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### **The Emergence of ‘North Korea’ in a Cold War United States**

by

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## **Abstract**

North Korea is commonly portrayed in the West as the most opaque society that cannot be penetrated, much less understood by outsiders. This paper traces the origins of North Korea’s opaqueness to the early days of the Cold War and argues that it has resulted as much from an intended blindness in the perceptions of American society toward North Korea as from North Korea itself. During the Korean War, North Korean society was studied through the conceptual framework that reflected the emergent Cold War in the U.S. As the American Army intensified its psychological warfare against the North Koreans, its representations of them were shaped by Cold War ideology. This paper concludes that the emergence of ‘North Korea’ as a Soviet puppet in American representations of the period laid the basis for America’s perceptions of North Korea and its ‘intended blindness’ in the later period.

## **About the Author**

Yong-Wook Chung is Professor of Korean History at Seoul National University. He has conducted research on U.S. policies toward Korea in the 1940s and 1950s. Some of his publications include *United States Policies toward Korea in the 1940s* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2003) and “Leaflets, and the Nature of the Korean War as Psychological Warfare,” *Review of Korean Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 2004).

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## Introduction

*“OUR NATION HONORS HER SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO ANSWERED THE CALL TO DEFEND A COUNTRY THEY NEVER KNEW AND A PEOPLE THEY NEVER MET.”*

In one corner of Washington D.C. Mall, across from the Vietnam War Memorial, stand statues and monuments that commemorate the Korean War. Engraved on the floor on the heart of this memorial, is the above tribute. Despite the nobility of the sentiment it expresses, a question lingers: did America’s sons and daughters really fight to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met? If, by “knowledge,” one refers to what is engendered in a moment of physical contact or face-to-face encounter, it is probably true that American soldiers came to “know” Koreans for the first time on the battlefields of Korea. And yet, it must also be true that images of the enemy were already well defined in their minds even before they experienced these frontline encounters. What were these images and how did they come to be?

The enemy of the United States has historically taken the form of an “ism”: communism during the Cold War and terrorism more recently. Considered a “puppet regime” of the Soviet Union before the latter’s dissolution and now a “rogue state” that along with Iraq and Iran make up the terrorist threat, North Korea has been twice crowned the enemy by the United States. In real life, of course, America’s enemy may be specific nations, terrorist organizations, or drug cartels, but the image of this enemy has proven quite susceptible to change, depending on shifts in American national interest (or interpretations of that interest). There are neither permanent friends nor permanent foes in the international arena, as the saying goes, and it is precisely the task of those who specialize in international politics or diplomatic history to map these changes motivated by national interests. Beyond this realm, however, there is another dimension to international relations that one might term epistemological. How is the other defined and apprehended at the national level? What are the interpretive methods involved in turning this other into an object of knowledge? Such analysis can get at the heart of relationship between different nations in unique and valuable ways.

The U.S. first began to take an interest in Korea in the late nineteenth century during what is called the “port opening” period. Throughout this period and the next—thirty-six years of colonial rule by the Japanese—American society saw Korea mainly through the eyes of missionaries, entrepreneurs, physicians and occasional travelers. These encounters were sporadic at best, but the end of WWII opened a new chapter in Korea-U.S. relations as American military began its occupation of Korean territory south of the thirty-eighth parallel. The ensuing history of the relationship between the two countries has been complex; this study focuses on one particularly troubled aspect of that history. In the following pages, we will examine the crystallization of America’s strategic interest vis-à-vis North Korea in the period between the end of WWII when the two countries came into full contact with each other and the division of the Korean peninsula into north and south following the Korean War, and analyze the process by which the American position came to take on a consistent framework that might be called “the perspective on North Korea.”

In a sense, American academics have contributed greatly to creating enduring images of North Korea. In existing studies on the early years of the regime, North Korea emerges as a totalitarian society and a satellite state of the USSR. Its leaders are depicted as Soviet puppets, and its political history delineated as a succession of purges. Works on North Korea published in 1950-1970's are representative in this regard. Their viewpoints, largely inherited in subsequent studies as well, laid the foundation for epistemological approach to North Korea in American academia.<sup>1</sup> Noteworthy, however, is the fact that there have been almost no studies to date either in Korea or in the States which seek to shed light on the nature and formation of such an epistemology. A countless number of studies have rehearsed the claim that North Korea is a totalitarian society or that it was a mere puppet of the USSR, but they have neglected to examine the process by which such a perception was produced and consolidated into an image in the first place. Thus, one might charge that deductive reasoning rather than inductive analysis has been the operative methodology here.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, the image and characterization of North Korea that are widespread in American society occlude the historically constructed nature of their origins. To subject this construction, then, to analysis is the main objective of this study. By focusing on the activities and perspectives of individuals who played a crucial part in shaping early American policy on North Korea, we will trace the process through which certain images of North Korea came to be fixed in the American mind and ask what the nature of these images were.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the U.S. scholars' studies of North Korean politics and the methodology in such studies, the preface and 1st chapter of Young-Chul Chung, "'Suryongje' Political System as a Collective Development Strategy," which will be presented in this workshop, could be consulted.

