

TURKISH MILITARY IN THE KOREAN WAR

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IN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The wrong war, the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong enemy," commented General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, about the conflict President Harry Truman consistently and erroneously called "only a police action."¹ This "police action" marked the first time in history that the opposing forces--the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea--were surrogates for the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively, military super powers possessing nuclear weapons and the ability to deliver them. Bradley also called the Korean War "a great military disaster."²

President Harry Truman used this "military disaster" to bring other nations, certain close Allies and supporters of United States policies, into this conflict that at times threatened to widen and spill over into a new world war. At the time of the North Korean invasion, Turkey was seeking to become an American ally and member of significant regional military organizations created by the United States in the post-World War II era. This sought-after American connection propelled Turkey to define a role for its armed forces in the American-sponsored United Nations "police action" in Korea.

Turkey bolstered the Middle East against potential Soviet incursions. The United States was fully aware of the

key geostrategic role Turkey played in the superpowers' Cold War calculations, particularly in relation to eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East. After World War II, the United States had become the major supporter of democratic or at least anti-Communist governments. Some countries, such as South Korea, had become part of the United States sphere of influence simply as a result of the defeat and subsequent collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945. The general stirring of nationalism in the Far East was greatly accelerated by the events of 1941-45. Former colonial masters had been defeated, subjugated by the Japanese. Following the Japanese defeat, people of East and Southeast Asia did not desire to return to their former colonial status.

Korea, which Japan had controlled since the beginning of the twentieth century, was now open to other influences. Farther south in the French colony of Indochina, Communist-led Viet Minh were challenging French colonial rule. Indonesia was struggling for independence from the Netherlands, while India and Burma endeavored to remove themselves from British control. Each of these emerging areas had its own unique, and at the same time similar, problems. Korea became the first focus of this problem for the United States. The United States would try solutions of the past, such as maintaining the status quo, first and foremost in Korea; conventional solutions were applied to unconventional problems. But at the conclusion of World War

II, there was little alternative thinking in the White House, the Congress, or the Pentagon. Vietnam would be the war that would bring unconventional thinking to the fore.

Korea was divided almost casually, at the end of World War II, with the Soviet Union occupying the peninsula north of the 38th parallel and the United States the southern portion of the peninsula. Although intended as a temporary demarcation to facilitate disarmament of the Japanese forces in Korea, this division led almost inevitably to the North's invasion of the South on June 25, 1950. Colonel Dean Rusk, a War Department staff officer, later United States Secretary of State during the Vietnam War, was intimately involved in Korea's division. He was the author of the plan to establish the 38th parallel as the dividing line between the American and Soviet occupation zones (see Figure 1).

The Soviet Union agreed to the proposal. It retained the northern, highly industrialized portion of Korea. Although it did not gain an equal division of population, all the hydroelectric plants and most energy sources and manufacturing plants lay in the Soviet-occupied north. The bulk of the population and the agrarian part of the country became the Republic of Korea (ROK). The United States became de facto protector of South Korea, but was reluctant to exercise much control over the area. During World War II at the Cairo Conference of Allied heads of state, President Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed to a policy, vague and open to interpretation, guaranteeing a free and independent Korea.

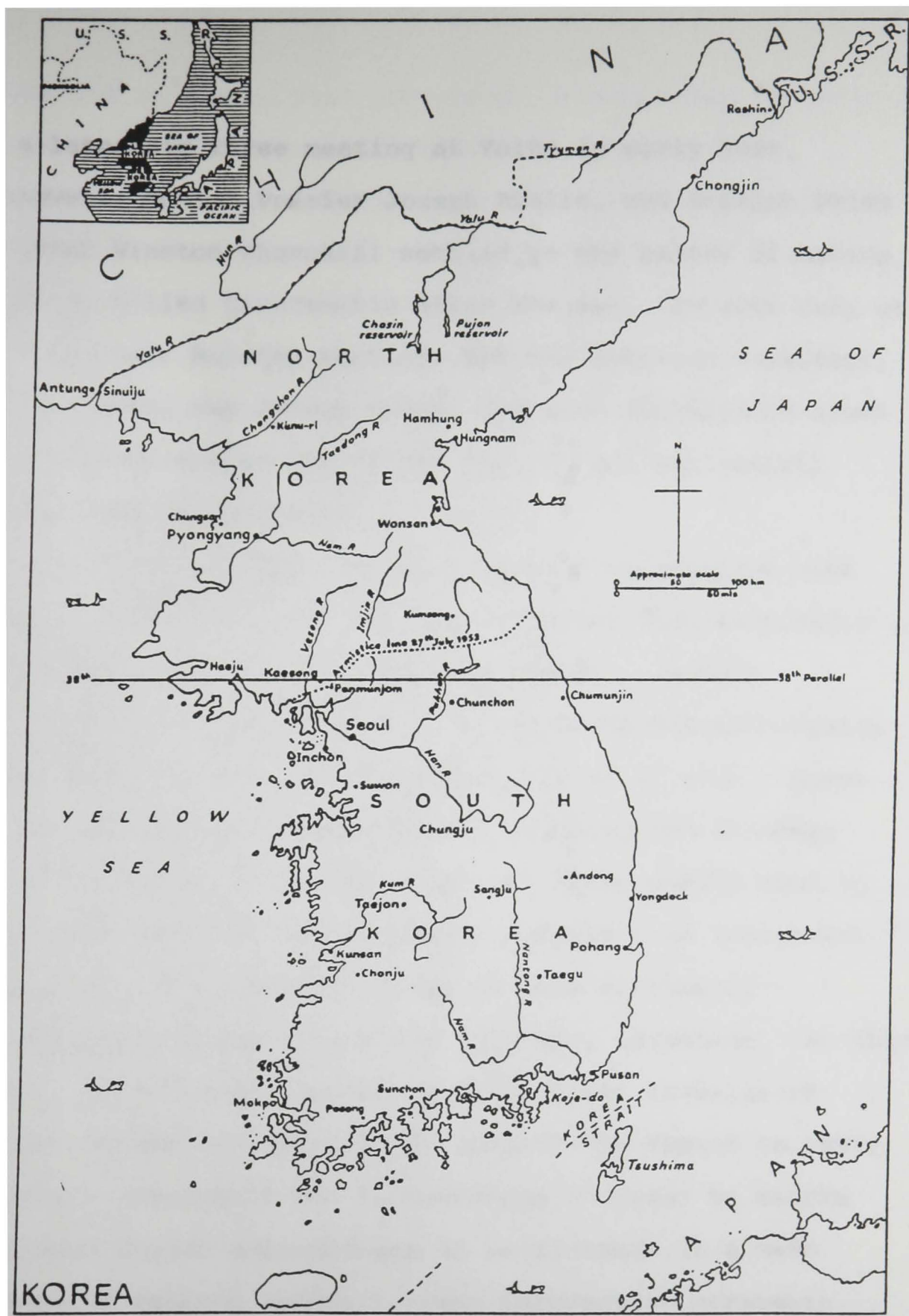


Figure 1

Korea and Adjacent Countries

Source: Max Hastings, The Korean War

At a later Big Three meeting at Yalta in early 1945, Roosevelt, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill settled on the policy of making Korea an Allied trusteeship after the war. In late July of 1945 at their Potsdam meeting, the new American President, Harry Truman, and Joseph Stalin had some discussions about Korea but no action was agreed upon before the Soviets entered the war on August 8, 1945.³

America initially had no firm plan for dealing with Korea. After World War II, America's and President Harry S. Truman's interests lay in Western Europe. America structured alliances, especially the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with European allies in mind. Korea was not prominent in Washington's thinking and strategy until the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb in 1949, well ahead of any strategic forecasts of that event.⁴ Thereafter, all American alliances were critically reexamined in light of the new strategic situation. At this point, U.S. Cold War concern over a Soviet invasion of western Europe led the U.S. to bolster the French in their seemingly unwinnable war in Indochina in order to secure continued French preparedness to participate in a NATO defense of Western Europe. These Eurocentric strategic considerations led the United States to take the first tentative steps into Vietnam. The United States commitment to Indochina began before, not after, the Korean War. The

1950 and in March, 1950, President Truman began economic and military aid to France in Indochina.

NATO began absorbing countries into the organization that were clearly not in the North Atlantic, first, West Germany, and later, during the Korean war, Greece and Turkey. For Turkey, entry into the western European alliances was clearly part of its strategy for aligning itself with Europe and away from the Middle East. Turkey's leaders understood and used the leverage of its strategic position astride the European crossroads of the Bosphorus to gain memberships that put Turkey into a more favorable position with western European countries as well as the United States. The United States was preferable as a major ally against the massive Soviet power on its borders.

The United States and the State Department tried to react quickly and correctly to all the events of 1949 that made invasion of Korea such a military and diplomatic disaster. The Soviet Union had achieved nuclear power status and mainland China fell to Mao's ill-equipped and almost ragtag forces. The United States and Turkey's aims and goals were about to coincide with the opening up of their interests on two geographic fronts.

Unfortunately, the United States was neither militarily nor politically prepared to occupy the Korean peninsula. Responsibility was assigned to General Douglas MacArthur, headquartered in Japan. But MacArthur showed very little interest in Korea; therefore, the Pentagon

ordered Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, the XXIV Corps commander, there. Hodge, who did little to conceal his disdain for the Koreans, allowed the defeated Japanese to continue to rule the newly "liberated" nation.⁵ Hodge recommended that the United States Army keep a minimum of 45,000 men in Korea during the occupation period. The recommendation was not implemented as the American army carried out a massive demobilization in the immediate post-World War II years.

The Russians equipped the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) as a mobile and well-trained force of 135,00 men. The NKPA was equipped with 150 T-34 Russian tanks, a full array of light and heavy artillery, and some Russian 120 mm howitzers. In total, there were about ten divisions as well as an air force.⁶ In 1949, the NKPA was up to projected strength, and one-third of the army had been combat-hardened in the Chinese Civil War (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 Korean Troop Strength June, 1950⁷

Branch	North Korea	ROK
Army	10 Divisions (30 Regiments) 120,880 Other special units 61,820 Subtotal: 182,680	8 Divisions (22 Regiments) 67,416 Other support units 27,558 Subtotal: 94,974
Navy	4,700	7,715
Air Force	2,000	1,897
Marines	9,000	1,166
Total	198,380	105,752

United States' military strength in the Far East and America's lack of interest in a long-term presence in South Korea made the equipment and supply of the South Korean army woefully inadequate to cope with the sudden invasion. In March, 1949, the United States completed the training and equipping of a 65,000 man Korean "army" and the formation of a 4,000 man coast guard with the necessary vessels. The ROK Army received a very small artillery component: only ninety-one 105mm howitzers. By comparison, under the standard United States Army table of organization and equipment (TO&E), the ROK Army would have had 432 divisional artillery pieces.⁸

The fledgling ROK Army progressed very slowly. In December, 1949, fewer than half the soldiers were qualified with the M-1 rifle. Four of the raw new army divisions were tactically deployed along the 38th parallel. Their American advisors hoped that the ROK soldiers' mere presence would act as a deterrent to any hostile moves by the North Koreans (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 Korean Major Equipment June, 1950⁹

Equipment	North Korea		ROK	
	Size	Quantity	Size	Quantity
Mortars	120mm	225	None	
	82mm	1,142	81mm	384
	61mm	360	60mm	576
Howitzers	122mm	172	105mm	91
	76mm	380		
Antiaircraft artillery	85mm	12	None	
	37mm	24		
Antitank artillery	45mm	550	57mm	140
Tanks	T-34	242	None	
Armored cars		54		27
Self-propelled artillery	SU-76	176	None	
Planes				
Fighters	YAK-9	not known	None	
Bombers	IL-10	not known	None	
	IL-10	not known	None	
	IL-2	not known	None	
Trainers		not known	T-6	10
Recon		not known	L-4	8
			L-5	4
	Total	211	Total	22
Patrol Vessels		30		28

In the five years following World War II, the United States forces in Korea were reduced to one regimental combat team which consisted of a military advisory group of approximately five hundred officers and enlisted men under the command of Brigadier General William L. Roberts. The Korean Military Advisors Group (KMAG) was given the responsibility for "providing advisors to the Republic of Korea Army down to the battalion level."¹⁰ The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), at the insistence of the Truman Administration, looked for ways to save money in the ever-shrinking military budget. Korea was a logical place to cut troop strength since the JCS understood the Administration policy articulated by Secretary of State Dean Acheson in his National Press Club statement on January 12, 1950:

This defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus [Okinawa] ... to the Philippine Islands So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack Should such an attack occur--one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from--the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on.¹¹

The United States' 24th and 25th Divisions were stationed in Japan, but due to the general post-war demobilization, cutbacks of the military budget, and the general nature of occupation duty, these divisions were not at their peak of combat readiness. This was the U.S. force strength as the North Korea invasion took place.

At 3:30 on Sunday morning, June 25, 1950, North Korean artillery began shelling Kaesong, the former capital of unified Korea, just below the 38th parallel. The invasion of the south had begun. A fifteen-car North Korean train filled with NKPA soldiers entered the city and began to detrain. A regiment of the NKPA's 1st Division struck at the ROK 12th Regiment at Kaesong while its remaining troops struck at the rear of the 12th Regiment by going around Kaesong on the Seoul-Shinuiju railway. The city was encircled and fell at 0930 hours.¹² All along the invasion line, the South Koreans were unprepared for the sudden onslaught of the NKPA. The main attack came at Uijongbu. Two full North Korean divisions, each led by forty T-34 tanks and other mechanized vehicles and supported by 120mm howitzers, hit the ROK 7th Division.¹³ The ROK 7th Division had no reserve regiment under its command because of unit rotation and tried to defend the 42 mile line with only two regiments.¹⁴ The North Korean air force struck South Korean positions with one hundred airplanes. Within seventy-two hours it was apparent to Washington that the American Army would be required to prevent the complete loss of South Korea to the invaders.

It quickly became obvious that if the United States was serious about holding on to the southern part of the peninsula she would need allied military assistance and UN moral condemnation of the North Koreans' aggression.

McCarthy-era anti-Communist hysteria would not allow the loss of another country to the Communists.

Responding to the invasion, the United States on the 25th of June requested a meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Temporarily relieved of the ever-present Soviet Security Council veto by that nation's boycott of the international body in protest of the rejection of Communist China's request for membership, the United Nations in a series of resolutions requested that member nations aid the Republic of Korea. In the key Security Council vote, all of the permanent members promised support of the resolution. The Security Council designated the United States as the executive agent for a unified command to direct and coordinate the UN effort. This initial resolution set the stage for United Nations members to come to the aid of the Republic of Korea.

The United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Norway, Ecuador, and Cuba voted in favor of the resolution. Only Yugoslavia voted against the resolution. Egypt and India abstained; however, two days later, on reconsideration and new instructions, India voted in favor. The Soviet Union was absent, continuing its boycott; therefore the resolution was approved.

President Harry S. Truman's private talks indicated that he envisioned a mighty array of United Nations forces fighting side by side with the United States. His hope never materialized. While in 1950 all democratic nations

might theoretically deplore and condemn the invasion of South Korea, fewer countries than the United States wished were prepared to translate theory into practical measures by coming to Korea's aid.¹⁵

The U.N. forces that were ultimately committed left the United States in its usual Cold War role as the major combatant. The United Nations designated the United States to command the war effort. The commander designated by the United States was the controversial and reclusive General Douglas MacArthur. The second largest force was, of course, the Republic of Korea. Other countries committed forces in various strengths to the effort which the United States hoped and anticipated would be brief. The United Kingdom dispatched 11,000 troops. Turkey committed one of the largest forces with the sending of a brigade. In contrast to Turkey's commitment, many nations sent forces of battalion strength or smaller.

The Turkish government was one of the first members of the United Nations to respond to the call for aid to South Korea.¹⁶ Turkish newspapers, such as the highly respected and widely read Aksam, supported the government action and praised the prompt action of the Security Council.

