

1945~53년 극동의 위기와 미 해군

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제2차 세계대전 말경, 미국은 경제 정치 군사적 초강국이었다. 범(凡) 태평양권에 있는 국가중 미국의 군사력보다 더 강한 나라는 없었다. 美 해군 지도부는 미국인들의 생명과 자원 등의 큰 희생을 치르며 성취한 그러한 군사적 우위를 유지하기 위해 단호한 입장이었다. 미국의 민·군(民·軍) 지도자들은 세계의 일부 중에서도 서부 태평양에 인접하고 있는 국가를 가장 요충지라고 생각했다.

미국 행정부는 일본의 패배이후 동북아시아에서 소련이 주도권을 갖고, 중국과 한반도 공산진영 세력으로 하여금 이 지역을 정치적으로나 군사적으로 장악하도록 돕는 것을 두려워했다. 동북아시아 지역에 소련과 자생적 공산주의 세력들이 영향력이 커지는 것을 저지하기 위해, 美 트루먼행정부는 신속히 한반도 남부와 중국 북부지역에 육군과 해병대를 파병했다. 당시 트루먼 대통령 고문인 레이히(William D. Leahy) 제독이나 태평양 함대사령관 스프루언스(Raymond A. Spruance) 제독 등 해군지도자들은 중국의 국민당을 적극적으로 지지했고, 소련을 견제하기 위해 해군이 산둥반도의 칭따오(靑島)에 남기를 바랐다.

그러나 트루먼행정부는 아시아분쟁, 특히 중국과 연루되지 않도록 중국 내전에 중립 입장을 취해 개입에 반대하는 정책을 발표했다. 이러한 정책의 결정적인 원인은 제2차 세계대전 이후 미국 상비병력이 취약했기 때문인데, 특히 극동아시아 지역에서 그랬다. 1950년 1월, 미 국무성 장관 애치슨은 미국 방어선에 일본과 필리핀을 포함시키고 타이완과 한국은 미국의 보호로부터 제외되는 것을 암시하는 내용을 발표함으로써, 트루먼행정부는 이러한 군사적 취약성을 묵시적으로 인정했다. 해군의 경우, 1950년 초 서태평양지역에서 해군력은 항공모함 1척, 순양함 2척, 손으로 헤아릴 수 있는 전함 수준으로 축소되어 있었다. 이미 1949년 칭따오에 주둔해 있던 함대를 철수시켰다.

공산진영은 아시아에 대한 전략을 수립할 때, 미국이 그들의 군사적 행동을 반대하지 않을 것이라고 결론지었다. 1950년 6월 25일 북한의 공격은 극동아시아와 미국의 전반적인 전략적 이해와의 관계에 대해 트루먼이 갖고 있었던 인식을 전면적으로 뒤바꾸게 했다.

1950년 6월 26일, 트루먼 대통령이 美 해군을 전쟁에 파병함과 동시에 워싱턴은 제7함대에 한국군을 지원하도록 지시했다. 美 해군은 6·25전쟁 기간 내내 중국과 소련을 정찰해왔다. 중국 또는 소련 공산권 국가의 U.N군에 대한 공격을 저지하고 격퇴시키기 위해 美 해군의 잠수함과 정찰기, 전함 등이 공산진영 국가들과 전장(戰場)을 오가며 군사행동을 전개했다.

美 해군의 한국전 경험은 해군의 군사력이 전쟁의 승리에 절대적으로 필요함을 보여주었다. 미국과 U.N군의 항공모함은 지상군 작전을 전개하는데 결정적인 지원을 제공했다. 1950년 태평양에서 美 해군의 주도권 장악은 유엔군사령부가 한반도에 남아, 이후 인천에서 총 반격을 개시할 수 있도록 해 주었다.

美 해군의 군사력과 기동력은 또한 1950년 가을부터 겨울까지 그러했듯이 전투가 U.N군에게 불리하게 돌아갔을 때, 공산진영과 군사적 교전을 중단하고 해상으로 철수시키는데 기여했다.

유엔 참전국 해군은 1951년부터 53년까지 공산진영 군대를 38선에서 저지토록 하는데 결정적이었다. 1951년 2월 중순이후 ‘원산 포위’ 작전은 공산측에게 원산 항구를 봉쇄했다. 이러한 연안 봉쇄로 북한군 8만 명을 묶어두는 역할을 했다. 또한 미 해군 및 해병대 항공대는 전쟁중 275,000회를 출격하였는데, 이는 근접 항공지원 폭격의 53%를 차지했다.

전반적으로 6·25전쟁시 해군의 군사력은, 특히 美 해군은 아시아 지역의 비공산권 전략적 요충지를 지키고 한국의 독립에 중대한 역할을 했다.

