice: The Korean War,*

1950-1953 (Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 200), pp. 127-150; and Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 70-78.

[35] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 156.

[36] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 24.

[37] As quoted in Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950* (Washington D.C., Center of Military History, 1986), p. 477. Appleman also quotes General Kean confirming this assessment: "The close air support rendered by the Fifth Air Force again saved this division as they have many times before." Ibid., pp. 476-477.

[38] David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martins Press), p. 51.

[39] See George Odgers, *Across the Parallel: The Australian 77th Squadron in the United States Air Force in the Korean War* (London: William Heinemann, 1954).

[40] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 159.

[41] Russell W. Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, vol. 9 (October, 1967), pp. 546-547. See also Bradley Lynn Coleman, "The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950-1954," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 69, No. 4 (October, 2005), pp. 1137-1177.

[42] Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," p. 547.

[43] The Silver Star and Bronze Star are the 3rd and 4th highest honors respectively given by the U.S. military.

[44] Rick Scavetta, "Ethiopia – Kagnew veterans share memories of Korean War," *United States Army*, January 27, 2010 available at www.army.mil/-news/2010/01/27/33578-ethiopia---kagnew-veterans-share-memories-of-korean-war/ (accessed May 7, 2010).

[45] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 160.

[46] Ibid., p. 161.

[47] Ibid., p. 162.

[48] Varhola, *Fire and Ice*, pp. 140-141.

[49] McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, p. 363.

[50] Ibid., p. 364.

[51] Ibid., p. 365.

[52] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 161.

[53] Varhola, *Fire and Ice*, pp. 144-145.

[54] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 163 and Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 72.

[55] The Turks' reputation generated several stories that may or may not have been true. According to one source, a Turkish commander was "incensed because a US officer had doubted the high number of Communist troops his men reported as having killed in a particular action. He then issued a bran sack to each of his men. The following day the officer reported back to the American, whereupon his men emptied their bran sacks – filled with Chinese ears – at the astonished US officer's feet. Laconically suggesting 'divide by two,' the Turk strode off." Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 162.

[56] As quoted by George McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 77.

[57] Fehrenback, *This Kind of War*, p. 212.

[58] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 162.

[59] David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martins Press), p. 250.

[60] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 158.

[61] Ibid., p. 155.

[62] Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, pp. 224-5.

[63] As quoted ibid., pp. 225-6.

[64] Major General Maxwell Taylor in commenting on the UN troop contributions believed that Turkey, Greece, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand could be able to provide forces up to a division. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, p. 356.

[65] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 195.

[66] Ibid., pp. 195-197.

[67] U.S. Senate, "Appendix IV: Declaration of the Sixteen Nations Relating to the Armistice," July 27, 1953, *Mutual Defense Treaty With Kore*a, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, January 13 and 14, 1954, p. 58.

[68] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 30.

[69] Reese, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 32.

[70] Terence Roehrig, *From Deterrence to Engagement: The U.S. Defense Commitment to South Korea* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 124-129.

[71] McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, p. 362.

[72] As quoted in Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 189.

[73] Ibid., p. 6.

[74] Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, p. 423.

[75] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 8.

[76] JCF comments, 10 November 1964 as quoted in Glen St. J. Barclay, *Friends in High Places: Australian-American diplomatic relations since 1945* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 145.

[77] As quoted in Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 194.

[78] Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, p. 356.

[79] Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, p.56.

[80] Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," p. 557.

[81] Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 24, no. 4 (December 1980), pp. 563-592.

[82] Walter LaFeber, "NATO and the Korean War: A Context," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall, 1989), pp. 461-477 and Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1984).