In Turkish minds - official and unofficial - support or non-support of the Republic of Korea by the United Nations and especially the United States, would be the acid test of the free world's determination to resist aggression in line with commitments to the small nations. The question was, "Will the United States stand up to this challenge?"¹⁷

Because of Turkey's precarious Cold War position, security was always a prime consideration. The Soviet Union kept a certain level of pressure on its neighbor to the south over control of the Turkish Straits. On August 7, 1946, the Turkish government received a request from the Soviet Union to meet and revise the Montreux Convention of 1936 which had assigned sole responsibility for the defense and control of the Straits to Turkey. The Soviet Union proposed that the two countries organize and jointly guarantee the security of the Straits with the Soviets maintaining the defense of this vital passage, the understanding being that Soviet troops would be allowed into Turkey for this purpose.¹⁸ The United States realizing that the entry of Soviet troops into Turkey would lead ultimately to Soviet control of Turkey and an increased threat to the southern flank of the reemerging European post-war economic and military alliances, opposed the Soviet initiative.¹⁹

Turkey was not in a position to defend itself, unassisted, against the Soviet bloc. The Turkish economy was not strong and the political changes from one-party government rule to a more democratic multiparty system were not sufficiently institutionalized to withstand the Soviet pressure.²⁰ Fearing the power and intentions of the Soviet Union, Turkey actively aligned itself with the United States and appealed to the United States for military and economic assistance.²¹ The aid agreement signed by the United States and Turkey on July 12, 1947, governed the application of aid

programs. The agreement stated in part that the assistance was "to enable Turkey to strengthen the security forces which Turkey requires for protection of her freedom and independence and at the same time to continue to maintain the stability of her economy."²²

Turkey, because of the Truman Doctrine, signed on March 3, 1947, and other post-war programs, such as the Organization for European Cooperation, a Marshall Plan affiliate, had become the recipient of large-scale aid programs.²³ On March 11, 1947, Turkey joined the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). At least five percent of the \$100 million in American aid had been earmarked to improving transportation in that mountainous country. This program in turn facilitated the movement of troops and military equipment throughout Turkey. American military advisors were established in Ankara and throughout the rest of the country.²⁴ Modern weapons flowed into the country and the Turkish military had a new spirit and a new system injected into the old guard that still thought in terms of cavalry charges and sabers.²⁵

They were not receptive to new ideas and new concepts which were required for the conduct of modern armies and modern warfare. A silent struggle took place between these conservatives and the young Turkish officers -- the latter winning -- and the result was that a new mentality was introduced into the Turkish armed forces, first by the American instructors and later by the Turkish officers trained in the United States.²⁶

The exact amount of military assistance to Turkey administered through Defense Department channels and the U.S. Military Mission in Ankara for years was kept secret and the exact amount is still unknown, but it was estimated at over one billion dollars from 1947 to 1959. The Turkish Armed Forces became one of the strongest, best equipped, and best trained forces in the Middle East. The Turkish Army, when it became a member on February 15, 1952, constituted one of the largest land forces in NATO.²⁷

Of this massive military and economic aid, Foreign Minister Necmeddin Sadek of Turkey stated:

The Truman Doctrine was a great comfort to the Turkish people of Turkey, for it made them feel that they were no longer isolated. They saw that a great nation, the most powerful in the world, was interested in their independence and integrity. The aid in military equipment which the Congress granted as a logical consequence of the Truman Doctrine was vital to Turkey. The strengthening of the Turkish army by the most modern of weapons will serve the cause of peace in our part of the world, for it will strengthen our power of resistance to any aggression. The Turkish people and army know how precious this aid is, and they know very well that no matter what sacrifice their country was willing to make, it could not have procured this equipment in any other way.²⁸

With American advice and sponsorship, Turkey became a member of several economic and military treaty organizations. In June, 1948, under President Ismet Inonu, Turkey became a member of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation making it eligible for Marshall Plan Aid from the United States. Soon after, on July 4, 1948, Turkey and the United States signed an agreement entitling

Turkey to this aid.²⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership did not follow as quickly as Turkey wanted. President Truman in a message to President Inonu on April 13, 1949, pledged that the United States would continue to maintain and develop close, friendly ties with Turkey, but NATO membership would not be proposed until a later time.³⁰ Turkey, although accorded membership in many organizations and enjoying increasing levels of American foreign aid, did not achieve the coveted NATO membership until the administration of President Celal Bayar. Bayar developed two principal strategies during his time in office: alliance with the West and building a bridge between the West and the Middle East. At the height of the Korean War on September 20, 1951, the North Atlantic Council recommended the acceptance of Turkey and Greece into NATO.³¹

Twenty-one nations eventually responded to the United Nations call to assist Korea. Sixteen dispatched fighting forces: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. Denmark, India, Italy, Norway, and Sweden furnished medical assistance.

The first Turkish contingent arrived on October 19, 1950, and the Turks, in varying strengths, remained until mid-summer, 1954. A much reduced and largely token military mission continued its presence until 1957. Initially, Turkey sent the First Turkish Brigade, commanded by

Brigadier General Tahsin Yazici. The brigade consisted of three battalions commanded by Major Imadettin Kuranel (1st Battalion), Major Mithat Ulunlu (2nd Battalion), and Major Lutfu Bilgin (3rd Battalion). Majors Ulunlu and Bilgin were killed in action along with Company Commander Captain Cevat Olhon of the 2d Battalion and Company Commander Captain Halil Cayan of the 3rd Battalion.

The Second Brigade relieved the First in July, 1951. Brigadier General Namik Arguc, the Second Brigade Commander, served from mid-July 1951 through September 12, 1952. His battalion commanders were Major Tahir Aiaybeyii (1st Battalion), Major Enver Saltik (2d Battalion), and Major Yekta Koran (3rd Battalion). These battalion commanders served roughly the same duty period as their commander. There were no severe casualties in the structure as there had been during the Chinese Offensive of November-December, 1950. The character of the war had changed and the casualty rate reflected the change from maneuver warfare to military stalemate.³²

The cumulative strength of Turkish forces committed to Korea during the war was 14,936. The Turks attained a notable and distinguished record. Both officers and enlisted men fought and died honorably, suffering a total of 3,506 casualties. A statistical recount gives some understanding of the ferocity of the fighting and the level of casualties that were suffered.

TABLE 3 Turkish Casualties³³

Type of Casualty	Number of Casualties
Killed in action	741
Wounded in action	2,068
Missing in action	163
Prisoners of war	244
Non-combatant casualties	298
Total	-----
	3,506 = 23% of Troops
	Committed

CHAPTER II
UNITED NATIONS RECEPTION CENTER
AND PREPARATIONS

On July 26, 1950, the Turkish government followed up its initial resolution to "comply with any decision taken by the Security Council on Korea," by offering to send 4500 men to Korea. Turkey was one of the first countries to guarantee troops to the United Nations.³⁴

With the inclusion of forces from numerous countries, the United States realized the need to establish some uniformity of military procedures. A committee from all staff sections was appointed to formulate methods and procedures to integrate the multinational forces into the overall combat strategy. The committee's plan principally outlined a general policy for the acceptance of the forces being offered by the various countries. It established command relationships, developed plans for deployment of forces, training and staging of units, and logistics. It included such mundane aspects as standardization of administrative procedures which included such items as disciplinary measures, press representation, welfare and medical services. Accountability for logistical support provided by the U.S. Armed Forces and procedures for reimbursement, claims for damage to persons or property, war crimes, and communications were also addressed. This

overall plan was presented to and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and the integration of the many countries' forces began.³⁵

One major problem the liaison section of the United Nations Command (UNC) identified was providing office space for the liaison groups of each participating country. Billeting and office space was to be provided in Japan by the appropriate national diplomatic missions there, but some of the participating countries, including Turkey, had no diplomatic mission in Japan. Further, office space was at a premium in Tokyo and other major Japanese cities. It was decided, therefore, that General Headquarters of the United Nations Command would assist in arranging for billeting and office space.³⁶

As part of the chain of command and to facilitate the immediate integration of all United Nations Forces into the overall battle strategy, the Commander in Chief Far East (CINCFE) and the U.S. Eighth Army Korea (EUSAK) devised a plan to furnish an orientation and training center for all incoming United Nations troops. On October 9, 1950, the commanding general of the 2nd Logistical Command of the Eighth Army was ordered to establish the United Nations Reception Center (UNRC), which was set up on the campus of Taegu University.³⁷

Eighth Army completed the move to the new center on October 15, 1950, and it became operational on October 20. The UNRC mission was "to clothe, equip, and provide

to UN troops as determined essential for operation in Korea by the Reception Center Commander."³⁸

The coordination of all allied forces in the combat zone was to be a complex effort in logistics, training, and communication. Each of the nations that committed troops to the war had a different understanding of what they required for their troops and how these troops would be resupplied. Even simple rotation of troops and medical casualties became large and cumbersome problems. The Reception Center was established to standardize often varying levels of training, familiarization with U.S. weapons, and tactical communications. Each nation's troops were assigned to an American unit. Theoretically, this was to facilitate orders and strategic movements. Unfortunately, this was not always realized.

The Turkish Armed Forces Command (TAFC) was a regimental combat team with three infantry battalions and supporting artillery and engineers. It was the only brigade-sized UN unit attached permanently to a U.S. division throughout the Korean War. The structure of the brigade was a complete brigade headquarters superimposed on a normal regimental headquarters. The regiment, for all intents and purposes, was commanded by the brigade commander. This unwieldy headquarters structure caused delays in execution of orders and the relay of all information. This condition continued until the Turkish General Staff eliminated the regimental headquarters in

General Staff eliminated the regimental headquarters in December 1, 1951.³⁹ The Turkish Brigade structure provides a striking example of the varied command structures with which the Eighth Army had to deal in fully integrating the multinational force into one cohesive fighting and support unit (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. Turkish Armed Forces Command⁴⁰

ORGANIZATION

Brigade (strength - 4,082)
 Infantry Regiment
 Field Artillery Battalion 105mm Howitzer
 1 Engineer Combat Company
 1 AAA Battery
 1 Medical Company
 1 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
 1 Signal Platoon
 1 Transportation Truck Company
 1 Band
 1 Replacement Company
 1 Military Police Platoon

SERVICES

Engineer - All support and services beyond organization level
Medical - Hospitalization and evacuation.
Ordnance - All Support beyond organization level.
Quartermaster - Graves registration, laundry, bath and shoe repair.
Signal - Repair of all equipment.
Transportation - Water, rail, motor, and air.

There was an enthusiastic sendoff from Iskenderun when the first Turks left for Korea on the September 25, 1950. Many of the officers and men of this initial contingent would die in the bloody warfare that followed the abrupt and unexpected entry of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) into the war. Their first massive confrontation in the Wawon and Kunu-ri area decimated the entire brigade.⁴¹

The more than 5,000 men of the First Turkish Brigade, which included liason and the advance party, were the first UN troops to be processed through the UNRC. The advance party arrived in Pusan, Korea, on the 12th of October. The main party arrived later on October 17, 1950, with 5,190 troops.⁴² The brigade unloaded from the ship the next day and proceeded to the reception center just outside of Taegu. The Commander, Brigadier General Tahsin Yazici, had as his principal officers, Colonel Celal Dora, as assistant commander, Major Faik Turun, as G-3 (Operations) officer, and Major Recai Baturalp as G-4 (Logistics). The Turks were fully equipped at the time of their arrival, except for certain weapons.

As the first troops to be processed through the UNRC, the Turks and their American instructors found more than a few problems with its initial organization. The Turks were accompanied by a 5-man U.S. Army advisor team, which had prepared the officers and men as best they could for integration into the United Nations command structure. On

the whole, the Turks were well trained; the brigade had had three weeks of intensive small arms unit training under the supervision of the US advisors before leaving Turkey. The chief drawback was that the unit had not previously functioned as a brigade.

Based on this information, the UNRC commander estimated that the Turkish troops would require a minimum of thirty days of intensive training but the brigade actually was scheduled for at least forty-five days to make it combat ready. In an emergency, however, General Yazici believed that his brigade could be used for defensive operations within two weeks of arrival in the theater of operations.⁴³ Along this line, even before his force reached Korea, Yazici had requested assignment to combat as soon as possible.⁴⁴

After four days of observing the newly arrived Turks, EUSAK G-3 (operations section) reported that the Turks were well-trained and their chief need was familiarization with firing American weapons, artillery direction training, and familiarization with other American equipment. The Turks stayed three weeks to complete this familiarization.

Conditions at the Reception Center were inadequate when the Turkish Brigade first arrived. There were no beds or sleeping cots of any kind, so the Turks slept side by side on the floor of the barracks.⁴⁵

Mess halls were set up in tents on the parade field in the university compound but the food did not meet these Muslim soldiers' dietary requirements. The Turks, following

Muslim soldiers' dietary requirements. The Turks, following Islamic dictates, did not eat pork or pork products. Aside from core religious considerations, they disliked citrus juices, sweet pickles, lima beans, corn sauces, and spices except salt and pepper. They required an extra ration of bread, in excess of the U.S. standard of two pounds per man per day. The soldiers were accustomed to a heavy, substantial bread loaf known as *ekmek*.⁴⁶ American bakers were trained to meet the bread requirements, which formed a major element in the Turks' diet, while U.S. Army field ranges were provided for the Turkish field kitchens.

The mess halls made necessary adjustments in the daily fare. The Turks requested that they be given American "C" rations but without the pork or pork products. The U.S. Army developed special combat rations and contracted with a company in Japan to produce the new "M rations" (Muslim rations), but by the time the rations had been manufactured and dispatched to the Turkish Brigade in Korea, the Turks had begun to adjust to the modified U.S. rations. The Turks thereafter drew the same rations as the Americans, but without the pork, for which a special mutton product from Japan was substituted. The Turks also located a stronger brand of coffee that was closer in taste to the coffee they usually drank.⁴⁷

The Turks normally cooked on a battalion level in large cooking pots; this presented another minor problem. The U.S. Army sent a food service team which assisted the Turks

in preparing meals more in conformance with standard U.S. Army ration supply.⁴⁸

At the conclusion of the Korean War, the U.S. Army tried to use its experience to address all the logistics problems that might be encountered with using large, diverse multinational armed forces in future conflicts. One of the resultant study's recommendations was that:

Every effort should be made to supply food that suits the eating habits and the individual religious preferences of the nationalities concerned. Each participating nation should furnish rations peculiar to its own national customs.⁴⁹

This recommendation further stated:

If the US is responsible logistically for Class I supply (Food rations):

(a) Deviation from the standard US field ration should be held to a minimum.

(b) Education and training in the preparation of American foods should be stressed to ease the burden on supply agencies.

(c) Historical data based on Korean experiences should be maintained on the dietary modifications needed to make US rations suitable for each participating UN unit.

(d) Available information on the eating habits of the various UN units should be given to the theater commander in advance of the arrival of units so that arrangements can be made for timely procurement of the additional items in the quantities required.

The Turks provided, in their brief three week stay at the UNRC, a picture of the problems that could and would be encountered by all the foreign troops incorporated into this American-led international army.⁵⁰

In addition to the special considerations for Muslim troops, more unanticipated problems arose. In the case of shower facilities, the Turkish soldiers were extremely modest and would not share group showers. Only one man would shower at a time until the Turks solved the problem themselves, forming individual cubicles by wrapping shelter halves around themselves. The UNRC personnel were relieved that this problem was resolved without their intervention, since providing individual shower facilities would have caused another delay in the training and orientation process.⁵¹

One of the problems fundamental to the operation of EUSAK was the difficulty posed by many different languages. The language problem was never really solved and even though English was designated as the primary language of communication, the various countries' units continued to struggle with the language barrier throughout the war.

All orders, instructions, and directives were issued in English; individual national units were then required to translate necessary items and inform their troops. All units had English translators to perform this function and also to translate training manuals, operational orders, and supply instructions into their unit's language. There were also UN liaison officers from the foreign units assigned to the U.S. units but less use was made of them. The U.S. units experienced great difficulty finding American officers proficient in the languages of the coalition forces;

therefore, communication was less than ideal and seldom a two-way street.⁵²

The language problem was first identified when the UN units moved through the UNRC. Training methods had to be modified, manuals translated, and orders issued through interpreters supplied by the UN units. In this case, the inability of the Turks to speak English or the Americans to speak Turkish, placed a heavy burden on each, and both the Americans and the Turks experienced considerable difficulties.⁵³

The differences between the various national contingents caused U.S. commanders more than a small amount of frustration. According to General Matthew Ridgway:

The UN forces at this time counted troops from many nations ... Catering to all the peculiar preferences, in food, in clothing, in religious observances - gave our service and supply forces a thousand petty headaches. The Dutch wanted milk where the French wanted wine, The Moslims wanted no pork and the Hindus, no beef. The Orientals wanted more rice and the Europeans wanted more bread. Shoes had to be extra wide to fit the Turks. They had to be extra narrow and short to fit the men from Thailand and the Philippines.⁵⁴

Ridgway was the second Supreme Commander after General Douglas MacArthur was relieved of the command. The passage of time, the establishment of the Reception Center, and a lot of good intentions still had not solved the problem the Turks initially encountered on arrival at the United Nations Reception Center.

The Turks arrived with some basic misconceptions that American personnel had to correct diplomatically. They

believed that some Post Exchange items, such as cigarettes, were free. That was really a minor problem in comparison with the other problems, especially language, that had to be solved.

In the case of the Turks, both officers and enlisted replacements arrived in increments of approximately 1800 every four months. After a short training period, these replacements were integrated into all elements of the TAFC and a like number of men were returned to Turkey, the process representing a turnover of about one third of the Turkish command. There was no provision for gradual training and integration of Turkish replacements; therefore, the Turkish command was weakened during these turnover periods.

The main problem was the replacement groups' lack of actual combat experience. Untried and green, they were largely ineffective until they gained the necessary skills and confidence in operations.⁵⁵

The delay in sending replacements many times was the result of domestic political problems. The Turkish government did not respond to the repeated requests of the Turkish Liaison Group in Tokyo, nor did it address the replacement problem faced by the Turkish Brigade which needed a minimum of 1500 replacements to avoid depletion. This problem became particularly acute when the brigade was understrength by 888 men and there were 450 patients in military hospitals in Japan awaiting transport back to

Turkey. Therefore the Turkish Brigade was actually depleted by 1338 men, taking it to dangerous low levels for its effectiveness.

Several countries experienced problems in developing adequate and timely means of facilitating the movement of replacement troops to the combat zone and the removal of wounded or rotational troops back to their respective countries; therefore, it was at this point that the Department of the Army instituted the transport shuttle, consisting of two U.S. ships, between the Mediterranean area and the Far East. The U.S., as overall coordinator of logistics for the Korean War, sought to facilitate the troop movements after having determined that the Turkish government and several other participant countries did not have the resources to carry out this mission.⁵⁶

The Turkish Brigade was organized along the same lines as the United States military. They used some U.S. weapons and equipment, but except for the artillery officers, replacements arriving from Turkey were not familiar with US small arms, since U.S. small arms training was not a part of the U.S. Military Mission to Turkey's program.⁵⁷ On the arrival of each large group of replacements, the TAFC, using Turkish personnel, conducted intensive small arms training for fifteen days. A U.S. advisory group was permanently attached to the TAFC and assisted in training the Turks; their job was made easier by the exclusive use of U.S. vehicles, communications equipment, artillery, and mortars.