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주제어 : 군사적 우위, 해군력, 동북아시아, 미군개입, 애치슨방어선

K C I

The U.S. Navy and the Far Eastern Crisis, 1945~53

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1. Post-World War II Turmoil in Northeast Asia
2. U.S. Naval Forces that Fought the Korean War
3. Naval Operations in Korea
4. Conclusion

By the end of World War II, the United States was an economic, political, and military giant. Nowhere was American military power greater than in the broad Pacific. The U.S. Navy then operated all over the globe 98 aircraft carriers, 24 battleships, 96 cruisers, 445 destroyers, 259 submarines, and thousands of amphibious and logistic ships; 24,000 aircraft; six Marine divisions; and 4 million Sailors and Marines under arms. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz,

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, controlled the bulk of these forces.¹⁾ When General Douglas Mac Arthur accepted the surrender

1) Information compiled from various sources in Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1994), 161. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this paper is drawn from the following sources: Joseph H. Alexander, *Fleet Operations in a Mobile War: September 1950-June 1951* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 2001); Thomas B. Buell, *Naval Leadership in Korea: The First Six Months* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 2002); Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1957); James A. Field Jr., *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington: Naval History Division, 1962); Richard Hallion, "Naval Air Operations in the Korean War," in *The Korean War: An Encyclopedia*, Stanley Sandler, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995); Richard C. Knott, *Attack From the Sky: Naval Air Operations in the Korean War* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 2004); Edward J. Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-1949," Ph.D. Dissertation, The George Washington University, 1990; Marolda, "Hostilities Along the China Coast," in *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Naval History Symposium*. Robert W. Love, Jr., Laurie Bogle, Brian Van DeMark, and Maochun Yu, eds. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001; "Cold War to Violent Peace, 1945-1991," in *The Navy*. William Holland, ed. Washington: Naval Historical Foundation, 2000; Marolda, "The Hungnam and Chinnampo Evacuations," "Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy," "Mine Warfare," "Naval Battles," "Republic of Korea Navy," "Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble," in *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*. Spencer C. Tucker, ed. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000; Marolda, "Wall of Steel: Sea Power and the Cold War in Asia," in *Maritime Power in the 20th Century: The Australian Experience*. David Stevens, ed. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998; Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the 'Loss of China'," in George C. Marshall's *Mediation Mission to China, December 1945-January 1947*. Larry I. Bland, ed. Lexington, VA: George C. Marshall Foundation, 1998; Marolda, "U.S. Navy" in *The Korean War: An Encyclopedia* Stanley Sandler, ed. New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1995; Marolda, "Through a Long Glass: U.S. Naval Leaders and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-1950." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 1992; Marolda, "Invasion Patrol: The Seventh Fleet in Chinese Waters" in *A New Equation: Chinese Intervention into the Korean War*. Washington: NHC, 1991; Malcolm Muir Jr., *Sea Power on Call:*

of the Empire of Japan on board the mighty battleship *Missouri* on 2 September 1945, the U.S. Navy ruled the waves in the Asia-Pacific region.

U.S. naval leaders were determined to maintain that superiority, achieved at great cost in American lives and resources. Admiral Ernest J. King, wartime commander of the U.S. Navy, observed that “we have got to dominate the Pacific …… If we intend to survive as a great power we have got to take care of ourselves.”²⁾ And, after World War II most leaders recognized that the United States had a new responsibility to help maintain global stability.

American civilian and military leaders considered the lands bordering the Western Pacific to be the most critical region in that part of the world. Even during the war, strategic planners in Washington feared that after the defeat of Japan, the Soviet Union of Joseph Stalin would be “in a dominant position on continental Northeast Asia, …… able to impose her will in all that region.”³⁾ Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and other influential leaders feared that the United States and the Soviet Union, then allies, would become antagonists in the postwar period because these men believed that the two political and economic systems could never peacefully coexist.⁴⁾

Fleet Operations June 1951–July 1953 (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 2005); Curtis A. Utz, *Assault From the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 2000).

2) Quoted in Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 144.

3) Quoted in Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 174.

1. Post-World War II Turmoil in Northeast Asia

Soon after the USSR entered the war in the Far East on 9 August 1945, Soviet armies stormed into northern Korea and Manchuria. The Soviets overwhelmed the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria and occupied the old Russian naval base at Port Arthur (Lushun). Stalin successfully pressured the Nationalist Chinese government under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) to accept the basing of Soviet warships at Port Arthur.⁵⁾

Washington also believed that the Soviets would help Chinese and Korean Communist military forces seize political and military control of the region. In fact, one day after the USSR entered the war, Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung), the Chinese Communist leader, secretly ordered his troops to enter the cities of northern China and take the surrender of Japanese troops there.⁶⁾

To counter to this increasing Soviet and indigenous Communist presence in Northeast Asia, the U.S. administration of President

4) Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 217. See also Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War," 19-21; Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1988), 4.

5) David M. Glantz, *August Storm: The Soviet 1945 Strategic Offensive in Manchuria*, Leavenworth Paper No. 7 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1983); Barlow, "From Hot War to Cold," unpublished manuscript, 396.

6) Barlow, "From Hot War to Cold," 409-411.

Harry S. Truman quickly deployed U.S. Army and U.S. Marine troops to southern Korea and northern China. In General Order No.1, issued by Truman on 15 August 1945, one day after the cessation of hostilities, U.S. military commands were told that only Soviet and Chinese Nationalist officials—and not the Chinese and Korean Communists—would be allowed to accept the surrender of Japanese forces.⁷⁾

In late September and early October, the U.S. Seventh Fleet transported to North China 50,000 Marines and established a presence in the port of Qingdao (Tsingtao).⁸⁾ Soviet authorities delayed and complicated the U.S. mission, even as they facilitated the Chinese Communist takeover of ports and cities in the region. The Soviets also turned over Japanese arms to the Communists.⁹⁾ These Soviet actions only reinforced the suspicion of many American military leaders that the Communists could not be trusted and that U.S. support for Jiang's government should be increased.

U.S. naval leaders clearly favored Jiang Jieshi. Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a primary military advisor to both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, and Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander in Chief,

7) Barlow, "From Hot War to Cold," 413-14; Marc S. Gallicchio, *The Cold War Begins in Asia: American East Asian Policy and the Fall of the Japanese Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

8) Benis M. Frank and Henry I. Shaw, *Victory and Occupation*, Vol. V in series *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Washington: U.S. Marine Corps Historical Branch, 1968); Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War," 22-34; Barlow, "From Hot War to Cold," 423-43.

9) Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War," 22-34; Barlow, "From Hot War to Cold," 444-62.

U.S. Pacific Fleet after November 1945, advocated strong and open support for the Chinese Nationalist government. When Admiral Charles M. Cooke took command of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in January 1946, he established a close, personal working relationship with the Generalissimo.¹⁰⁾

The Truman administration believed, however, that after four years of a bloody war, most Americans did not want another international confrontation, especially in Asia. Truman sent General George C. Marshall, wartime head of the U.S. Army and a man of great stature, to China to facilitate a coalition government between the Nationalists and Communists. This was a forlorn hope. Mao and Jiang had been fighting each other for control of China since 1927 and neither man was about to stop short of victory.¹¹⁾ The Communists did not trust the Americans to be even-handed in their mediation role.

Moreover, Mao was a dedicated Marxist Leninist. He regarded Stalin as the leader of the global confrontation with the capitalist world, but saw himself as the leader of the Asian Communists. A directive to Communist party officials stated that the “central problem in the [postwar] world is the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. The reflection of this struggle in China is the struggle between Jiang and the [Chinese Communist Party].”¹²⁾ As an indication of what he thought of Marshall’s peace mission, in

10) Forest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Statesman* (New York: Viking Press, 1987), 108.

11) Pogue, *Statesman*; Marolda, “The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War,” 35-53.

12) Quoted in Barlow, “From Hot War to Cold,” 478.

April 1946 Mao told his general Lin Biao that “everything is decided by victory or defeat on the battlefield[.] do not put any hope on negotiations.”¹³⁾

Even though Jiang broke a temporary ceasefire in 1946 and attacked first, by the end of 1948 Mao’s forces had crushed the Nationalists on the battlefield and were on the verge of total victory. Mao’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) had become a powerful force, supported as it was with munitions from the USSR, captured Nationalist weapons, and Kim Il-Sung’s North Korean Communist troops.¹⁴⁾

U.S. military leaders concluded that a Communist victory in China would do great damage to U.S. security interests in the entire Western Pacific. American admirals and generals were especially concerned that Mao would let the Soviets base their warships and aircraft all along the coast of China, threatening U.S. military forces stationed in Japan and the Philippines. They were also worried that a victory by Mao in China would inspire similar Communist movements in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.¹⁵⁾

Truman, however, did not want to “become involved in a fratricidal war in China”¹⁶⁾ and felt that Jiang’s corrupt and

13) Quoted in Orme Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounter: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 35. With regard to Mao’s preference for military over political solutions, see 58, 60.

14) Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 174.

15) Marolda, “The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War,” 28-34.

16) Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 63.

ineffective government was doomed to defeat anyway. By 1948 the Truman administration's policy was to distance the United States from the conflict in China. Despite internal grumbling from American military leaders, the administration withdrew the Marines from northern China and closed the homeport of the U.S. Seventh Fleet at Qingdao.¹⁷⁾

Confirming the worst fears of U.S. leaders, in June 1949 Mao proclaimed that his Chinese movement would “lean to one side”—that is the Communist side. This intention was made even clearer with establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949. In February 1950, Beijing and Moscow signed a 30-year military pact—a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. One month later, Stalin sent a 99-plane fighter unit to China to defend Shanghai.¹⁸⁾

The Chinese civil war was not over, however. Jiang's armed forces that had fled the mainland and occupied Taiwan and many other offshore islands in 1949 inaugurated a “maritime phase” of the conflict that would last for decades. Beginning in 1949, Nationalist naval and air forces blockaded China's ports, seized merchant ships and cargos, mined coastal waters, and bombed Shanghai and other cities.¹⁹⁾

17) Marolda, “The United States Navy and the Chinese Civil War,” 53-74.