The Turks handled morale and discipline problems swiftly, and punishment was severe. Turkish military police coordinated and cooperated very closely and effectively with the 25th Division Provost Marshal when attached to that unit. Traffic violations, particularly speeding, were numerous among the Turkish personnel, with the offenders using the excuse of language differences.⁵⁸ TAFC and 25th Division refused to accept this excuse.

The 1st Turkish Brigade, after orientation at the United Nations Reception Center, saw its first action in the "Home by Christmas" offensive. While the Turks were at Taegu, Chinese Communist Forces moved in force across the North Korean border, fundamentally changing the complexion of the war that Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur and Lieutenant General Edward Almond, MacArthur's chief of staff and subsequent IX Corps commander, had confidently predicted would soon be over.

The Eighth Army strategists had had every reason to believe that the North Korean Army was finally beaten. United Nations forces had already pursued the remaining units of the NKPA to the northernmost boundaries of the peninsula. The Chinese military intervention created new and dangerous problems for the United Nations forces. This widening of the war brought the United States into open conflict with a major Communist country, possessing almost unlimited manpower, which was being supplied by the Soviet Union.

From the outset, the Korean War had always been a gamble for the United States. The biggest gamble, of course, always was the danger of intervention by the Soviet Union or its surrogate, the People's Republic of China. United States policy was containment and prevention of the fall of any additional countries to Communism. The Soviet Union also had reason to preserve the Communist government of North Korea from destruction by the advancing United Nations coalition.

The border area was of strategic importance to both China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese Communists maintained that the United Nations forces intended to invade Manchuria, posing an obvious threat to a complex of hydroelectric power plants on the Yalu River which supplied Manchurian industries. Further, Chinese interests would be compromised by the fall of North Korea's Communist government and the establishment of a democracy south of the Yalu. In order to prevent this, the Chinese were willing to gamble that the United States would not attack China directly.

Vladivostok, the Soviet Union's chief Siberian port and Pacific terminus of the strategically important Trans-Siberian Railway lay nearby. The Soviets, like their Chinese allies, had no desire to see the North Korean industrial complex leave the Communist camp.

Intelligence from many sources detailed Chinese military movements. One of the principal recipients of this

intelligence was Major General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief, who analyzed the material and sent detailed reports of changes in Chinese army assignments.⁵⁹ These reports were largely unheeded and a case could be made about this prior knowledge allowing the U.S. military and political leaders to foresee Chinese intervention. The Chinese Communist Forces' eventual entry into the war expanded Truman's "police action." The third world war Truman had hoped to avoid by engaging in a swift, clean, surgical, and above all brief, police action was on the verge of spilling over into a full-blown Asiatic-triggered world war. American political aims and military policies were at odds as the United States and the UN nations in the coalition struggled to come to terms with an entirely new and not entirely unexpected war. The China lobby of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) exercised much influence in the State Department and Congress. Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted hearings into the activities of suspected Communists and fellow travelers. In 1949, Mao sent messages to President Truman trying to gain support for the victorious Chinese Communist forces.

The Chinese had crossed the Yalu in October and fought some small battles with the UN forces; small groups of Chinese soldiers dressed in North Korean uniforms had been captured from these battles of the Chinese "First Phase Offensive." Chinese Communist Forces entered the battle in force on November 24-25, 1950, and the fighting in Korea

took on a new and much more dangerous aspect. The Turkish Brigade, newly arrived from the UNRC, was about to receive its initial combat experience against an overwhelmingly numerically superior foe.

CHAPTER III

COMBAT PREPARATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE

The Turkish Brigade commander, Brigadier General Tahsin Yazici, has been described many ways by both contemporary and present day historians. "Yazici was an aging brigadier who had been a division commander at Gallipoli in 1916 fighting the British," Clay Blair wrote. "Yazici was highly respected, high up in the Turkish military establishment, and took a bust to brigadier to command the brigade."⁶⁰ Yazici was a well-seasoned soldier; he had fought valiantly against the British at Gallipoli and had captured a high-ranking British officer. He was skillful and experienced but his main drawback was he did not have proficiency in English; therefore, he was hampered by this lack of language skill.

Diplomatically, Yazici, through interpreters, always stated that generals should not talk politics and he spoke in generalities to the small groups of reporters that tried to interview the Turkish Brigade. He never mentioned the fact that the Turkish Army had not fought a major battle against foreign troops since World War I; their only real military engagements were the six years of border patrols during World War II and skirmishes against Kurdish tribesmen. The Turkish military did not know how well they would perform in this environment with volunteer officers

and volunteer enlisted men who were just completing their compulsory two year service.⁶¹ Until the recent pacts and alliances with the United States, the Turks had received most of their training and equipment from the German military before World War II. German methods were standard procedure in the Turkish force that was sent to Korea.⁶²

The U.S. Army was unaware of the difficulties in coordination, logistics, and above all basic communication in a common language that would follow, especially in the early months of their cooperative effort with the Turks. Therefore, the U.S. military command did not at first attach any American liaison officers to the brigade, thus adding to the problems the Turks faced in their initial combat operations. Military operations were slowed and often hampered by this lack of basic language skills; the problem would be exacerbated in the heat of battle.

The Turks' arrival in Korea garnered a considerable amount of publicity. The Turkish soldiers' fierce appearance with flowing moustache, swarthy complexion, and fierce demeanor was a news correspondent's dream. They made great publicity photos for American newspapers and newsreels. Time magazine highlighted the arrival of the Turks with a photograph showing them standing in formation at the Pusan train station and an accompanying story that made the Turks almost larger than life. Time also gave an interesting insight as to how close the United States thought it was to victory in Korea:

Landing at Pusan two weeks ago, a Turkish officer said sadly: "We are jealous. We wish ... we could join the fighting." UN forces reaching Korea in the future would have even less chance to see any heavy fighting, but they would be welcome nonetheless. By carrying out mopping-up operations and occupation duties, they could free combat-weary U.S. troops for a return to Japan.⁶³

In a later November issue, Time featured an even more dramatic picture of the fighting Turks and their cultural differences in an article aptly titled, "Cold Steel & Heavy Bread":

Looking like warriors of another age, in their greatcoats and sweeping mustaches, the Turks applied their standard solution - they fixed bayonets and charged. The Chinese ran ... Some small part of the credit for Turkish successes in Korea may be due to U.S. bakers, who have learned to make a heavy bread that suits their gallant allies - using wheat and rice flour and olive oil. A U.S. colonel who visited Korea brought back to Washington last week the text of a classic message sent by the Turks, to a U.S. supply depot: "Enemy attacked, we attacked. Send us more bread."⁶⁴

The Turks, both during and after the war, had the reputation of being rough, hard fighters. Most of the enlisted men were young and all carried a sidearm sword that to most Americans and other UN troops appeared to be a long knife. No other UN troops were armed with this kind of knife or indeed any other weapon so out of the ordinary. The Turks had a dangerous proficiency in close combat with the long knives that made all other forces wish to stay clear of them.⁶⁵

Most of the enlisted men were from the eastern steppe region of Turkey near the Russian border and had little more than three or four years of school. They had been uprooted

by the conscription process, given uniforms, a rifle, some training by the Turkish military and United States military advisors, put on a ship in Iskenderun, transported ten thousand miles and suddenly deployed in Korea.⁶⁶

The enlisted ranks of the Turkish army were drawn from the eastern provinces where higher education was unavailable to most of the children of the area's mountain villages. They were provincial in the fullest sense of the word, cut off from the modern world for all intents and purposes. There was little in the way of medical facilities available in these villages and few opportunities to learn about the outside world. Few villagers had either running water or electricity. A central village well still provided water as it had done in ancient times. News of the outside world very seldom penetrated the village daily life and activities.

Life in the villages and small towns of Turkey was the same as it had been for hundreds of years. Bards still made the rounds of the villages, sing-songing their ancient repertoire of stories in the coffeehouses late into the night. Army service, generally speaking, offered the conscripted men the greatest opportunity to broaden their narrow lives. When they were drafted, for the first time in their lives they had modern medical and dental care. They moved outside the narrow parochial world of their village. In the military, for the first time in their lives, they

always had sufficient food to eat, warm clothing and shoes. Life was not nearly as harsh and bleak.

While these cultural considerations may seem insignificant to Americans, they were wide-reaching and very important. Military duty in Korea marked the first time that these men moved into a world populated by many religions and heard languages other than Turkish. Very few of these soldiers, and not many of the officers, could speak English. Far fewer Americans spoke Turkish. In combat, this became a critical deficiency. Communication between IX Corps headquarters and the Turkish Brigade was on a very elementary language level.

Intra-unit improvisation developed to overcome the language problem. The Eighth Army tried to place U.S. Signal Corps teams with foreign-speaking units as the communication problem was identified. In the case of the Turks, this did not happen during their initial combat experience in the Chinese counteroffensive, leading to many of the misdirected and misunderstood commands. Later in the war this was rectified, but not at this crucial point.

When the Turkish Brigade moved into reserve with the IX Corps on November 10th, there were unconfirmed rumors of massive Chinese troop movements southward across the Yalu. General MacArthur initially ordered the UN forces northward in October, but General Walton Harris "Johnnie" Walker pleaded lack of sufficient supplies and delayed the operation temporarily. The movement was supposed to be

cloaked in the utmost secrecy; however, MacArthur himself tipped off the Chinese Forces Commander General Lin Piao. Less than subtle signs abounded as the month of November waned.

In a press conference in early November, MacArthur casually stated that the war was winding down, and there was an excellent chance that the troops would be home for Christmas. Additionally, MacArthur remarked to an old friend that he was cautiously optimistic "the desire of Washington as expressed at the Wake Island conference, to send two divisions back and get the boys home for Christmas" would be realized.⁶⁷ This prediction by the supreme United Nations commander, who knew of the existence and capture of Chinese troops in late October and early November, was carried in major newspapers and newsmagazines. MacArthur had reports that clearly stated that the Chinese had entered North Korea and were fighting in battles alongside of their allies. Willoughby, his intelligence chief and principal apologist, insists that MacArthur's remark on "home by Christmas" was taken out of context and misconstrued by a press avid for news of the end of the war.

MacArthur subsequently made one of his rare trips away from his Tokyo headquarters on November 20, something clearly out of the ordinary.⁶⁸ Photos were taken of the meeting with his top commanders in Korea, especially Generals Walker and Almond, and distributed to the media. On the return trip to Tokyo, MacArthur unexpectedly and

suddenly, and against President Truman's specific order, directed his pilot to fly at approximately 5,000 feet altitude over the northern stretches of Korea, close to the Manchurian border. The flight may have confirmed MacArthur's conclusion that despite all intelligence indications to the contrary, the Chinese were not preparing to intervene in force; he reported that there were no extensive signs of much usage of the trails and roads. However the snow was deep and tended to cover any traces of movements and the terrain was rough and barren, with jagged heights and deep crevices, all snow filled.

The general's unauthorized trip had one other side effect: it greatly angered President Truman, who reported his irritation with MacArthur to cabinet members and friends.⁶⁹ By this point General MacArthur was developing a disturbing pattern of disobedience of orders from his superiors. A Pentagon directive of September 27, 1950, "instructed the Commander in Chief to use no non-Korean forces in the provinces bordering on the Soviet Union or along the Manchurian frontier."⁷⁰ However, in the final advance toward the Yalu and Tumen Rivers in November, MacArthur directed removal of all prohibitions against the use of non-Korean troops and later, when questioned, told the JCS that his decision had been prompted by military necessity. General J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff, told a Congressional Committee that the Pentagon had been

concerned at that time lest MacArthur later disobey other orders with more serious results.⁷¹

Growing military concerns notwithstanding, MacArthur's public mystique had not yet been tarnished. After all, the common wisdom went, he had successfully outflanked the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) with the brilliant Inchon invasion in September. In the past, MacArthur had successfully flouted conventional military wisdom and tactics. Several notable exceptions, such as his actions in the Philippines, 1941-42, still had not cast serious doubts or tarnished his reputation as a general who engaged in unconventional tactics. The Joint Chiefs, confronted by a willful general of remarkable seniority, proved very reluctant to contradict his prediction that the troops would be "home for Christmas." In private, though, many generals, including Matthew Ridgway, were apprehensive about this movement northward to the Yalu River. But, Ridgway remembered, no one in Washington or the Pentagon was willing to reign in MacArthur.⁷²

After World War II, most high-ranking officers, whether they were personally favorable or unfavorable toward MacArthur described him, in public, as "brilliant" or a "strategic genius." Noted was that surprise was the one element of war most exploited in his offensives.⁷³

A major factor in MacArthur's political clout in America was the China Lobby which was supported, politically and financially, not only by Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang

regime in Taiwan but also the ruling conservative regimes of South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as ultra conservatives in America. MacArthur, in turn, advocated American assistance to these countries. For this reason he had the backing of Chiang of Taiwan, Yoshida of Japan, Rhee of South Korea, and Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino, successive presidents of the Philippines.⁷⁴

MacArthur's inner circle, when the Korean War began, were Major Generals Courtney Whitney, his alter ego and chief of the occupation government's Government Section; Edward M. Almond, his chief of staff and subsequent X Corps commander; Charles A. Willoughby, his intelligence chief since 1941; and Colonel Laurence E. Bunker, his principal aide, later to become vice president of the ultra-conservative John Birch Society.⁷⁵

The Chinese High Command, especially Lin Piao, followed all these signs believing they indicated that an invasion of China was imminent. In the days leading up to the Chinese - UN confrontation, MacArthur continued to give the Chinese more than adequate warning of the UN command's northward movement. MacArthur also deliberately disobeyed orders and directives designed to prevent further escalation which could easily lead to the first total nuclear war, as both the Soviet Union and the United States by now had the ability to deliver nuclear weapons.

Truman was adamant in his desire to prevent escalation to nuclear war. Aside from his fear of the wide-spread

destruction of American cities, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki along with rigorous testing programs had severely depleted the stockpile of materials necessary for the production of nuclear weapons. Further, the United States had made piecemeal commitments to various hot spots in Asia, such as the Chiang Kai-Shek regime in Taiwan, the Philippine Army's fight against the Hukbalahup movement, and the French struggle to suppress the Viet Minh in Indochina. The commitment that at the time seemed least risky, yet later proved most deadly, was the arrival of the first members of a thirty-five man United States military mission to Saigon, Thus "committing the United States in Indo-China." After all, the French would bear the full brunt of the war in Indo-China, with United States support, aid, and "some advisors."⁷⁶

United States Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "who felt that the United States was now closer than ever to a wider war," said that some way should be found to end the Korean conflict.⁷⁷ In the midst of the Cold War, the United States began to gather as many allies as possible to stop the advance of the Chinese Communists. The various speculations on the type of war, its real possibility of widening into a global conflict, and the possibility of a nuclear confrontation were issues under consideration within the Truman Administration. For that reason, after MacArthur committed United States and United Nations troops to a final massive offensive, pressure to conclude the war mounted on

the generals in the field who would actually commit their men to one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war.

Through rough and almost impassable terrain, in cold that froze bare hands to the metal of equipment and weapons, the United States and United Nations forces were sent forward.

The American public read the first disquieting news in the November 27, 1950, issue of Time:

In Korea, U.N. forces, advancing cautiously toward the Manchurian border, were slowed down more by their own supply difficulties than by enemy resistance.

Later in the article it was reported:

The 7th's men, although equipped with parkas and other arctic garb[,] were suffering in the coldest weather anywhere along the Allied front. For a while their supply road to the east-coast port of Iwon was blocked by snowdrifts ten or twelve feet deep. They resorted to airdrops and ox carts ...

Bitter winds swept down over Manchuria last week to the mountains and bleak fields of North Korea. Typical December weather seemed to be coming in a month early. Behind the front, the countryside was dotted at night with bonfires at which U.S. troops warmed themselves. In the fighting lines, the numbed and miserable doughfeet had no such comfort. Medical officers treated their first cases of frostbite and trench foot.

In the U.S., families of soldiers were horrified by reports that some units were still fighting and shivering in summer clothes...

Units of the 7th Division, which had winter clothing, were fighting last week in 20-below zero cold. The cold brought tears which froze on the men's faces.

The Americans moved quickly forward toward the Yalu. The first units to reach the sensitive border area were three battalions of the 17th Regimental Combat Team of the

7th Infantry Division on November 21. They entered the deserted North Korean town of Hyesanjin, and began to move across what they had been told was ankle-deep water that should have presented no problem to their crossing. However, the night before, upstream dams had been opened and water released.⁷⁸

The soldiers waded into frigid water registering seven degrees. Ice floated in the waters. The ankle-deep water was found to be waist deep; nevertheless, the soldiers attempted to cross the river. Finally, the crossing was called off and the troops rerouted because eighteen men had already suffered frostbite. Their uniforms had to be cut off, they were wrapped in blankets and removed to the command post tent to restore their circulation.⁷⁹

Everything froze in this intense cold. It was necessary to mix alcohol with the gasoline to prevent fuel lines from freezing on the vehicles and equipment. Blood plasma had to be heated for ninety minutes before it could be used. Medicines that were water-soluble froze and during the almost endless nights, sweat that accumulated in the men's boots turned to ice.⁸⁰

The 7th Division and the other American units in North Korea were not really prepared for arctic warfare. The Americans and their United Nations allies suffered as a result of ill-considered post-World War II military economies. Few of the fighting units had arctic parkas. Field jackets, even with the quilted insert, were inadequate

for the severe cold the troops experienced in that winter offensive. Many soldiers lacked even the basic and necessary item, gloves. They wore leather boots that were not even insulated. Despite these handicaps, the 17th RCT reached its objective, the Yalu River.

As General Walker's thinly stretched Eighth Army moved steadily northward, the peninsula widened, and the army necessarily expanded to cover the increased width. Walker intended "to keep the Eighth Army under close control. His order of battle comprised the U.S. I Corps, consisting of the U.S. 24th Division, the British 27th Brigade, and the ROK 1st Division; the U.S. IX Corps including the U.S. 2d and 25th Divisions and the Turkish Brigade; the ROK 6th, 7th, and 8th Divisions; and the 1st Cavalry Division in Army reserve."⁸¹ (See Figure 2)

Walker was cautious about committing his troops. Intelligence tried to get some realistic estimates about the Chinese troop strength and their movements. Daily intelligence briefings in early November indicated a dramatic increase in Chinese and North Korean troop strength from 40,100 men to 98,400 men.⁸² Major General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief, on November 15 warned of approximately 300,000 seasoned Chinese troops north of the Yalu between Antung on North Korea's Yalu

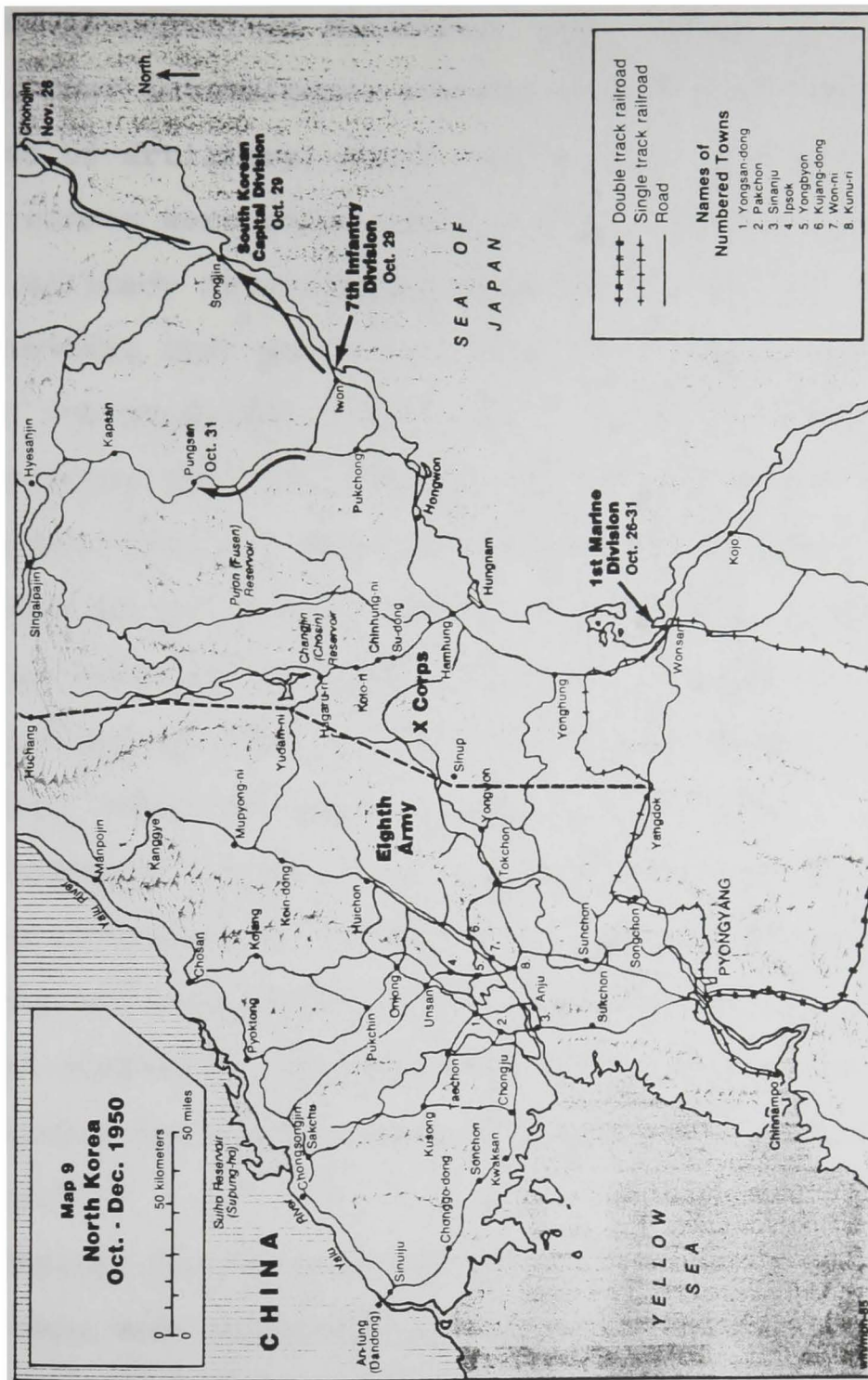


Figure 2

North Korea October - December, 1950

Source: Bevin Alexander, Korea: The First War We Lost

border and Manpojin, in Manchuria, just across the border. Other intelligence reports stated that "large quantities of artillery, small arms, ammunition and other military stores were being shipped from Canton, China."⁸³ American military intelligence supplied figures of Chinese troop movements that would have been alarming to any commander but MacArthur. They reported rumors from various sources that the Chinese had 200,000 men in Korea; but MacArthur told the American Ambassador to Korea, John Muccio, that he was "sure the Chinese Communists had sent 25,000, and certainly no more than 30,000, soldiers across the border" and he further stated that the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) could not have gotten any more over surreptitiously.⁸⁴ MacArthur tended to discount any statistics favorable to the Chinese, and did not believe them. Only one week later at the beginning of the "Home for Christmas" offensive, the estimate was changed to 40,000 to 80,000 Chinese and 83,000 North Koreans, still highly inaccurate.⁸⁵

Initially, the Chinese had had no intention of entering the war; they were preoccupied with consolidating their control over the mainland, taking the first steps in collectivization, and changing the Chinese economy to conform to the communist model. In keeping with these priorities, following the defeat of the Nationalists, the Chinese Communist Party in early 1950 ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to demobilize 1.4 million troops

beginning in May, 1950. The demobilization, in fact, began just five days before the NKPA invaded South Korea. Under these circumstances, the People's Republic of China provided only moral support for the Korean leader, Kim Il-sung, and very little else. The Chinese had made a gesture to the North Koreans by sending all ethnic Koreans serving in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to Kim's aide. These Koreans consisted of one fully armed and equipped division of 14,000 men and one cadre brigade.⁸⁶

However, the United Nations' decision to support South Korea triggered defensive redeployment of the PLA. On the same day the UN Command was established, July 7, 1950, Mao redeployed the Chinese 13th Army Corps consisting of four armies, from the Central-South Military Region to the Yalu River, and redesignated it the Northeastern Frontier Defense Army (NFDA). This troop deployment was the immediate predecessor to the Chinese Peoples Volunteers. The former commander of the 15th Army Corps, Deng Hua, was named commander of the Northeastern Frontier Defense Army.⁸⁷

Mao wanted a reliable source to assess and report any danger that the North Koreans would not be able to contain the South Koreans and UN forces. In late August, General Deng Hua, through General Lin Piao, reported that a dangerous situation was developing as the NKPA rapidly pushed southward, overextending their supply and leaving their rear undefended. Deng accurately estimated that MacArthur would stage an amphibious counteroffensive and

predicted that the places for the landing would be near Seoul or Pyongyang.⁸⁸ Tensions were on the rise. On September 9, Mao instructed the 9th Army of the East Military Region deployed close to the railway to await further movement to the Yalu River.⁸⁹

The Chinese notified Indian Ambassador K. M. Panikkar that if American troops entered North Korea, China would intervene.⁹⁰ Mao believed that the possibility of a major confrontation between the United States and China was increasing. He had told his High Command that there were three probable countries where this confrontation might occur: Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Korea seemed the most favorable for the Chinese since it was a short distance from the Soviet Union and the industrial center of China. China could not accept a hostile North Korea because such a solution would demand the stationing, indefinitely, of the large number of troops along the 1,000 mile border.⁹¹

This was the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese twelve-year cycle and the Chinese understood that they were getting closer to active participation in the Korean War. They felt that they would be fighting the "Tiger"--the United States, whom they hoped would be only a paper tiger. In fact, most of their propaganda focused on the United States as being a paper tiger, nothing to be feared. Remaining on the sidelines was no longer a viable option given the North Koreans' demonstrated inability to prosecute and decisively win the war against the South Koreans and the UN coalition.

The Chinese therefore began to maneuver for advantage by first employing their propaganda skills in a war of words. Calling America a "Paper Tiger," the Chinese organized "hate America" campaigns. "Radio Moscow announced that the Chinese First Phase Offensive in October and early November, 1950 was but a prelude to a larger, more intensive operation upcoming which would destroy the United Nations Command."⁹²

The Chinese People's Committee in Defense of World Peace and Against American Aggression was formed in Beijing on October 26. Now the newspaper war began in earnest and several Chinese newspapers gave voice to the direction that China would take in the war. The papers left no uncertainty as to how the Chinese government would react: "We cannot stand idly by when the American imperialist, a notorious enemy, is now expanding its war of aggression against our neighbor and is attempting to extend the aggressive flames to the border of the country." Another stated, "By spreading the flames of aggressive war to the very borders of China, they [American imperialists] are menacing the security of the whole world, but especially of China."⁹³

Added to the Chinese Communists' growing insecurity was Chiang Kai-Shek's earlier announcement on August 1, concerning a meeting he had had with MacArthur that had laid the foundation for "Sino-American cooperation" and final victory against the CCP. On August 26, MacArthur publicly urged that Taiwan be turned into a United States defense stronghold.⁹⁴

Mao, in his days of fighting the KMT, developed and described precisely what the Chinese battle plan would be: "We have always advocated the policy of luring the enemy to penetrate deep precisely because this is the most effective military policy for a weak army in strategic defense against a strong army."⁹⁵ This strategy was reflected in the Chinese army's movements. As the United Nations Command forces moved closer to the frontier, the Chinese increased the readiness and strength of the 13th Army, now designated NFDA.

Major General Willoughby highlighted the UN final problem on November 7:

The Chinese Communists have already displayed their ability to infiltrate troops into Korea with comparative ease. Utilizing back roads and the cover of darkness, it is entirely possible that the CCF could secretly move ... this readily available force into position south of the Yalu in preparation for a counteroffensive. Logistic support ... should be relatively simple ... since supply lines would be extremely short.⁹⁶

CHAPTER IV

COMBAT

The Chongchon River flows out of the Karil L'yong (Handong-ni) Mountains in a southwesterly direction through western Korea, until it reaches the Yellow, or Western, Sea as it is called by the Koreans. Many of the familiar geographic names and features of the peninsula reflect the strong Chinese cultural influence.

The Chongchon River is an old geologic feature that has numerous diversions. It traverses rugged terrain and has changed and created a largely igneous formation of granitic cliffs and long, narrow, daunting valleys. Heavily forested land gives an enemy numerous and convenient places to hide or to ambush. Dense forests lend themselves to guerilla operations against an approaching military force. The terrain is difficult to fight on and hold, and especially difficult to defend. There are too many places to hide, too many passes, and too much high ground for enemies to place small bands of soldiers with only mortars and rifles awaiting the march of a defender.

The mountains, streams, and the divide separating the Chongchon River from the Taedong River drainage area present especially perilous conditions for a mechanized army to either take or hold. Erosion has caused steep almost unnavigable tributary streams, high narrow passes, and boulder outcroppings that would test the agility and

surefootedness of mountain goats. The people in this area eke marginal existences from agriculture and some mining operations. They live in small villages perched on mountain tops or small plateaus and in the valleys. Roads, when they exist, are little more than narrow, loose dirt tracks, mere thin dustings of soil that jut out over precipitous drops into valleys below. Very few tracks were wide enough to support heavy mechanized equipment and armored units.

On November 19, the U.S. 25th Infantry Division left Kaesong at six in the morning and bedded down at the mining town of Kunu-ri around ten that night. They, including the newly assigned Turkish Brigade, had covered one hundred and eighty-seven miles. The next day, the Turkish Brigade, which was largely an infantry unit that had no trucks for troop transport, was detached from the 25th Division and reassigned to the IX Corps reserve at Kunu-ri.⁹⁷ The movement depended, like all such movements, upon American transportation, and was accomplished over a four day period.⁹⁸

General Walker's Eighth Army command, which was to lead the offensive, was split down the middle by the Chongchon River. On the west side, Walker's left flank, he placed I Corps' 24th Division and the South Korean 1st Division. Just north of the town of Tokchon, Walker placed the South Korean II Corps. In the center of the line, divided by the Chongchon, was the IX Corps.⁹⁹

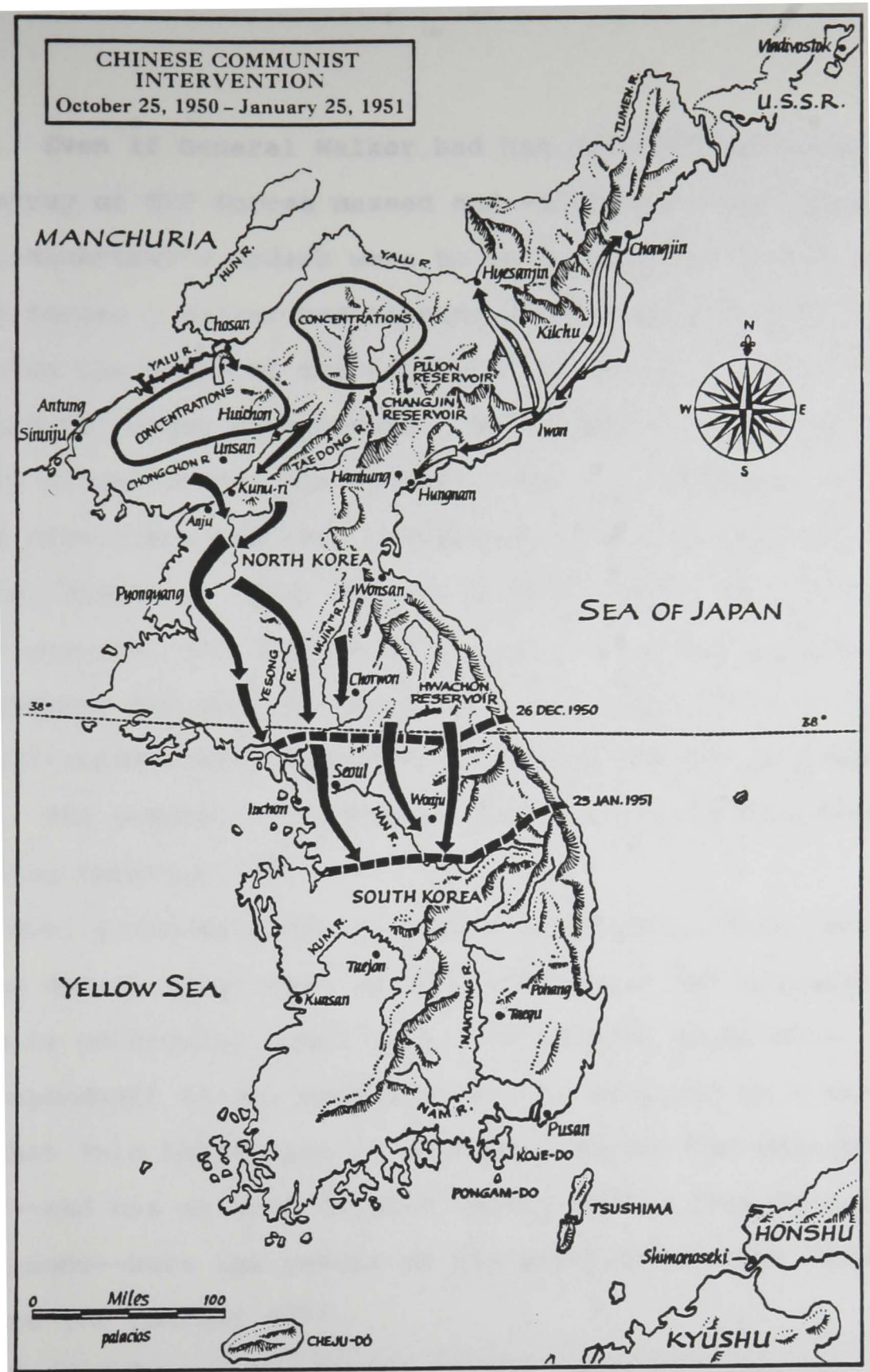


Figure 3

The Chinese Intervention, November 1950-January 1951

Source: Richard Whelan, Drawing the Line: The Korean War

Even if General Walker had had detailed knowledge of the array of CCF forces massed and waiting for the Eighth Army, MacArthur's orders were to go forward and engage any enemy forces. Walker had already displeased MacArthur by delaying the start of the offensive to get ample supplies for the men under his command. Walker was disturbed by the supply situation for his command. The rail supplies coming north from Pusan had been bombed repeatedly during the earlier campaign. They were in need of repair in order to be of any use. At Inchon, ships were required to anchor in the channel through the mud flats; from there their cargo was off-loaded onto barges and then transported into the port. The seaport for Pyongyang had only a limited cargo-handling capacity.¹⁰⁰

Now, given MacArthur's imperious command style, Walker had no option other than to obey directives the soundness of which he personally questioned. In private talks with correspondents at his headquarters, he admitted to a select few that "his hesitation in advancing beyond the Chongchon River--and his silence despite barbed cables from MacArthur and Almond--were the result of his knowing he might have to prepare for retreat."¹⁰¹

Even prior to the Eighth Army's northward advance, General Willoughby's concern over possible Chinese intervention was confirmed by yet another source. On November 6, 1950, the American Ambassador to Taipeh cabled a summary of Nationalist Chinese intelligence. This

information bore out the substance of the intelligence reports General Willoughby had been providing MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Chinese military intelligence forwarded to Washington by the Embassy's service attache during the past few days lends strong support to the assumption that the Chinese Communists plan to throw the book at the United Nations forces in Korea and in addition to step up their pressure on Indochina.