18) He Di, “The Last Campaign to Unify China: The CCP's Unrealized Plan to Liberate Taiwan, 1949-1950,” in Mark A. Ryan et al, *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 81. See also Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 299-303.

19) Marolda, “The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War;” Marolda, “Hostilities Along the China Coast.”

Mao had to keep “reminding his colleagues that the civil war was not over—the two big Chinese islands, Hainan and Taiwan, were not yet taken.”²⁰⁾ Indeed, the Nationalists drove home that point when their troops on Jinmen (Quemoy) Island off the port of Xiamen (Amoy) and Dengbu Island southeast of Shanghai defeated PLA amphibious assaults and killed or captured over 10,000 Communist soldiers. Mao considered the Jinmen debacle of 1949 “the most serious loss in the War of Liberation.”²¹⁾

The PLA did succeed in taking Hainan Island in the South China Sea in April 1950, but not until the Nationalist navy and ground troops had defeated several preliminary landing attempts and killed many invaders. The PLA was unable to prevent the Nationalists from evacuating 66,000 of their troops from the island and transporting them to Taiwan.²²⁾ These setbacks dashed Mao’s earlier optimism about seizing Taiwan itself in 1950.

During 1949 and early 1950, the Truman administration continued to proclaim its intention to remain neutral in the Chinese civil war. The President and his chief advisors felt that Jiang’s movement did not warrant significant U.S. support. Moreover, they were preoccupied with the Soviet threat to Europe and establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Another important factor was the weakness of the U.S. military establishment, especially in the Far East. After World War II,

20) Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 297.

21) Quoted in He Di, “The Last Campaign to Unify China,” 78. See also Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 299- 303.

22) He Di, “The Last Campaign to Unify China,” 74. See also Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 304-05.

American strategists envisioned the next war to be a nuclear conflagration between the United States and the Soviet Union executed by long-range bombers. Washington demobilized the 16-million man armed forces of World War II, mothballed the 6,700-ship combat fleet, and threatened to do away with the Marine Corps. General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other Army officers concluded that aircraft carriers and amphibious assaults were a thing of the past.

By early 1950, U.S. naval forces in the Western Pacific had been reduced to aircraft carrier *Valley Forge*, two cruisers, three destroyer divisions, 5 submarines, and an assortment of amphibious, mine warfare, and logistic ships.²³⁾ Neither the four ill-trained and poorly equipped Army divisions nor the Air Force combat squadrons based in Japan were ready for war.

In January 1950, the Truman administration implicitly recognized this military weakness when Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that the U.S. defensive perimeter in the Far East would include Japan and the Philippines, and by implication exclude from American protection Taiwan and South Korea.

As we now know from newly opened archives and other sources in Moscow and Beijing, after months of restraining Kim Il Sung, in January 1950 Stalin finally gave the Communist leader the green light to launch his invasion of the Republic of Korea. Since Mao had postponed the invasion of Taiwan until 1951, he voiced no objection to the shift in Communist focus to North Korea. The following month, as Stalin and Kim planned the springtime invasion of South

23) Field, *United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 47.

Korea, Ho Chi Minh traveled to Moscow and Beijing to obtain the support of his Communist patrons. Mao promised “to offer all the military assistance Vietnam needs in its struggle against France.”²⁴⁾ As they coordinated their plans for Asia, the Communists concluded that the Americans would not oppose their actions with military force.

The North Korean attack on 25 June 1950 dramatically altered Truman’s understanding of the relationship of the Far East to overall U.S. strategic interests. Europe continued to command his attention, but he recognized that the success or failure of American arms in Asia would have profound global implications. Stung by criticism from domestic opponents that he had stood by while the Communists conquered mainland China, Truman was now determined to take a stand.

On 26 June, Truman sent the U.S. Navy to war when the Washington command ordered the Seventh Fleet based at Subic Bay in the Philippines to support ROK forces in Korea. In recognition of the fact that the North Korean attack was connected to Communist actions throughout the Far East, the orders also directed the fleet to “take station to prevent invasion of Formosa [Taiwan].”²⁵⁾ En route to Korea, the Seventh Fleet passed east of Taiwan as twenty-nine combat aircraft from *Valley Forge* roared northward along the China coast in the Strait of Taiwan.

24) Quoted in Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 317–18.

25) OORDER 5-50 in msg, COMNAVFE to COM7FLT, 270915Z Jun 1950, Post-46 Plan File, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center (OANHC). The fleet was also ordered to ensure that the Nationalists did not try to invade mainland China.