The reasons why the Chinese Communists have so far delayed their entry into Korea in force, quite aside from any speculation on influences exerted by Moscow, may include

2. Postponing any major effort on their part until the fighting reached the region of the Korean-Manchurian frontier served to shorten their lines of communication--a particularly important point in view of the fact that United Nations forces control sea and air--and also gives them the maximum time for preparation. In addition to bringing up forces from other parts of China, it was necessary to replenish stocks of equipment and supplies in Manchuria which had been severely depleted in extending aid to the North Koreans.¹⁰²

This represents but a small part of the intelligence available from a variety of sources. MacArthur's battle plans did not take into account these reports from persons and agencies that were in a position to know and report on the accuracy of their sources. Later, after President Truman dismissed him as Supreme Commander, MacArthur tried to explain away his disregard of this intelligence. The forward movement of the Eighth Army was ordered nonetheless. MacArthur seemed to believe that the Chinese Communists would simply stand on the sidelines and let their North Korean allies be rendered harmless and no longer a threat to

the South Koreans. MacArthur indicated that his directive from Washington was to unify the Korean peninsula into one nation, thus eliminating the DPRK and effectively giving the Republic of Korea an abundant source of hydroelectric power for manufacturing and other industries. This action would jeopardize Communist China's access to the same source of power and industries. The stage was thus set for a massive, damaging, and punishing confrontation between the coalition of United Nations forces and the PLA; the latter was prepared to fight to the last man through the intense cold and tortuous country that had vast, deep gorges, icy reservoirs that sometimes stretched sixty miles in length, mountains with only rough, sometimes icy, dirt tracks that defied the mechanized army's efforts to traverse it. Walker understood the mission. He probably wondered how he would accomplish it.

Assembled in front of General Walker's IX Corps in the west was the XIII Army Group of the Chinese Fourth Field Army; eighteen infantry divisions of at least 180,000 men were in that sector. Opposing the U.S. I Corps, in the east was the IX Army Group of the Chinese Third Field Army with twelve infantry divisions of about 120,000 men. The total Chinese strength was about 300,000 men; twelve divisions of the North Korean People's Army added approximately 65,800 men. The North Korean soldiers had recovered sufficiently from their earlier reverses to be battle worthy. There

were also about 40,000 guerillas operating behind the United Nations command.¹⁰³

The Chinese Army had managed to move this large number of troops by the most primitive means. They used the backs of animals and their own backs to transport supplies, which allowed them the freedom to move at will, not restricted to the roads. They had greater mobility in their movements toward their objective than their United Nations counterparts. Chinese soldiers were expected to carry on their backs all the food they required for an extended period of at least six days. The food, in concentrated form, was cooked rice and soybean curds, and similar items that required no cooking or heating to be eaten. They did suffer the pangs of hunger from these shortened rations.¹⁰⁴

The soldiers generally marched at night and averaged at least eighteen miles a day for eighteen days at a stretch. In the daylight hours, they concealed and camouflaged themselves with only scouting parties moving on the land. Most interesting is the degree of strictness exacted by their commanders to enforce these orders. "Officers were authorized to shoot down any man who violated his order."¹⁰⁵ There was no miracle or even anything unusual involved in the large-scale movement of Chinese troops. Probably it only took the execution of one or two men for disobeying orders for the message to be ingrained in the rest of the soldiers. Many of these tactics are similar to and emulate,

to a certain degree although not entirely, tactics used by Napoleon Bonaparte a century and a half before.¹⁰⁶

Although the weakness of the UN position became starkly apparent when the Chinese attacked, General Matthew Ridgway suggested that there was no widespread concern before that event:

While many a field commander was convinced in his heart that strong forces of Chinese were lying in wait somewhere, and while one or two harbored definite doubts of the wisdom of moving blindly forward with flanks ignored and without liaison with friendly forces on either side, no one flinched at the job and many reflected the growing optimism of the Commander in Chief.¹⁰⁷

As part of the IX Corps' general northward advance, the Turks were also ordered to move north and on November 13, the brigade was assigned to the 25th Division. It was assigned to the sector on the route connecting the Injin Bridge northward to Sibyon-ni.¹⁰⁸ On November 20, the Turkish Brigade was detached from the 25th Infantry Division and reassigned to IX Corps reserve where it remained for five days. By November 22, the Turks, having completed their assignment of neutralizing various North Korean patrols in the area, were moved out of the Changdan area and sent northward to Kunu-ri.¹⁰⁹ The Turks held at Kunu-ri, which was much like all the other small villages of that northern area, mud and sticks (see Figure 4).

Thanksgiving Day, November 23, American soldiers in the field were given a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. The food was air-dropped to them in the field. Much

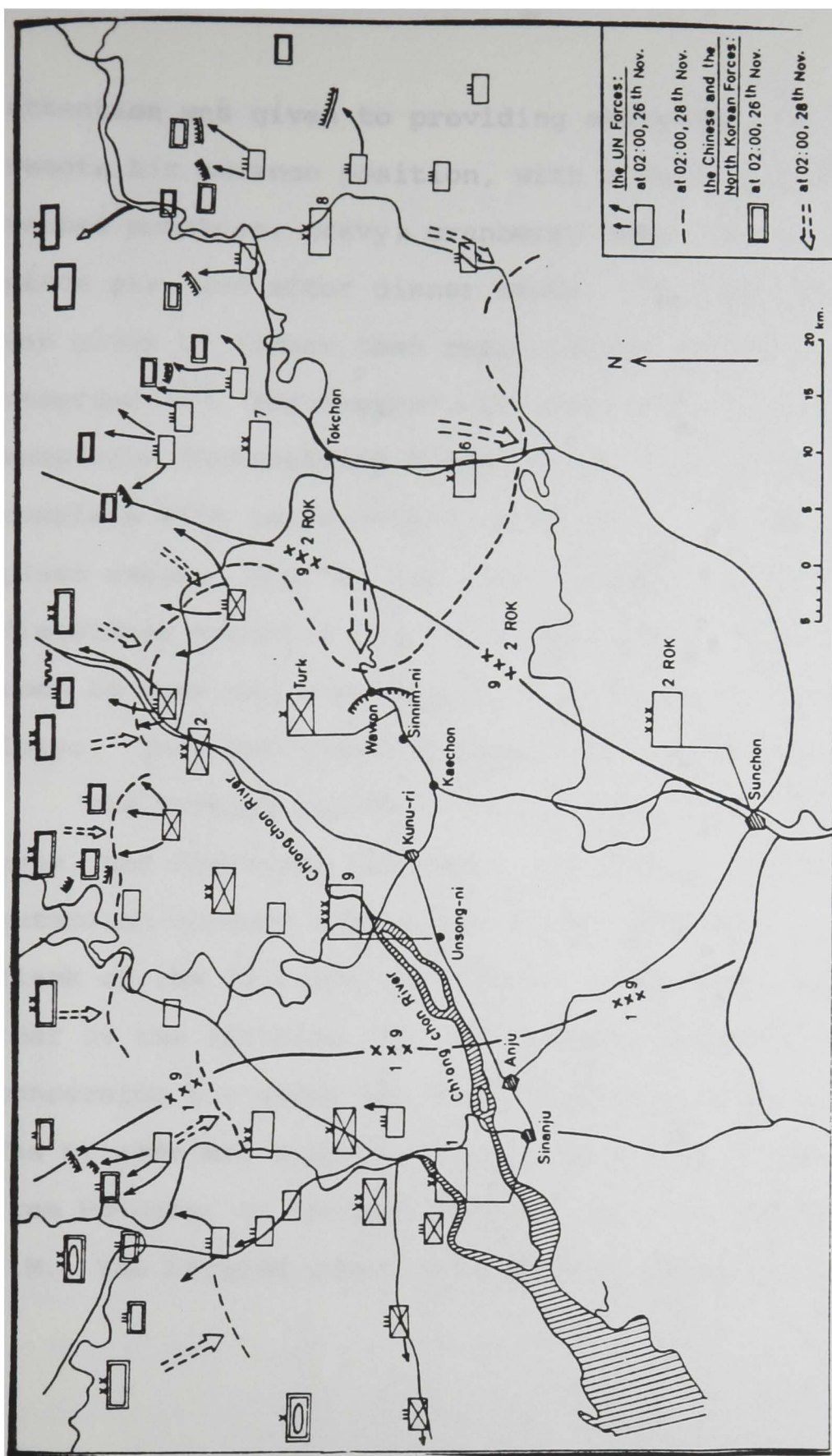


Figure 4

General Situation in Korea, November 26-28, 1950
 Source: Nusret Ozselcuk, "The Turkish Brigade in the Korean War (25 June 1950-27th July 1953)."

attention was given to providing every man, no matter how remote his advance position, with a turkey dinner including mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, buttered squash, mince pie, and after dinner mints. In fact, more priority was given to dinner than replenishing ammunition reserves.¹¹⁰ Top command officers farther to the rear had a sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner served more elaborately, complete with table covers, napkins, china, crystal and even place cards. Feeling was running high, despite the discounted negative tone of intelligence, that the war might soon be over and they would all march in a victory parade in Tokyo. This unfounded optimism was soon shattered.

The Turkish Brigade, as they moved into the Kunu-ri area, had different feelings. They were ordered to establish contact with the U.S. 2nd Division on the right flank of the IX Corps and also to cover the right flank and rear of the Division.¹¹¹ The brigade received information concerning the enemy regiment northwest of Tokchon. The brigade was moved in four groups over a four day period, from November 23 through November 26. On November 26, at 3 P.M., the brigade moved from Kunu-ri along the Tokchon road.

General Yazici described his situation:

This was what the order was. Further intelligence was asked for about the enemy and the ROK Corps, but none was available: or more information was not supplied lest it lower the morale of the Turkish Brigade. We were then asked if we required any assistance We asked for sufficient transportation to take our units to Tokchon as soon as possible and a tank unit to help our brigade. Our requests were accepted, 50 motor vehicles would be sent to us by 20:00 the same day; but these vehicles would not be allowed to go further east than Wawon, and be returned as soon as their job was over. The brigade would also be provided with a tank platoon. The situation was serious, and demanded prompt action.¹¹²

On November 26, the Chinese Communist Forces launched strong counterattacks against the U.S. I Corps and IX Corps. The main Chinese force moved down the central mountain ranges against the ROK II Corps at Tokchon. The South Koreans could not withstand the attack and their defenses collapsed.

The Chinese onslaught assumed alarming proportions. The Turks were ordered to protect the right flank of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division which was the Eighth Army's right flank. Trucks were assigned to transport the Turks' First Battalion to Wawon, fifteen miles east of Kunu-ri, about halfway to Takchon, unload and return for the brigade's Second Battalion.¹¹³ Insufficient trucks arrived and some of the brigade set out on foot. When the units arrived at Wawon, they left for Takchon on foot. As they moved across the mountain, a message from Corps informed the commander that Unsong-ni, five miles west of Tokchon had fallen to the enemy, making their present route toward Tokchon not

feasible. The Turks were ordered to close the road at that point and secure Unsong-ni. Of this order General Yazici wrote:

There was no time to move the brigade to Unsong-ni and deploy it there before dark. Besides, the enemy which was supposed to be at Chongsang-ni was in fact too close to the line which the Corps wanted us to hold. That the brigade might be subjected to a surprise attack before reaching its positions was highly probable. Even more important was the fact that the civilian population had not been moved out of the area. If the peasants and the guerillas that might have infiltrated among them attempted to block the mountain crossing or the Wawon Pass in the rear, the brigade might suffer heavily. As a matter of fact, the 2nd Division of which we were supposed to defend the right flank, was withdrawing. It was impossible to fulfill the task from Karil L'yong, where the brigade was, because the terrain was very rugged and thickly wooded. In order to protect the Kunu-ri-Tokchon road and the other roads to the north and south, a 12 mile wide front had to be held; This was impossible against a numerically superior enemy who knew the region well. Further, the terrain restricted the effective use of artillery and heavy infantry weapons.¹¹⁴

The Turks were in an unenviable situation. They had to withdraw to the southwest. This withdrawal compounded the exposure of the Turks' own east flank and as well as the 2nd Division eastern flank. General Yazici ordered his men to move in the direction of Wawon, about 18 kilometers northeast of Kunu-ri. Brigadier General James Coulter, commander of IX Corps, wanted to regain possession of this route and shore up the collapsing flank caused by the collapse of the ROK II Corps.¹¹⁵

Yazici and the brigade lost contact with corps, therefore Yazici assumed responsibility and ordered his men to the Wawon area and positioned them there. When the Turks

reached Wawon, they attacked toward Tokchon. They were on foot and without tank support. The terrain was upstream along the Tongjukkyo River into the mountain divide that separated the Chongchon River from the Taedong drainage. The headwaters of the Tongjukko River fan out at this area into numerous small streams.¹¹⁶

When he had heard that air observers had seen hundreds of Chinese moving toward Tokchon, Major General Laurence B. Keiser, commanding the U.S. 2nd Division, remarked, "Goddam it, that's where they're going to hit. That will be their main effort--off our flank and against the ROK II Corps." Keiser had miscalculated; his own 2nd Division was the enemy's first target. The Chinese counteroffensive actually struck all along the front.¹¹⁷ Two platoons of the Turkish Brigade assigned reconnaissance duty were now given rear guard duty. The Chinese followed the brigade closely. The Reconnaissance Unit engaged the enemy at the Karil L'yong Pass. The unit was not able to break contact with the Chinese troops. The unit was almost completely wiped out; only a few men survived.¹¹⁸

The Turks had achieved one objective: they had tied down the enemy. The CCF forces suffered heavy casualties in trying repeatedly to take this position. All their attacks were repelled. The Turks, although at a numerical disadvantage, held the area for as long as they could. Finally, Yazici, understanding that the brigade was being

encircled by the numerically superior Chinese, ordered a withdrawal.¹¹⁹

During this time, the ROK II Corps attempted to communicate their desperate situation to Eighth Army headquarters. They discovered their telephone lines had been cut by guerillas and radio communication was severely limited by the mountainous terrain. By nightfall of November 27, the ROK II Corps had taken such significant casualties that they were no longer operationally effective. Eighth Army headquarters attempted to protect its disintegrating and dangerously exposed right flank when it learned the extent of the South Korean casualties.¹²⁰

The Turkish forces seemed a plausible solution. However, the language problem, which had been identified but not resolved at the United Nations Reception Center, resurfaced. General Yazici and his officers had only a rudimentary grasp of English and yet all orders and communications were being relayed in English. The Turkish command misunderstood the orders they received through interpreters.¹²¹

The Turks were alone in the subzero temperatures. Their orders were not fully understood. And they were subjected to the PLA's "one point-two sides" strategy.¹²² Two nights earlier, on November 25, the South Korean troops on point heard a sudden frightening noise: drums, bugles, whistles, flutes, shepherds' pipes, and cymbals wailed and thumped in the darkness. Added to these sounds were

shouting, laughing, and chattering of human voices. The weird combinations of sounds disoriented the allied forces and signaled the beginning of the Chinese Second Phase Offensive. In the eery silence that followed this outburst of sound, the South Koreans were hit by a sudden and ferocious attack. The tactic was the one the Chinese described as *sang-meng kung-tso*, the three fierce actions: fierce fires, fierce assaults, and fierce pursuits. The attacks followed the pattern of the "one point - two sides method," developed during the recent Chinese civil war.

Using this tactic, the South Koreans were allowed to enter a V formation, at whose base and both sides simultaneous assaults were directed. The draws and feeder valleys that led into the Chongchon River valley were used against the helpless South Korean forces. The Chinese effectively sealed off the rear of the retreating South Koreans and the CCF set up roadblocks.¹²³

In the confusion, on November 25, the capture incident occurred. At IX Corps headquarters at Unhang-ni, a few miles from Kunu-ri, a message was relayed that the Turks had met a force of Chinese and a wild "knife and bayonet melee" had ensued, in which the victorious Turks had captured over a hundred Chinese. The IX Corps knew that the Chinese forces were in Tokchon and had captured it; therefore, this account seemed very likely and plausible. The report further stated that the Turks fought bravely and withstood several "Chinese" attacks. They took heavy casualties and

then reported the capture of two hundred Chinese soldiers. American, European, and especially Turkish newspapers trumpeted news of the successful capture. Everyone heard about the capture; however, upon investigation of the spectacular Turkish victory, a totally different picture emerged.

A Japanese-American interpreter with 2nd Division, Lieutenant Sukio Oji, interviewed the Turks' prisoners, many of whom had been badly mauled and were severely wounded. The "Chinese" turned out to be South Koreans retreating from the CCF attack at Tokchon who had accidentally stumbled into the Turks. The Turks later told Eighth Army that since they spoke no Chinese or Korean they could not have known that these soldiers were not Chinese.¹²⁴ There were no Chinese in this first Turk fight in Korea. The incident was quickly covered up and the corrected story never appeared in any newspapers. Once again, language differences and the inability to effectively communicate had been a decisive factor.

Language difficulties contributed in other ways to the "Chinese capture" incident. The Turks had had little reliable operational information or intelligence. Messages were not relayed to them and thus, they had no way of knowing that a ROK force was retreating toward them. The Turks were looking for CCF troops somewhere ahead of them on the road. There were no allied forces with them and the language difficulty that was foreseen but not corrected at

the Reception Center now emerged. In these confusing circumstances, the Turks were understandably not able to identify the advancing force. The Turks continued to experience heavy fighting and this fact coupled with their officers' inability to understand the orders led to even more confusion.

The next day, November 26, there was no case of mistaken identity. At Wawon, the Turks encountered and fought a numerically superior Chinese force. Turkish officers reportedly threw their hats to the ground and said they would not retreat beyond that spot. The surviving Turkish companies were battered but they held their positions.¹²⁵

The Turks were ordered to Wawon, about eighteen kilometers northeast of Kunu-ri, and reached Songbul-gol, only one kilometer from Wawon before nightfall and bivouacked there for the night. Communications were, if anything, becoming even worse. The Turks had no enemy contact nor any message from Corps headquarters. In the morning, November 27, when the Turks resumed their march, they lost the use of the American trucks that had been assigned to transport them only as far as Wawon. Point cars led the infantry column followed by artillery, antiaircraft guns, mortars, engineers, and signal units. There was no particular order of march. Each unit fell in somewhere along the line of march. Around 1430 hours on November 27, IX Corps Command informed General Yazici that the brigade

should stop the advance toward Tokchon and turn back to Wawon. He was also directed to merge the brigade with the U.S. 38th Regiment, understandably to cover the 38th's flank and secure a retreat route westward.¹²⁶

In the confusion of the retreat and the garbled, misdirected and delayed messages, this crucial directive was two hours late in delivery and was received at 1630 hours. The column turned about in the mass confusion and congestion of the road. Finally, on November 27, the brigade reached Wawon, where they encountered heavy enemy fire. The Chinese forces had arrived in the Wawon area before the Turks were able to reassemble and assume defensive positions. The Chinese ripped into the ragged column and General Yazici ordered his men once more to turn about. The Turkish 9th Company took the brunt of the Chinese attack as it covered for the retreating main body.¹²⁷ The 10th Company of the brigade's 3rd Battalion received orders to form the brigade's general outpost line.

Major Lutfu Bilgin, commander of the 3rd Battalion, sent his 9th Company to defend the 10th and 11th Companies' flank. The Chinese eased off on the 10th Company but continued to besiege the 9th and the 11th. By mid-morning of November 28, the Chinese thrust through and attacked the 9th's positions in force. The company was overrun; Major Bilgin and many of his men were killed.

Enemy reenforcements tried to encircle the entire brigade. General Yazici, however, assessed the situation

and took steps to protect his flank and avoid encirclement. The Chinese Communist Forces poured forward and the Turks were caught in the trap that the Chinese were effecting. The Chinese, however, broke off suddenly after encountering the strong resistance of the 3rd Battalion.

During the withdrawal, the Chinese had attacked the Turks with overwhelming force and the brigade took such high casualties that by November 30 it was destroyed as a battle-worthy unit.¹²⁸ The only support the Turks received from the IX Corps was a tank platoon and truck transportation in addition to the reversion to the Turks of the brigade's artillery from the U.S. 25th Division.¹²⁹

The flow of messages and changed orders to the Turks on the road to Tokchon on November 27 reflects the lack of precise information and the high level of uncertainty that IX Corps and Eighth Army experienced as they struggled to interpret the significance of the rapidly unfolding events. One certainty was that during the day, the Chinese attacked the leading 1st Battalion at Wawon and this ambush inflicted the devastating blow to the Turks. The battalion was surrounded and a battle of bayonets and Turkish long knives took place. It was reported that two companies of Turks were still fighting east of Wawon with approximately 400 wounded men in their midst.¹³⁰ General Yazici was at his headquarters in Taechon, a larger village southeast of Kunu-ri. The Turks held out at Wawon until the afternoon and then withdrew to another position southwest of Wawon. The

CCF outflanked these Turks who then withdrew toward Kunu-ri. The Turkish battalion lost most of their vehicles and the human losses were extremely heavy. The survivors scrambled into the hills when all other means of retreat was denied to them since the Chinese held the roads. General Yazici established his new headquarters east of Kaecheon and struggled to reorganize the brigade. The Turks continued to fight delaying actions to gain time for the rest of the troops to reform and establish some semblance of an orderly defense against overwhelming odds. They were not successful in any of their moves.

At the 2nd Division headquarters, information about the Turks, their condition, and their actual movements was becoming more difficult to ascertain. The commander, Major General Lawrence B. Keiser, sent Colonel John C. Coughlin to the Turkish Brigade CP at Kaecheon to learn as much as he could concerning the Turks. Coughlin's report was not good. The Turks had one battalion cut off at Wawon; there was no situation map posted, and worse still, they had no communications with their forward units. The American tanks that were sent up the road to the Turkish units repeatedly turned about and came back to the CP as they were sent to forward positions. Confusion and outright fear of the Chinese led to startling and unusual events, such as American soldiers simply abandoning their positions and, equipment, and sometimes even their weapons. The Chinese appeared to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Confirmation of Chinese movements was sparse and often erroneous. The Chinese, reported to be just ahead, turned out to be advancing on the soldiers from behind. The Turks expressed the opinion that the time had come to evacuate the CP. Coughlin tried to convince them to remain in place. He also reported that the Turkish command was extremely indecisive. The tactics and superior numbers of the Chinese had brought a high state of confusion to the Turks. Their artillery was ordered forward and then quickly recalled. Tersely, Coughlin reported that the Turks' movements must be quickly brought into coordination with other units. The 38th Infantry and the 2nd Division were withdrawing and were trying to coordinate their movements with those of the Turks on their right.¹³¹

On the evening of November 28, the brigade left Wawon, pursued along a wide front by the Chinese, and arrived at Sinnim-ni late in the night. A flood of Korean civilians and ROK troops, with North Korean guerillas infiltrated into their midst, also converged on Sinnim-ni during the night. Yazici took care on the arrival of the brigade, now attached to the U.S. 2nd Division of IX Corps, to keep his men close together, because of the dangerous situation that was developing with the flood of civilians and North Korean guerillas into the area. Yazici detailed the First and Second Infantry Battalions on the hills and the upper slopes to the north and south of Sinnim-ni, and positioned the

artillery nearer to the village itself. The Third Infantry was kept as reserve.¹³²

Around midnight, the eery calm was broken once more by mortar and rocket fire along with heavy concentrations of machine gun fire. The brigade came under attack once more by the Chinese troops and North Korean guerillas and also by collaborators in the village. The First and Second Infantry Battalions responded quickly to the attacks but the artillery battalion and the Third Infantry Battalion, held in reserve, bore the brunt of the enemy attack and did not respond as quickly or as effectively as the others. In the ensuing confusion and darkness, the Third Infantry and the artillery battalion, without notifying the First and Second Battalions, began withdrawing from their positions toward the brigade headquarters at Kaechon.¹³³

By the morning of November 29, the brigade had effectively been halved and brigade headquarters had lost contact with many of its units.¹³⁴ Yazici made a decision to rescue the beleaguered and much battered First and Second Infantry Battalions rather than to withdrawal to a safer area. The First Battalion, except for its Second Company, was engaged in a hand to hand knife fight with the enemy forces. Finally, the unit was able to break through the encircling enemy and withdraw to the Kaechon area and assume new defensive positions. The Second Battalion and the First Company of the First Battalion fought off the numerically superior enemy force while surrounded in the

area east of Kaechon. Meanwhile, an infantry battalion of the 38th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 2nd Division plus a tank company arrived in Kaechon and along with the brigade's artillery battalion, took defensive positions on the hills northwest of the town.

The rescue of the Second Company of the First Infantry Battalion and the Second Infantry Battalion became the main preoccupation of the Turkish Brigade. The Kaechon position was occupied by the American infantry battalion in the north and the First Turkish Infantry Battalion in the south. By 5:00 p.m. on November 29, the enemy had increased their pressure on the First Battalion and the Americans began to withdraw. This movement was not reported to the Turkish units and their left flank was left unprotected. The Turks were about to be encircled again; Yazici ordered a withdrawal to the Kunu-ri region, his First Battalion remaining as rear guard.¹³⁵ The Turkish Brigade began to fight their way through the Five Mile Pass on the Kaechon-Kunu-ri road, which was controlled by enemy infantry as well as guerillas, and entrenched with machine guns, mortars, and rocket launchers in commanding positions along the road. Once again, the brigade was encircled. Command and control of the Turkish Brigade at all levels was completely disrupted. Small units began fighting their way out with light weapons and long knives.¹³⁶

At three o'clock in the morning of November 30, four American bombers flew over the pass and dropped flares, then

bombed the illuminated enemy positions. The Turks and the Americans, with the further aid of an American artillery battery at the end of the pass, were then able to break out¹³⁷ (see Figure 5).

The Battle at the Five Mile Pass took a heavy toll on both the Turks and the Americans. The heaviest loss of men and materials occurred in this area.¹³⁸ Following this and other engagements in the Kunu-ri area, the Turks scattered as far away as Pyongyang: at least one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty Turks and an American KMAG advisor arrived at Pyongyang in ten trucks.¹³⁹ The Turks had ceased to be a factor to contend with for the Chinese. There were simply no Turks left who were unwounded and capable of defending their position.¹⁴⁰

The Turkish Brigade had been attacked by superior enemy forces in Wawon, Kaechon, Kunu-ri, and the Sunchon Pass regions. They had fought from November 27 to November 30 and had been encircled several times, each time breaking through. These battles were the first real encounters for the Turks since 1923; the cost in terms of men and materials was extremely heavy.¹⁴¹ In the battle for Wawon, the Turkish Brigade took 767 casualties: 218 killed (11 officers), 455 wounded (15 officers), 94 missing (7 officers). The brigade lost 15% of its men; the enemy, however, lost an estimated 5,000 men. The Turks had made considerable effort to hold their positions in the face of crippling casualties. They had held and delayed the major

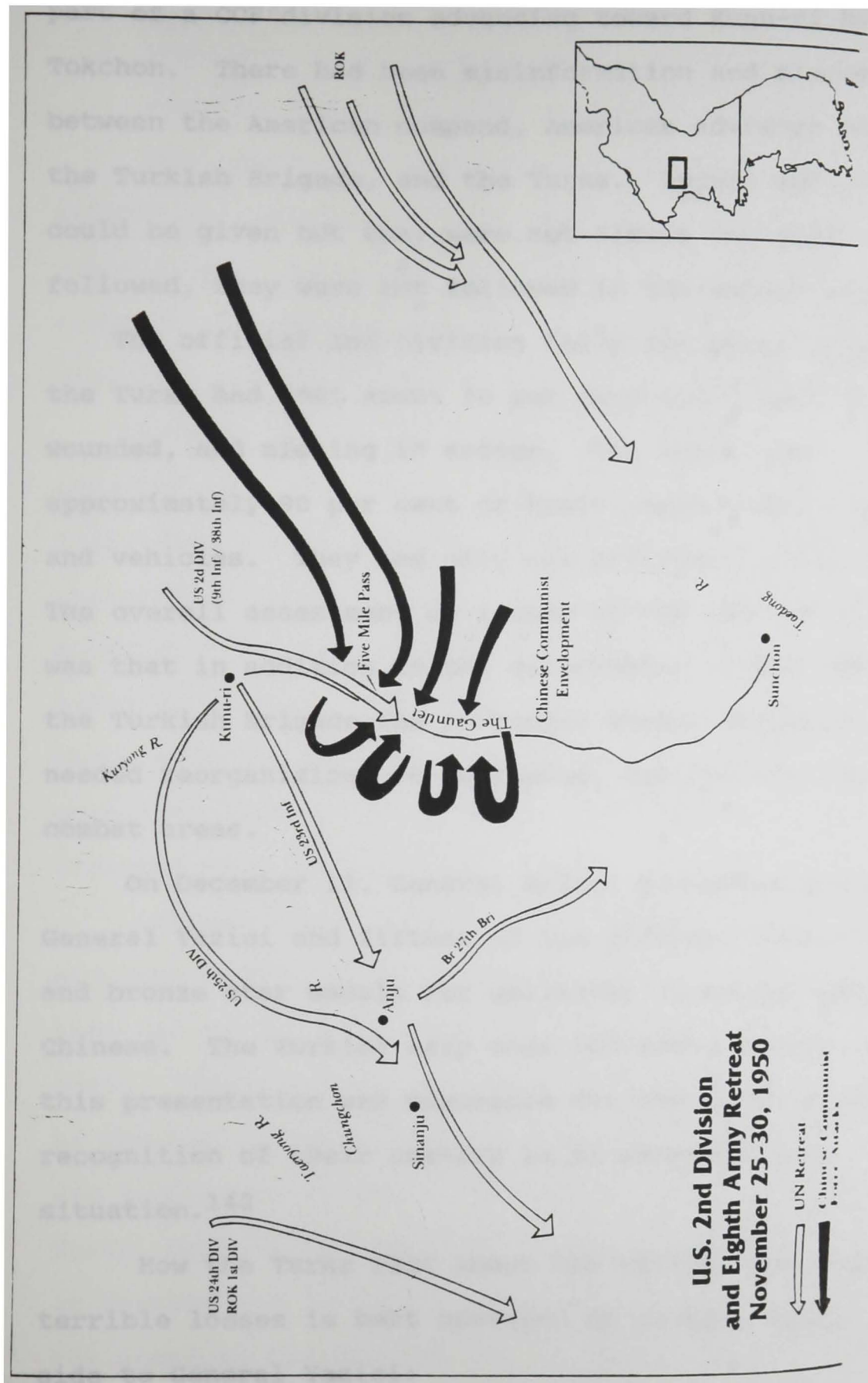


Figure 5

U.S. Second Division and Eighth Army Retreat

Source: Clay Blair, The Forgotten War.

part of a CCF division advancing toward Kunu-ri by way of Tokchon. There had been misinformation and miscommunication between the American command, American advisors attached to the Turkish Brigade, and the Turks. Orders and directives could be given but they were not always followed, or if followed, they were not followed in the manner requested.

The official 2nd Division tally two weeks later reported the Turks had lost about 20 per cent (1000 men) killed, wounded, and missing in action. The Turks lost approximately 90 per cent of their communication equipment and vehicles. They had only six artillery pieces remaining. The overall assessment of losses to the Chinese offensive was that in addition to the destruction of the ROK II Corps, the Turkish Brigade was no longer combat effective and needed reorganizing, re-equipping, and rest in the rear non-combat areas.

On December 13, General Walker presented Brigadier General Yazici and fifteen of his officers with silver star and bronze star medals for gallantry in action against the Chinese. The Turkish Army does not award medals; therefore, this presentation was memorable for the Turks by the recognition of their bravery in an extraordinary situation.¹⁴²

How the Turks felt about the battles and their terrible losses is best conveyed by Captain Ismail Catalogy, aide to General Yazici:

Many men are bitter - bitter because of requested air strikes that did not come, a lack of transportation to get us out of our rough spot, a shortage of food and ammunition, and the fact that we were not advised on occasions of withdrawal plans. Some think they were let down by the Americans. But we are explaining that everyone had a bad time up there.¹⁴³

The Eighth Army moved the Turks from Pyongyang as quickly as possible and got them away from the front for rehabilitation and reorganization. They moved the Turks south to Kaesong and attached them to the 2nd Infantry Division which was also moving south for reorganization.

Another crisis developed at Kaesong. The Turks reported that they had no food. Trucks were immediately dispatched to the general supply depot at Ascom City. Two railcars of rations were loaded and arrived at four in the morning at Kaesong. Eight thousand blankets and four thousand sleeping bags were also dispatched for the Turks. These supplies arrived on December 5. At this time, there were 2500 Turks at Kaesong and one thousand more were expected soon by train.¹⁴⁴

General Yazici complained that the Turkish forces were employed without regard to their lack of mobility and that they had 60 per cent fewer vehicles than comparable American units. These complaints were heard and taken into account by the Eighth Army command. An Eighth Army liaison officer was invited to attend a meeting of the Turkish Brigade and Korean delegations; however, since Yazici and his men spoke in Turkish and the meeting was largely conducted in Turkish, the American liaison officer could not understand the

proceedings. The American officer reported that the Turks should be moved from the Kaesong area but that a senior American officer with some proficiency in Turkish should be sent first to discuss the move before another embarrassing incident occurred.¹⁴⁵ Eighth Army issued orders that the Turks move to Sosa-ri, a few miles from Inchon, and they came again under the U.S. 25th Infantry Division.

1951

On January 3, the Turkish Brigade was released from the U.S. 25th Infantry Division and directed to Ansong, southeast of Seoul. They then moved into corps reserve at Chonan where they stayed for three weeks (see Figure 6).

The Turks next participated in Operation Thunderbolt which began on January 25. The Turks were with IX Corps for the operation, a limited advance along the Han River to search for and destroy the enemy. The Turks advanced northward toward Suwon, and encountered no opposition in their move to Songjon-ni by the next day's dawn. General Yazici decided when the brigade came to a fork in the road to send the 2nd Battalion through Kimnyangjang-ni and the 1st and 2nd Battalions along the Osan road.