The U.S. Navy kept watch over the People's Republic of China throughout the Korean War. Seaplanes and patrol aircraft based on Nationalist Chinese territory, on Okinawa, and in the Philippines flew along and over the coast of China. U.S. destroyers of the Formosa (later Taiwan) Patrol Force and submarines made their presence known in Chinese waters. Admiral Arthur W. Radford's Pacific Fleet provided logistical support for CIA operations in China from bases in Taiwan and Japan. American military advisors and material flowed to Nationalist forces.²⁶⁾

During April 1951 carriers *Philippine Sea* and *Boxer* steamed along the coast of China and launched aircraft that flew over the coastal cities of Xiamen, Shantou (Swatow), and Fuchau (Foochow). The Communist antiaircraft guns fired at them. Despite the risks, Radford felt such operations were "a powerful deterrent to further expansion of Communism" in Asia.²⁷⁾ The following year, in July, carriers *Essex* and *Philippine Sea*, along with their escorting destroyers, proceeded from Korea all the way to Hainan Island, where their aircraft took low-level reconnaissance photos of Chinese military facilities. The Chinese tried but failed to stop these missions with antiaircraft fire and MiG interceptors.²⁸⁾

During the July 1952 mission, Admiral Radford's spokesman at his headquarters in Hawaii told the media that the goal of the operation was to "show that the Navy could bomb the coastal cities of Amoy,

26) Marolda, "Hostilities Along the China Coast during the Korean War," 351-63.

27) COM7FLT, Operations Report, 28 Mar 1951- 3 Mar 1952, ser 0038, 11 Feb 1952, Post-46 Command File, OANHC, 11.

28) Marolda, "Hostilities Along the China Coast during the Korean War," 358.

Foochow, and Swatow anytime.”²⁹⁾ The following day, Admiral William Fechteler, Chief of Naval Operations, stated during a visit to the Far East that the U.S. Navy “could deliver baby atom bombs in Korea [and by implication anywhere in the region] if it is ordered to do so.”³⁰⁾

Throughout the Korean War, U.S. Navy submarines and patrol aircraft also operated between the USSR and the combat theater to discourage a Soviet attack and to warn the fleet if such an attack were launched. The Navy was not bluffing. In September, American carrier planes shot down a Soviet bomber on reconnaissance when it flew too close to the fleet in the Yellow Sea. The Soviets did not retaliate. At least partly because of this UN naval presence, at no time during the war did Beijing or Moscow use the sea or the air above it to support Communist forces fighting for survival on the Korean Peninsula.

2. U.S. Naval Forces that Fought the Korean War

The U.S. Navy’s experience in the Korean War showed that sea

29) Related in memo of telecom between Lovett and Acheson, by Kitchen, State Department, 23 July 1952, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington: State Department), Vol. XIV, pt. 1, 79.

30) Ibid, 81. See also Marolda, “Hostilities Along the China Coast during the Korean War,” 359.

power was indispensable to victory in a conflict far from America. The fleet's overwhelming strength in the Western Pacific allowed the United States to fight a major war on the rim of the Asian continent even though in close proximity to enormous enemy ground forces.

U.S. Naval Forces, Far East (NAVFE), at the outset of the war under Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, was the naval component of General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command (FECOM).³¹⁾ Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe succeeded Admiral Joy as Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Far East (COMNAVFE) from 4 June 1952 to the end of the war. On 27 June 1950, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, headquartered in Hawaii, transferred operational control of Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble's U.S. Seventh Fleet to NAVFE.³²⁾ During the next month, Admiral Joy was charged with operational direction of British Commonwealth naval forces, other United Nations naval forces, and the Republic of Korea Navy (ROK Navy). Commander Seventh Fleet actually organized the combat operations of UN naval forces.³³⁾

The U.S. Navy conducted operations through the use of task forces. COMNAVFE's major combat elements were Task Force 77, the Carrier Striking Force; Task Force 95, the Blockading and Escort Force; Task Force 90, the Far East Amphibious Force; and Task Force 96, Naval Forces, Japan. Task Force 96 searched for Communist submarines in the waters around Korea and Japan and

31) Marolda, "Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy;" Buell, *Naval Leadership in Korea*.

32) Marolda, "Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble;" Buell, *Naval Leadership in Korea*.

33) Field, *U.S. Naval Operations: Korea*, 43-50; Marolda, "U.S. Navy," 240-44; Buell, *Naval Leadership in Korea*.

defended the critical U.S. naval bases in Japan at Yokosuka and Sasebo.

Task Force 77 was organized around the fleet's capital ship—the aircraft carrier. During the war, eleven carriers served combat tours in the Western Pacific, many of them completing two or three deployments to Korea.³⁴⁾ These ships operated the F4U Corsair, AD Skyraider, F9F Panther, and F2H Banshee aircraft. An escorting screen of cruisers and destroyers protected the carriers from enemy planes, warships, and submarines. Task Force 77 usually operated in the Sea of Japan/East Sea. Task Force 95, the Blockading and Escort Force, employed Navy and Marine Corps planes from one light carrier and four escort carriers and from air bases ashore.³⁵⁾

American and other United Nations Command aircraft carriers provided critical support to operations ashore. Carrier planes successfully engaged Communist MiG fighters, bombed and strafed enemy truck convoys, trains, oil refineries, and supply depots, and rescued downed flyers. Attack aircraft operating from carriers positioned just offshore were especially valuable to the UN command in the summer of 1950 when advancing North Korean forces overran one airfield after another. U.S. Air Force planes based in Japan did not have the fuel capacity to operate for too long over the Korean battlefield. Naval air support was instrumental in preventing the Communist seizure of Pusan in July and August 1950.

34) These ships were *Valley Forge*, *Bon Homme Richard*, *Antietam*, *Boxer*, *Lake Champlain*, *Kearsarge*, *Philippine Sea*, *Oriskany*, *Leyte*, *Essex*, and *Princeton*; Marolda, "U.S. Navy."

35) These ships were light carrier *Bataan* and escort carriers *Bairoko*, *Badoeng Strait*, *Rendova*, and *Sicily*. Knott, *Attack From the Sky*; Marolda, "U.S. Navy."

U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps aircraft flew over 275,000 combat sorties during the war. This amounted to 100% of the antisubmarine patrols, 53% of the close air support strikes, 40% of the interdiction missions, 36% of the air-to-air sorties, and 30% of the reconnaissance sorties executed by all U.S. air forces. Navy and Marine Corps planes dropped over 178,000 tons of bombs, fired over 274,000 air-to-ground rockets, and fired more than 71 million cannon rounds. The American command concluded that this naval air power killed 86,000 North Korean and Chinese troops and destroyed 33,000 buildings, over 6,000 locomotives, tankers, and boxcars, 7,500 tanks and vehicles, 1,900 supply dumps, and 2,400 vessels. The enemy exacted a price for this success, however, shooting down 559 Navy and Marine planes. MiGs destroyed another 5 aircraft. The total of 1,248 planes lost included 684 naval aircraft destroyed due to non-combat causes.³⁶⁾

The Blockading and Escort Force controlled the fleet's bombardment ships that included the four powerful *Iowa*-class battleships—*Iowa*, *Missouri*, *Wisconsin*, and *New Jersey*—and cruisers, destroyers, and rocket ships. These warships shelled enemy troop concentrations, supply dumps, bridges, railways, and roads all along the Korean coastline. More than a few allied ground units owed their survival to timely and devastating naval gunfire support. UN warships fired over 4 million rounds of naval gun ammunition that resulted in the sinking of hundreds of enemy supply craft and destruction of over 3,000 buildings, 214 trucks, 108 bridges, and 93

36) Marolda, "U.S. Navy;" Wayne Danzik, "Coalition Naval Forces in the Korean War," *Naval War College Review*, 25-36.

supply dumps. Naval gunfire was credited with killing 28,000 enemy soldiers. Communist shore batteries damaged 82 UN vessels and killed and wounded allied sailors—but failed to sink a single ship.³⁷⁾

Task Force 90 grew from a small group of five amphibious ships at the outset of the war to a sizeable fleet of 112 U.S. and allied attack transports, cargo ships, minesweepers, landing ships, and patrol vessels by September 1950.

Allied navies made a significant contribution to UN success. The Royal Navy deployed to Korea aircraft carriers *Glory*, *Theseus*, *Ocean*, and *Triumph*; cruisers *Belfast*, *Jamaica*, *Birmingham*, *Kenya*, and *New Castle*; and destroyers *Cossack*, *Consort*, *Cockade*, *Comus*, and *Charity*. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Colombia, France, the Netherlands, and Thailand also dispatched destroyers and frigates to the hostile waters off the Korean Peninsula.

The 7,000-man Republic of Korea Navy more than made up for its small size at the start of the war with an aggressive fighting spirit. In June 1950 the ROKN operated frigate *Bak Du San*, 1 tank landing ship, and 15 motor minesweepers. By July 1953, the South Korean naval component consisted of U.S.-supplied frigates *Kum Kang San*, *Apnok*, *Chi Ri San*, *Sam Kak San*, and additional LSTs.

The fleet's dominance in the Pacific Ocean in 1950 enabled the UN command to remain on the peninsula and then launch a general counteroffensive. The U.S. Navy's Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) managed the massive sealift to Korea of troops, vehicles, equipment, and supplies from Japan and the United States. MSTS troopships, freighters, and tankers transported U.S. Army and U.S.

37) Marolda, "U.S. Navy."

Marine combat divisions, trucks, weapons, ammunition, and fuel 5,000 miles from the United States to the Far East and then returned to California for more. As one example, in September 1950 MSTTS lifted the Army's 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team directly from the U.S. West Coast to Pusan. By the end of the conflict, MSTTS had delivered 5 million passengers, over 52 million measurement tons of cargo, and 22 million long tons of petroleum, oil, and lubricants to the combat theater.³⁸⁾

The Pacific Fleet's oilers, ammunition ships, and stores ships supplied American warships at sea, enabling naval forces to remain continuously on station in the combat theater. Hospital ships, for the first time in war employing helicopters, received casualties directly from the battlefield, dramatically improving their ability to save the lives of badly wounded fighting men. Great Britain was the first nation to send a hospital ship, *Maine*, to the Korean theater. Denmark later dispatched *Jutlandia*. Ultimately, the U.S. Navy deployed hospital ships *Consolation*, *Haven*, and *Repose*.