Major Kuranel, the 2nd Battalion commander, came within six miles of Kimnyangjang-ni. There was some firing on the battalion and two leading companies, the 5th and the 7th, moved quickly toward the village. The 7th Company, under

the command of Captain Turhan San came within a mile of the village. The 5th Company, led by Captain Olhon was stopped by an enemy minefield. The road was heavily mined and all efforts at clearing it proved futile.

This was the heaviest engagement since the Kunu-ri battles in November-December. The 2nd Battalion continued to attack the village. Major Bilgin of the 3rd Battalion engaged an enemy force at Hill 151. The enemy dead numbered 474 and the battalion captured 23 Chinese. The battalion's casualties totaled twelve killed: one non-commissioned officer and eleven men and thirty-one wounded: one officer, one non-commissioned officer and twenty-nine other soldiers. In an ironic note, documents recovered from Chinese soldiers in this engagement identified the Chinese as the 150th Chinese Division which the Turks had fought two months previously in the Kunu-ri area.

The Republic of Korea government later awarded the Turks the Presidential Unit Citation for their part in this battle. The Turkish Brigade, A Company of the 79th American Tank Battalion, D Company of the 89th Tank Battalion, and a company of the 25th American Antiaircraft Battery all attached to the brigade, were awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for gallantry for their action during the battle on January 25, 1951.¹⁴⁶

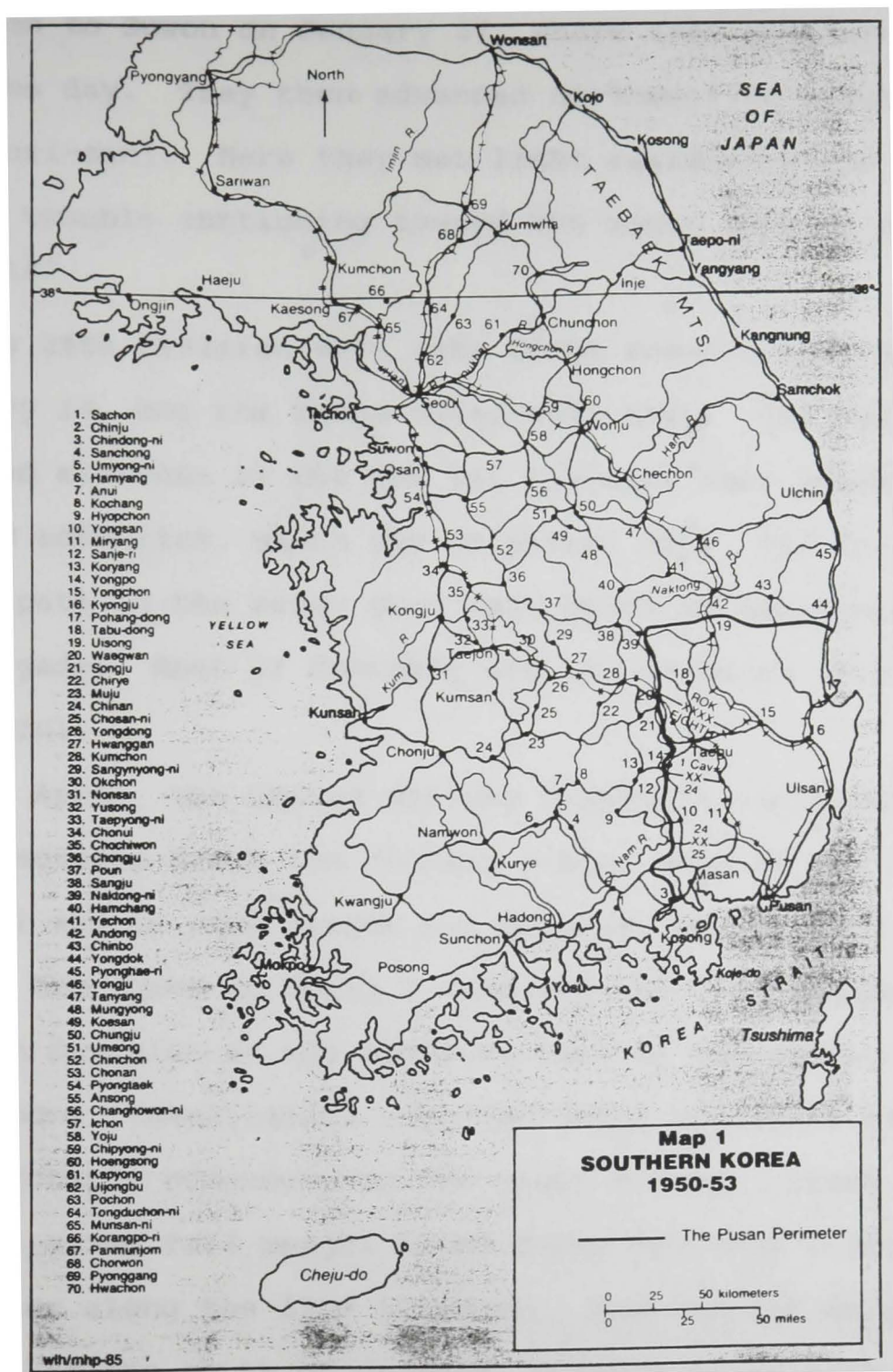


Figure 6

Southern Korea with Named Towns and Cities

Source: Bevin Alexander, Korea: The First War We Lost.

After clearing the area of enemy forces, the Turks moved on to Suwon on January 27, where they remained for only one day. They then advanced northwest to secure Hill 431 (Suri-san). Here they met light resistance and had very little trouble continuing toward the south bank of the Han River.¹⁴⁷

The 25th Division went into corps reserve near Anjang on February 14, and the Turks moved with them. The Turks relieved elements of the ROK 1st Division near Anjang. Only the 3rd battalion, which was on patrol duty, did not participate in the seven days rest given to the remainder of the brigade. Most of February and all of March were rather uneventful.

In April, the United Nations Command's coordinated air-ground actions drove the Chinese forces back to the 38th parallel and in some places the parallel was crossed several times. The Turks on April 5 relieved the 27th Regiment of the 25th Division on the southern bank of the Hantan River at Yonchon. Intelligence reported large movements of CCF, and a probable offensive by the enemy forces. These reports were not given full weight since there was only light resistance along the line of march. The Turkish Brigade advanced to the south of Chorwon, fifteen miles north of the Hantan River (see Figure 6).

The Chinese began their Spring Offensive on April 22 when the Turks were eleven miles south of Chorwon. Major Kurunel's 1st Battalion (9th Company) positioned itself

along Hill 425, below Mungmuk-kol. On the battalion's left was the 2nd Battalion under the command of Major Ulunlu and the 3rd Battalion was designated reserve. The brigade's 105-mm howitzers were positioned on the right of the brigade command post.

At midnight on April 22, the Chinese artillery and mortar barrage began and infantry advanced up the hill to the Turkish 1st Battalion's positions. A bayonet and knife battle of the type for which the Turks were already famous developed. The Chinese retreated. At daybreak elements of the brigade began to cross the Hantan River. During the day, the brigade placed its CP near Omaekk-kol and the soldiers moved south of the river to Kayang-ni. The brigade counted its losses at five officers, including Captain Akinci, the 2nd Company commander, three non-commissioned officers, and fifty-eight enlisted men. There were thirty-five wounded and more than one hundred missing.¹⁴⁸

The brigade continued to retreat, and by April 29, it reached Kwangam-ni, four miles southeast of Seoul; there it was detailed to Division reserve. On May 10, the brigade moved out of reserve to a position six miles north to the Toegyewon-ni area and established blocking positions. The Chinese Second Offensive began on the night of May 15 with an estimated twenty-one divisions flanked by three North Korean divisions in the west and six divisions in the east. The Chinese struck down the center of the United Nations Command forces against the U.S. X Corps and the ROK III

Corps. The Chinese also attacked the western sector and by the night of May 17, an enemy force of 25,000 struck in that area.

Most of the spring and summer offensives followed a similar pattern. The Chinese and North Koreans advanced and took heavy losses while inflicting heavy casualties on the UN Command. But the battles were inconclusive; neither side was able to control the peninsula. The Turks moved into battle then into reserve for a respite. While committed at the front, the Turks worked at improving their positions and consolidating the ground won. Most of the action was characterized by artillery and air strikes. Patrols were sent out on a regular basis. The offensives consisted mainly of limited company or platoon action. Prisoners were captured and the Turks mainly tried to keep the enemy from closing onto their positions.

A 25th Division report from this period gives some insight into the Turkish fighting man and his tenacity:

When the Turks took Hill 507, one of the first to reach the summit was Private Huseyin Aydin, who carried the cerise identification panel which was to forestall attack by friendly air or artillery. As Aydin was spreading the panel, he dragged it over a foxhole.

A Chinese soldier, unbeknownst to the young Turk, was lurking in the hole. The Red grabbed the edge of the banner and attempted to pull it into the bunker. Aydin pulled on his end, dragging the Chinese with it.

Then the Red braced himself and pulled. It was like an old fashioned game of tug-of-war ...

Abruptly the UN soldier loosed his end. The Chinese, overbalanced, fell backwards. Aydin then leapt upon

him and took him prisoner. He said later that he did not end the tussle by shooting the other because, "he was not armed and I knew I could take him. I decided a prisoner would be of more value than a dead man."¹⁴⁹

Another incident recorded in the 25th Division's battle record reenforces the positive image of the Turkish enlisted man:

During an attack by his company on an enemy strong point, Sergeant Mehmed Vurma caused his squad to infiltrate through Chinese lines to attack a strategic machine gun position from the rear. The weapon had been holding up the Turkish unit's advance. The maneuver was successful and Vurma and his squad plunged forward to destroy the machine gun and capture its crew.

Seeing one Red with a bugle, the squad leader ordered him at bayonet point to sound "assembly."

The call rang out loud and clear. While Chinese came from their holes in obedience to it, Vurma lined them up and disarmed them. Thirty-six surrendered to the Turk and his ten man squad. The Turkish company then dashed through the gap left in the Chinese lines to capture the hill without difficulty.¹⁵⁰

The Second Brigade relieved the First in July, 1951.

Brigadier General Namik Arguc, the Second Brigade Commander, served from mid-July 1951 through September 12, 1952. His battalion commanders were Major Tahir Alaybeyii (1st Battalion), Major Enver Saltik (2nd Battalion), and Major Yekta Koran (3rd Battalion). These battalion commanders served roughly the same duty period as their commander.

Brigadier General Yazici was promoted to major general on August 30. He regained the rank that he had relinquished in order to lead the gallant officers and men of the 1st Brigade. Shortly thereafter, he ended his service in Korea and returned to Turkey. The level of warfare had lessened and it was time for the old warrior to return home.

There were several new U.N. operations aimed at dislodging the Chinese and decisively defeating the North Koreans, none of which achieved the desired result. Operation Commando was launched in October. The Turks were assigned as an element of the 25th Division to assault Hills 372 and 358. Early on the morning of October 3 the attack began. The Turks were positioned in the center of the advance, with the 7th Regiment of the U.S. 3rd Division on the left flank and the 24th Regiment of the 25th Division on the right. They faced a well-entrenched enemy with ample artillery support. The 1st Battalion of the Turkish Brigade seized Hill 372, and the Turkish 3rd Battalion met with only light resistance on Hill 358, which they also took.¹⁵¹ The Turks continued their successes by overrunning enemy positions on various hills.

As the year drew to a close, the inconclusive struggle continued. In November, backed by their artillery, the Turks gained ground on Hills 412, 533, and 450, and they were able to stand their ground against the enemy forces. By December 16, the 25th Division was relieved of line duty and the Turks moved with them into the IX Corps reserve at Sidang-ni where they remained until February 24, 1952.

1952

The 25th Division left reserve on February 24, to relieve the 7th Division which held positions east of Heartbreak Ridge, thirty miles northeast of Chunchon. The

Turks were detailed to relieve elements of the 32nd Regiment which had the Ethiopian Battalion attached.

The Turks established their CP at Piduk-kogae. This was an area of steep ridges that formed a natural shelter, and the Turks put their artillery and an American tank company at Piari, about a mile away. The battalions were scattered among various hill positions with the 3rd Battalion placed in reserve in Yao-dong.

The situation remained basically the same for the next eight months. Patrols probed the enemy resolve and small skirmishes occupied most of the troops' time. Chinese forces did not make many initiatives against the Turkish line positions. Activity remained low as armistice talks dragged on, with contacts mainly initiated by the Turks, which tended to inflict heavy enemy casualties.

One unfortunate event occurred during this period. The Assistant Brigade Commander, Colonel Fezi Pamir, returning from his usual daily inspection of the hill areas, specifically Hill 1065, suddenly ran into an enemy patrol. The colonel was severely wounded in the ensuing firefight and died on June 5.

New replacements for the 3rd Turkish Brigade arrived at Pusan on July 5th. They underwent training and orientation until August 20, then they relieved their counterparts in the brigade. The brigade commander Brigadier General Sirri Acar took command on July 30, 1952, and remained until September 4, 1953. The First Battalion was now commanded by

Major Fahrettin Ulukan, the commanding officer of the Second Battalion was Major Niyazi Bengisu, and the Third Battalion was commanded by Major Turgot Vural.

On October 31, the 25th Division relieved the 7th Division on the central front line. The Turkish Brigade took the left sector of the 25th's position near Kumhwa. There were enemy outposts on Star Hill, Silver Star Hill, and Monk's Hood Hill. The war continued in the same mode as earlier in the year: patrols made the only real contact with enemy patrols and the truce negotiations dragged on to no real conclusion.

1953

The year opened with the brigade, less its artillery, ordered into division reserve. At the reserve area, the Turks underwent strenuous training and had more time for recreation until early May. On May 8, the Turks moved with the 25th Division to relieve the 1st Marines.¹⁵²

Armistice negotiations continued at Panmunjom and everyone looked forward to the time when they would be able to leave the war zone. May 3, 1953, the U.S. First Marine Division occupying the area around Panmunjom was replaced by the 25th Division and the Turkish Brigade. Defensive hill positions had combat outposts. The outposts had names assigned by the American soldiers. The east flank outposts were named East Berlin and West Berlin, those in the central section were called Vegas, Elko, and Carson and the west

outpost was named Eva. The entire complex was given the overall name Nevada Complex. The Turks, along with the other United Nations forces, remained on guard in the days when nothing much seemed to be happening. From the middle of May, small enemy assault teams made attacks against these outposts, testing and probing. The outposts changed hands many times and the hills were recaptured in brutal hand-to-hand fighting.¹⁵³ It was at one such point in mid-May that the Chinese chose to launch another offensive. The Turks had just moved out of reserve with the 25th Division and had taken positions in the Nevada Complex area. The brigade commander was Brigadier General Sirri Acar.

General Acar deployed the 1st Battalion on the left, the 2nd Battalion took the center position at Vegas, Carson, and Elko, and the 3rd Battalion had the outposts of West Berlin and East Berlin. Facing the Turks were the 358th, 359th, and 360th Regiments of the 120th Division of the 46th CCF Army.

The Chinese threw themselves against the Carson-Elko-Vegas line and the West Berlin and the East Berlin outposts. Turkish artillery bombarded the advancing Chinese, and with American tanks, inflicted heavy losses on the Chinese troops. The Chinese responded with artillery barrages of their own. By May 28, the 120th CCF Division moved in force against the Nevada complex and the Berlin outposts.

The Turks defended Vegas and Elko against the artillery and mortar assaults but at last the Turks on the Carson line

fell into enemy hands and Elko was under heavy and mortal attack. Major General John Williams of the 25th Division ordered General Acar to counterattack using the brigade reserve. The fighting for the Vegas outpost raged back and forth as the position changed hands several times. Elko, Vegas, and Carson finally came under enemy control. At 11:00 p.m. on May 29th, Williams ordered the Turks to vacate their remaining posts and withdraw. By dawn on May 30, the withdrawal was complete. In this engagement, one hundred and fifty Turks had been killed and two hundred and forty-five wounded. The Chinese losses were estimated at 3,000. The battle so close to the end of hostilities was bitter and severe. This was the last Turkish engagement of the war. The brigade was relieved by the Fourth Turkish Brigade on July 6, and the war drew to a bloody close with the signing of the armistice on July 27, 1953.

In the period following the end of the war, the Turks were mainly occupied with rigorous training programs in mobile warfare in mountainous terrain. Finally, the Turks were relieved of their duties in Korea and the 4th Turkish Brigade returned to Turkey in the summer of 1954.

CHAPTER V

PRISONERS OF WAR

The Turkish Brigade withstood heavy combat and when the soldiers were either wounded or captured, they gave an excellent account of themselves. Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, gave a highly complimentary assessment of the Turkish Brigade, stating that they had become an effective fighting force in the United Nations Command:

There was never any question of the fighting qualities or the fortitude of the Turkish soldier. During one of my visits to a hospital in Tokyo, I was introduced to a Turk whose left arm had been partially paralyzed by a shell fragment during the action at Wawon. This soldier spoke little English and could not comprehend the American surgeon's questions seeking to determine the extent of damage to the nerves in the arm. The surgeon had the man extend his left hand, and the doctor, using a heavy operating needle, pricked successively the fingers of the outstretched hand. Whereupon the soldier grabbed the needle, rammed it through the palm of his hand, pulled it through, then gave it back to the surgeon, and in his deep guttural voice said, "Me - Turk!"¹⁵⁴

Wounded prisoners of war displayed this same courageous attitude. Turks were the largest POW contingent after the Americans. They shared the same conditions and infamous prison camps as the Americans; however, even though many Turks were wounded when captured, not a single one died from his wounds in captivity. The Turks had an unusual record among the many United Nations prisoners; they maintained a strong cohesiveness and bonding throughout their captivity.