3. Naval Operations in Korea

One of the first objectives of UN naval forces in June 1950 was to clear North Korean combat vessels and supply craft from the sea around the Korean Peninsula. Late on the night of 25 June, the enemy launched a bold naval operation to seize the port of Pusan.

38) Marolda, "U.S. Navy."

Not only was Pusan South Korea's largest port but the one closest to the UN's critical logistic support bases in Japan. Loss of Pusan would have doomed UN hopes to remain on the peninsula. Fortunately for the allied cause, the vigilant crew of ROK Navy warship *Bak Du San* intercepted and eliminated the Communist freighter and her embarked soldiers. Not long afterward, on 2 July, U.S. cruiser *Juneau*, British cruiser *Jamaica*, and British frigate *Black Swan* surprised a North Korean naval force of torpedo boats and motor gunboats further north on the east coast and sank five of the enemy vessels.³⁹⁾

Throughout July, August, and early September 1950, the ROK Navy fought hard and successfully to frustrate the enemy's use of the sea to supply Communist troops advancing down the west coast. Minesweeper YMS 513, for example, sank three enemy supply vessels near Chulpo and five days later PC 702 and PC 703 sank twenty North Korean sampans loaded with ammunition west of Incheon. On other occasions, YMS 503 sank 15 Communist vessels and captured more.⁴⁰⁾

The fleet's superiority at sea enabled General MacArthur to turn his dream of decisive victory over the Communist invaders into reality. The commander of UN armed forces chose Incheon as the site for a major amphibious landing behind the enemy army. Many American military leaders doubted that an operation could be successful at Incheon, where the tide ranged between 23 and 35 feet. At low tide, any attacking ships would be hard aground and

39) Marolda, "Naval Battles;"

40) Marolda, "Naval Battles."

vulnerable to enemy fire. Furthermore, Wolmi-Do blocked access to the port. Despite these drawbacks MacArthur was convinced his bold stroke would succeed and his passionate advocacy carried the day.

In mid-September 1950, Admiral Struble, commander of the Seventh Fleet and also Commander Task Force 7, guided a powerful UN force of 230 amphibious and other ships up the water approaches to the North Korean-held port on Incheon. The allied navies, in Operation Chromite, carried a lethal combat force. Army Major General Edward M. Almond's X Corps was composed of elements of the 1st Marine Division, reinforced with 8,600 South Korean marines and soldiers, and the Army's 7th Infantry Division.⁴¹⁾

Following days of intense bombardment by carrier aircraft and warships, at 0633 hours on 15 September elements of the 5th Marine Regiment stormed ashore. By the next day, all D-Day objectives had been secured. On the 18th, Marine aircraft began operating from Kimpo airfield east of Incheon. On the 21st, U.S. Army units that had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter linked up with the 7th Infantry Division southeast of Incheon. After a week of bloody street fighting, the Marines captured Seoul. The X Corps suffered 3,500 casualties in Operation Chromite but inflicted 21,000 casualties on the North Korean army that fled South Korean soil in great haste and with little of their heavy equipment.⁴²⁾

MacArthur wanted to oversee another amphibious victory with a landing on the east coast of North Korea at Wonsan. X Corps

41) Utz, *Assault From the Sea*; Alexander, *Fleet Operations in a Mobile War*.

42) Utz, *Assault From the Sea*; Alexander, *Fleet Operations in a Mobile War*.

reembarked in the fleet's amphibious ships that steamed around the peninsula and prepared to deploy the troops ashore. Hard-driving ROK troops, however, captured the port of Wonsan on 10 October, one week before the scheduled American amphibious landing.

To its embarrassment, the U.S. Navy discovered that the Communists had deployed in the water approaches to Wonsan 2,000 to 4,000 Soviet-supplied sea mines. In a short period of time, U.S. minesweepers *Pirate* and *Pledge* and ROK Navy YMS 516 hit mines and sank quickly, taking many of their crewmen with them to the bottom. The fleet had to painstakingly clear lanes through the minefields before landing the troops. Finally, on 25 October the irritated 1st Division Marines came ashore and headed into the forbidding mountains of North Korea.⁴³⁾

The U.S. Navy's power and mobility also helped UN forces break off contact with the Communists and withdraw to the sea when the battle turned against the UN, as it did in the fall and winter of 1950. The Chinese People's Liberation Army came to the rescue of Kim Il-sung's army in November, and in a devastating surprise attack drove the outnumbered and overextended UN forces from the interior of North Korea. The allied command decided to evacuate the American and South Korean troops through the ports of Hungnam and Wonsan.

The withdrawal operation began on 10 December 1950 when Task Force 90 embarked elements of the 1st Marine Division, which had just completed an epic fighting withdrawal from the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir. As the evacuation proceeded, combat aircraft

43) Marolda, "Mine Warfare."

from carriers *Philippine Sea*, *Valley Forge*, *Princeton*, and *Leyte* and three escort carriers bombed and strafed Chinese troops. The American aviators conducted over 7,000 sorties in one week alone. As the allied troops neared the coast, battleship *Missouri*, cruisers *St. Paul* and *Rochester*, and other warships covered their rear with gunfire. The ships fired over 23,000 shells and rockets.⁴⁴⁾

On 24 December 1950, Navy explosive ordnance teams destroyed the port facilities at Hungnam and the last of the evacuation flotilla set a course for Pusan. The U.S. and allied navies withdrew by sea 105,000 troops, 91,000 civilian refugees, 350,000 tons of cargo, and 17,500 military vehicles. Air Force and Marine planes airlifted out another 3,600 troops, 1,300 tons of cargo, and 196 vehicles. Hence, the Navy's control of the sea allowed the X Corps to live and fight another day.⁴⁵⁾

Incheon had taught the Communists a lesson they did not want repeated. Mao and his field commander in Korea, General Peng Dehuai, kept large, badly needed ground forces off the front lines and deployed in the rear to deal with expected amphibious landings. At one point, Mao observed to Peng "the enemy definitely has an intention to lure us into the south and land in the north."⁴⁶⁾

On several occasions, the fleet carried out naval feints and demonstrations to keep the enemy guessing about allied intentions. In Operation Decoy, Navy carrier planes and warships bombarded

44) Marolda, "The Hungnam and Chinnampo Evacuations."

45) Marolda, "The Hungnam and Chinnampo Evacuations."

46) Quoted in Shu Guang Zhang, "Command, Control and the PLA's Offensive Campaigns in Korea, 1950- 1951," in *Chinese Warfighting*, 110; see also 104, 109, 135.

targets ashore and the amphibious task force simulated a landing of 1st Cavalry Division units. This feint prompted the Communists to rush troops to the coast near Wonsan. Conversely, since the allied navies enjoyed absolute superiority at sea and had no fear of a Communist amphibious landing in South Korea, the UN command put all of its troops on the 38th parallel.

The allies exploited sea control to land U.S. Navy UDTs (underwater demolition team), U.S. Marines, British Royal Marine commandoes, South Korean commandoes, guerrillas, and intelligence agents in North Korea and on many islands on the western coast. The commandoes blew up enemy railway bridges, railway tunnels, highway bridges, and supply depots.

In the so-called “siege of Wonsan,” which lasted from 16 February 1951 to the end of the war, the fleet prevented the Communists from using this major North Korean port. The allied navies denied the enemy use of the port by frequently bombarding it and by deploying troops on several islands in the water approaches. This allied concentration off the North Korean coast required the enemy to position as many as 80,000 troops in that region.⁴⁷⁾

Naval power was especially important during the last two years of the war, when UN and Communist representatives engaged in lengthy and heated negotiations to achieve a ceasefire. At one point, the Communists claimed their troops controlled the Yonan and Ongjin peninsulas on the west coast. To discredit that claim, UN warships kept up a bombardment on the peninsulas, which were not far from the negotiation site. As a Pacific Fleet report later

47) Muir, *Sea Power on Call*.

observed, “the naval gunfire, within hearing distance of the conference table, nullified Communist delegates’ contentions that they controlled this 200 square miles of land area.”⁴⁸⁾ U.S. and allied naval power helped to frustrate Communist political and military objectives and to achieve the armistice agreement ending the Korean War on 27 July 1953.⁴⁹⁾

4. Conclusion

The U.S. Navy had a major impact on the evolution of the 1945-1953 crisis in the Far East. American naval leaders recognized early the Communist threat to U.S. interests in Northeast Asia and enlightened others about it. The Truman administration’s focus on Europe, frustration with the Chinese Nationalist government and war effort, and lack of military strength in the region, however, limited American options until the outbreak of the Korean War. Then, U.S. maritime power, despite initial weakness, proved critical to deterring the spread of warfare throughout the Western Pacific, maintaining the enclave at Pusan, turning the enemy’s flank at Inchon, safely withdrawing forces from Hungnam, and achieving the ceasefire in 1953. In short, sea power did its considerable part to preserve the

48) CINCPACFLT Evaluation Report.

49) 1,842,000 Navy personnel served in the Korean War, a sizeable proportion of the 5,720,000 other Americans who responded to the call to duty. 458 officers and men were killed in action and another 4,043 sailors died from disease or injury and 1,576 were wounded in action. Marolda, “U.S. Navy.”

non-Communist position in Asia and the independence of the Republic of Korea.

Key Words : Military Superiority, Naval Force, Far East, American Intervention,
Acheson Line

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