American POWs' performance in captivity suffered in comparison with the Turks' record.¹⁵⁵ American prisoners of war who collaborated with the enemy acted strictly as individuals. Although there were notable exceptions, the Americans generally did not maintain unit and military discipline in their captivity. American prisoners were not as rigid in their attitudes towards their captors. The sick and wounded were set upon many times by their fellow Americans. The American prisoners were, however, subjected to:

extraordinary stress. Of more than 7,100 war prisoners, approximately 40% did not survive captivity, and one in four died after release. Capricious killings, forced marches, camp relocations, sustained nutritional deprivation, threats of death and nonrepatriation, confinement in shackles, solitary confinement, brutal tortures, and widespread disease were common occurrences for prisoners of war. These captured U. S. servicemen were also the first to be subjected to a program of mass indoctrination, which included group and individual indoctrinations, incessant demands for self-criticism and compliance, and structured reeducation sessions.¹⁵⁶

The methods the Chinese captors employed on the prisoners of war as a whole were marked especially by "isolation of resistance leaders, strategic placement of captive informants among prisoner groups, and group persuasion combined with physical privation, harsh punishments, and physical isolation to render prisoners susceptible to ideological persuasion."¹⁵⁷

Besides the military prisoners taken by the North Koreans and Communist Chinese, there were civilian prisoners, mainly Christian missionaries, who were also

taken prisoner in the early days of the war. Two such prisoners, Larry Zellers and Philip Deane, wrote of their experiences and of their impressions of the American prisoners of war that they encountered during their captivity. The Americans, at least in the early days of the war, were young and green, with very little training or experience. Certainly few, if any, were battle-hardened soldiers from World War II.¹⁵⁸ These civilians were less harsh in their assessment of American behavior in captivity than others, such as Eugene Kinkead.

Later psychiatric evaluation of American prisoners of war established that the majority of the men had been involved in heavy combat operations with heavy casualties just prior to capture by the North Korean and Chinese forces.

Post-World War II American soldiers, as well as the U.S. military establishment, were not prepared for the methods and the intensity of their application that the North Koreans and the CCF inflicted on the prisoners of war. The North Koreans, who were not prepared to cope with American prisoners of war, used more brutal methods and sheer physical torture on their prisoners. The North Koreans had few English-speaking interrogators and no prepared facilities for the large number of prisoners they took.¹⁵⁹ The Chinese employed several methods, chiefly "brainwashing," that subjected prisoners to mind games and indoctrination. Another method was accusing American

prisoners of "war crimes" when they wanted to use "criminal interrogation" to obtain a propaganda confession or to punish a man.¹⁶⁰ The Chinese tried their methods with varying levels of success on the various national prisoners who fell into their hands.

The Turks exhibited greater military discipline and cohesiveness than their captors expected. Of the two hundred and twenty-nine Turkish prisoners, all survived their captivity. At the infamous Death Valley camp, the "Turks lost not a man while American losses during this same period at this same camp, were estimated to have been from four hundred to eight hundred dead out of fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred prisoners interned."¹⁶¹

The secret of the Turks' astonishing record, ... was the strict discipline they maintained from the time of their capture till their release ... when a Turk got sick, the rest nursed him back to health; if a sick Turk was ordered to the hospital, two well Turks went along. They ministered to him hand and foot while he was there, and when he was discharged, brought him back to the compound in their arms. They shared their clothing and food equally. When the Communists did the cooking for the camp, two Turks were dispatched to bring back the food for the group, and it was divided in equal portions down to the last morsel. There was no hogging, no rule of dog eat dog.¹⁶²

The Turks presented an unbroken chain of command to their Communist captors. This command structure presented a united front that could not be broken even though their enlisted men and officers were segregated in exactly the same manner as the rest of the prisoners. The officers

stood their ground to the Chinese and North Koreans. One of the Turkish officers reported:

I told the Chinese commander of the camp that while we were a unit, I was in charge of my group ... If he wanted anything done, he was to come to me, and I would see that it was done. When he removed me, the responsibility would fall not on him but on the man next below me, and after that on the man below him. And so on, down through the ranks, until there were only two privates left. Then the senior private would be in charge. They could kill us, I told him, but they couldn't make us do what we didn't want to do. Discipline was our salvation, and we all knew it. If a Turk had responded to an order from his superiors to share his food or lift a litter the way I understand some of your men do, he would literally have had his teeth knocked in. Not by his superior, either, but by the Turk nearest to him.¹⁶³

Since the Chinese had amazing success with the Americans, they could not at first believe the Turks' lack of response. Evidently, the Chinese thought the correct method would bring a successful result. The Chinese tried many methods and brought in several different persons whom they felt certain would make the Turks cooperate. As each successive method was tried, the Chinese became frustrated with dealing with Turks. The first, and by far the easiest, method was to present indoctrination lectures to the segregated and assembled Turks. These lectures were unsuccessful. The Turks turned a deaf ear to the lectures and did not respond. When questioned, the Turks insisted that they did not understand what the Chinese were discussing. They heckled the speakers, asked ridiculous questions, and responded or asked questions in English.¹⁶⁴

The Chinese stopped the indoctrination lectures, and brought a long-time Turkish resident of Russia to form discussion groups within the Turkish contingent. The Turks ignored the man and treated him with scorn. They did not take him seriously as the Chinese had hoped they would. The Turkish man's life "became very unpleasant." He left, unexpectedly and unannounced, from both the camp and his assignment.¹⁶⁵

Another Chinese ploy was to bring in an English Communist, Monica Felton, and have her speak to and visit with the Turks. She tried to speak on intellectual matters and brought them greetings from their "neighbors to the north," the Russians. The Turks gave her no more attention than they did the previous Chinese efforts. The Turks were becoming very irritating to the Chinese. No other group of prisoners resisted so ingeniously or with as much delight in foiling the best tried and true indoctrination methods of the Chinese.¹⁶⁶

Two more attempts were made. A Caucasian who had lived in the Middle East and spoke fluent Turkish made an unsuccessful attempt. The final effort was made by James Veneris, an American nonrepatriate. Veneris spoke both Greek and Turkish, and thus might have been able to get the indoctrination discussion groups started. He finally quit, unable to achieve the Chinese purpose.¹⁶⁷

Indoctrination was not the only effort that failed miserably when used on the Turks. The Turks simply did not

cooperate with their captors in any way, refusing to obey any rules except those established by their own officers. They maintained the strict military discipline of the Turkish Army and exhibited pride in themselves and their country. The Chinese seemed to fear the Turks to a certain degree, even though they were their prisoners. When the Chinese asked any Turk what his outfit was, he would reply proudly and without hesitation the name of his company, regiment, and brigade in the Turkish Army. American soldiers, by contrast, after a period of indoctrination and residence in the prison camp, would reply to the same question with his prison camp number and the company or platoon to which he belonged he belonged in that prison camp.¹⁶⁸

One of the chief lessons learned in that prison experience was that the Turks' dogged and determined resistance undermined the Chinese indoctrination efforts. Compliance with orders given by the Chinese captors diminished the prisoners' will to resist. Cooperation by the prisoners invited further indoctrination by their captors. The Turks' non-cooperation finally won them their freedom to exist simply as interned prisoners of war, not as pawns in an international propaganda effort. The humiliation and the harsh conditions of captivity certainly were sufficient burdens to bear. The Turks' pride in themselves and their nation, coupled with strict and

unyielding discipline, sustained their self-respect and their ability to bear the burden of waiting out the war.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Korean War was the first war in which the newly formed international organization, the United Nations, acted to stop aggression by one country against another. The initial United Nations resolution calling upon members to aid the Republic of Korea was the basis for all resolutions that followed. The United States sometimes initiated these resolutions and always carried them out militarily. The war marked the first time that member nations, such as Turkey, committed military forces to enforce duly adopted United Nations resolutions. The United States took the lead in the combat and support operations.

Turkey had every reason to send more than a token force to the conflict. The country occupied a precarious geostrategic position, on the perimeter of the expanding Soviet Union. The Soviets were making inroads in the nearby Balkans and had taken control of eastern Europe. One country after another had fallen under Soviet dominance. The army and defenses of Turkey were not adequate for defense against an openly expansionist nuclear-armed Soviet Union. Clearly, Turkey must align itself with one camp or the other. The United States camp was more preferable and lent itself to the highest level of economic as well as military development. The United States was more distant than the Soviets and even back in the days of the Ottoman

Empire had never shown any colonial or territorial interest. The Turks were moving from one party rule to a multiparty democracy. The Communist Party had tried to make political gains in the country but had been kept out of the active political sphere.

When the North Koreans invaded South Korea, American and Turkish interests coincided. Turkey, as a large and eager recipient of American economic and military aid, very likely felt it had little choice. The combat experience would also benefit the Turkish military establishment. A long simmering controversy with the Greeks over Cyprus increased the Turks' desire to bolster their military defenses and the war, as well as the U.S. Army Mission to Ankara, gave the Turks privileged access to sophisticated American technology and weaponry. The threat of the Soviets with their large and well-armed military was not a distant theoretical threat; it was close and real.

By sending a full brigade to Korea, the Turks made a major and highly visible commitment and clearly expected a significant return for their investment. In February, 1951, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson acted on the Joint Chiefs of Staff's recommendations that UN participants in the stalemated Korean War be requested to send additional ground troops. Acheson approached the governments of Australia and New Zealand for additional battalions to bolster the UN Command forces. Further, Canada was approached for more ground troops. Several other countries

were considered possibilities for ground troops; however, so clear were Turkey's motives that Acheson stated emphatically that "it would be unwise at this time to press ... the Turks ... for additional forces, but advantage will be taken of any opportunity to encourage a voluntary offer on their part."¹⁶⁹

A month later in a communication to Marshall, Acheson elaborated his concern about Turkish motives. Acheson, still looking for ways to bring in more forces to bolster the war effort, observed:

Turkey has in the field in Korea a brigade of about 5,000 men, and is currently replacing its losses, which as you know have been heavy. At this present time, we are making arrangements to assist in financing an expansion of the Turkish military establishment, in order to augment the size of the country's forces and to strengthen their fighting capabilities. In addition to these factors, certain highly important political considerations, such as the Turkish insistent demand for a full-fledged United States security commitment, suggest that it would be inadvisable at this time to solicit additional Turkish troops for Korea.¹⁷⁰

Turkey understood and used the leverage that it had acquired by its strategic position astride the European crossroads of the Bosphorus, a vital waterway coveted by the Soviets because of their Black Sea naval bases and ports.

The Turks could not be blamed for seizing an opportunity to climb once more into the arena of world politics. Their geostrategic position at once threatened their existence, yet greatly increased the value of their friendship with the U.S. Siding with the United States kept the Soviets at bay and gave the Turks a means to interface

with and become a part of the recovering and expanding post-World War II European economic community. Membership in the important multilateral trade and defence organizations made it possible for the former "sick man of Europe" to gather new strength and possibly new life. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Marshall Plan coupled with the Truman Doctrine were perfect vehicles for the Turks to realize their aspirations. There was ample reason in increased military ties with the U.S. for the Turks to join in the United Nations' effort to oust the North Koreans from South Korea. An added regional bonus for the Turks was the realization that the military aid that flowed into Turkey to strengthen Turkey's defense against possible Soviet aggression was also keeping their old enemy, the Greeks, at bay. The long simmering feud between these two neighbors erupted several times into open hostilities in Cyprus and in disputed border areas. The massive American military aid to Turkey prevented the Greeks from achieving a decisive victory over the Turks.

The United States, in soliciting Turkish military forces for Korea, walked a fine line trying to keep open hostilities between the Greeks and Turks from suddenly erupting and opening a conflict amongst America's allies for the United States to manage. Yet, there was always the Soviet Union on the Turkish border as a factor with which to contend. The United States did not want to reduce the Turkish military forces to the point of ineffectiveness, nor

did it desire to overextend itself in aid to Turkey at the expense of Greece.

The war did, however, bring out problems that both the United States and the United Nations Command participants, in this case Turkey, had not anticipated. The war had been thrust upon the United States, by reason of United States and Soviet Cold War policies. The United States tried to gather allies, use large quantities of firepower and mobility to move quickly to crush the North Koreans and hopefully return to the status quo ante bellum. General MacArthur did speak of the United States seeking to reunify the Korean peninsula under a government friendly to the United States. That was an unrealistic appraisal of the situation which failed to take into account Soviet and Communist Chinese strategic considerations. Truman surely did not see reunification as a real war aim. Containment and holding the line on Soviet and Chinese advances was the only real objective. A quick victory at the 38th parallel with the alignment of supporting countries of the United Nations would give a moral victory. Turkey, as one of the supporting countries, moved into this war undoubtedly with the same view as the United States as to the quickness of victory. The entry of the Chinese forces tipped the balance, prolonging what Truman wanted to be a small, quickly disposed of "police action." The war dragged on for three years, draining resources of the combatants on both sides and teaching many lessons that would sometimes be

interpreted--and reinterpreted in ensuing wars: Vietnam and Desert Storm.

The primary lesson, as far as the Allied forces were concerned, was the problem of language. Inability to communicate with Allies caused serious and overwhelming casualties in the Turkish Brigade. Valor is not enough when help cannot be summoned or pleas for air strikes against an attacking enemy can not be understood. Even simple supply requirements went unheeded or got lost because of the inability to communicate clearly and correctly. The First Turkish Brigade took heavy losses, to the point of having to retire to the rear and be reorganized and resupplied. They were effectively lost as part of the army until their needs could be addressed. The army as a whole experienced some problems along these lines, but the Turks as one of the first non-English speaking forces, took a greater share than was necessary. In hindsight, it is always easy to say how this could have been avoided. The U.S. Army commissioned several interesting and informative reports in an attempt to understand how the Turks could have taken such heavy losses. These reports identified the language barrier as a major contributor.¹⁷¹

The U.S. Military Mission to Turkey, with all of its advisors and its presence in Turkey, never fully communicated the importance of the language problem to the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the planners in charge of the mobilization. The Mission members interfaced principally

with English-speaking Turkish officers and although the problem was given some attention, it did not receive the emphasis that it warranted. The U.S. Army officers who attended joint meetings of the Turks and other nationalities during the war were unable to speak Turkish, and thus failed to understand why the Turks became so upset with the manner of their deployment and the way they were employed on the battlefield.

Language was not the sole problem affecting the multinational forces in Korea. However, it is appropriate now to focus on language and its attendant problems, as well as customs and cultural differences, for in the post-Cold War era, the United States has chosen a course of action that focuses on a peace-keeping role in the world. This peace-keeping role increasingly places American military forces in Third World situations that require a fine sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic differences they will encounter.

Since the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have adopted a strategy of committing United States forces only in "winnable wars" with clear missions that can be achieved quickly. The Persian Gulf War was such a conflict. An argument can be made, however, that the Gulf War, or Operation Desert Storm, did not achieve its objective but only temporarily forestalled a future war. It is unlikely that future enemies will give the United States over six months to build up combat and logistic strength in the theater of operations. Terrain, such as the jungles and

highlands in Vietnam and a potential peace-keeping effort in the rugged mountains of Bosnia, pose tremendous problems similar to the mountain warfare in Korea. The United States tends to fight mechanized warfare, which is decisive in open country such as the Iraqi desert. Korea's terrain presented obstacles to mechanized warfare and favored the PLA which moved divisions mainly by animals and on foot.

Wars have been fought from antiquity with multinational allies, each speaking its own language, pitted against a common enemy; but in this age of weapons of mass destruction, any misstep can lead to a world war or even to destruction of the earth. For this reason, language and an effective and understandable means of communication are important in the United States planning.

Turkey, after its huge losses of men and equipment, learned this lesson. The Turks have partially rectified the language problem since the Korean War. Most of their military officers now speak English. Most of their officers are trained at American bases in the United States, and these officers interface as much as possible with their American counterparts. On the other hand, unfortunately, the United States Armed Forces still have very few members who can effectively communicate in Turkish.

As an overall assessment of their participation in the Korean War, despite severe problems, the Turks performed well. The government gained economically, militarily and diplomatically from the Turkish contribution to the war.

Even today, Turkey remains a recipient of more than \$450 million in American aid annually. Turkey now is considered more than just a minor Middle Eastern power. Turkey obviously did not and presently does not wish to be relegated to the status of a Third World country waiting for handouts from the super powers. The government and the major political parties continue a policy that had its roots in the republic created by Kemal Mustafa Ataturk. Each succeeding president and premier has taken Turkey farther along the road to their goal of independence from superpower influence and establishment as a power broker in the area. Turkey's participation in the Korean War provided a springboard toward this goal.

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APPENDIX

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY RESOLUTION OF
JUNE 27, 1950

June 27, 1950

Resolution concerning the complaint of aggression upon the Republic of Korea, adopted at the four hundred and seventy-fourth meeting of the Security Council on June 27, 1950:

The Security Council,

Having determined that the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constitutes a breach of the peace.

Having called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and
Having called upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel, and

Having moved from the report of the United Nations Commission for Korea that the authorities in North Korea have neither ceased hostilities nor withdrawn their armed forces to the 38th parallel and that urgent military measures are required to restore international peace, and
Having noted the appeal from the Republic of Korea to the United States for immediate and effective steps to secure peace and security.

Recommends that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repeal the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.¹⁷²