<sup>2</sup> Among the South Korean scholars studying the North Korean society, a new trend of criticizing the American scholars' and some of the South Korean scholars' attitude of 'painting' the North Korea with a pre-fixed image, a trend which showed new efforts to study the identity, its reason of existence and its own inherent development process of the North Korean society, has been forming since the 1980s. This sort of approach has been referred to by the South Korean scholars as an 'Immanent approach', and currently is widely accepted by the South Korean scholars' society as a viable method of research in North Korean studies, although there are still some differences in opinion as well. Through discussions to debate acceptable research methodologies in cases of dealing with North Korean social issues, South Korean scholars like Lee Jong Seok and Yu Gil Jae came to agree with the fact that understanding of the historical origin of the North Korean society, the inner strengths of North Korea, and the internal needs of the North Korean society should be obtained first, in order to properly analyze the North Korean society.

<sup>3</sup> Although it is not directly referring to the American scholars' perception of North Korea, Bruce Cumings sharply pointed out the nature of the American society's perception of Korea, with the expression of 'structured absence' (Bruce Cumings, "Bringing Korea Back In: Structured Absence, Glaring Presence, and Invisibility," Warren I. Cohen ed., *Pacific Passage: East Asian Relations on the Eve of the Twenty-first Century* (Columbia University Press, 1996). In the meantime, Charles K. Armstrong examined the cultural aspects of the cold war which had been continuing both in the South and North parts of the Korean peninsula since right after the end of World War II. This study provides us with a lot of insights regarding the cold war mentality, and also the culture of the U.S. and South Korean societies, in the early days of the cold war (Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945-1950," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 62, No. 1 (February 2003).

## **1. Korean Communists as Puppet of Kremlin**

### **1) American Perceptions of Korea Before Liberation**

A systematic perception of Korea began to emerge in American society during WWII. The central role in the formation of this perception was played by the American military and government, since strategic intelligence on Korea which began to be collected systematically during the Pacific War became the most important source of information in producing knowledge of Korea. As part of the war against Japan as well as postwar planning, various government offices, military agencies and information bureaus, including the State Department, Office of War Information (OWI), Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Military Intelligence Services of the Department of War, and the FBI collected intelligence on Korea and Korean communities overseas.

If these intelligence offices, state bureaus and military agencies provided the data and analysis necessary for creating the image of Korean society, think tanks and policy makers who participated in America's postwar planning were central in determining the tone that these perceptions would take. For instance, members of the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy and the "War and Peace" Project of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) discussed such issues as Korea's strategic value in the postwar world order, Koreans' self-governing ability, the roadmap to Korean independence, the nature of the interim administrative organ in the transitional period between occupation and independence, and Korea's economic situation and potentials. They then drafted an outline of policies on postwar Korea, which served as the basis of the position the U.S. maintained throughout the Allies' talks on postwar reconstruction.<sup>4</sup>

Since a detailed examination of what these committees discussed regarding policy issues in postwar Korea lies beyond the purview of this essay, I will present here only a brief summary of their conclusions. Broadly speaking, the CFR's and the State Department's postwar planning converged on the trusteeship plan for Korea. The plan was based on two general premises. The first concerned the geopolitical significance of the Korean peninsula. As the point where continental and maritime powers in Asia meet, Korea was seen as the ground where the interests of powerful nations like China, Japan and Russia collide head on. Since the monopoly of Korea by one of these nations would result in sharp hostilities, trusteeship over Korea shared by the interested nations was seen as necessary step until Korea became fully autonomous. The U.S., of course, was to act in the capacity of overseer during the period of trusteeship to ensure that the interests of the major powers remain balanced. The other premise was that Koreans would be unable to govern themselves. Even though Koreans had been actively resisting the Japanese colonial government for decades, they were deemed to be incapable of establishing and administering an independent nation on their own.

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<sup>4</sup> Chung Yong Wook, *The United States Policies toward Korea in 1940s*, (Seoul; Seoul National University Press, 2003) Chapter 1. Regarding the activities of the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy, documents of National Archives II, RG 59 Records of Harley A. Notter, 1939-45, Records of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy could be consulted. Harley A. Notter served as the secretary of the committee, and was well aware of the objectives and goals of the committee. At the request of the State department, he authored a book documenting the activities of the committee, after the war. Harley A. Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950).

Once the policy position America would adopt and the principles of American involvement in Korea were hammered out, these became the basis for interpreting all available information on Korea. American military and government made a particularly strong effort to assess the level of influence held by various political groups both in and outside of Korea, as well as these groups' leanings. They also paid close attention to these groups' relationships with different nations neighboring Korea. The general conclusion reached was that no single group possessed the administrative capacity to run an independent national government. What is of greater interest, however, is the manner in which each political group was evaluated. American postwar planners divided the Korean political field into five broad categories: Koreans in America, the Provisional Government in Chungking, anti-Japanese militants in Manchuria and Siberia, nationalists within Korea, and middle managers who participated in various organs of the Japanese colonial authorities. A joint report by the British and Americans on Korean revolutionary element found that of these five groups, armed independence fighters in Manchuria led by Kim Il Sung and Ch'oe Hyōn was one of the most active. The report also assessed this group's administrative capabilities as considerable. Another report predicted that the American military government would have to employ Korean bureaucrats who had served in the Japanese colonial government in order to carry out the occupation.

Three observations can be made regarding the aforementioned postwar planning and strategic intelligences about Korea, in connection with American perceptions of North Korea in the post-liberation period. First is that in its strategic thinking about Korea *before* Korea's liberation from the Japanese colonial rule, the U.S. treated Korea as a single entity, even though Japan's unexpectedly quick surrender would later lead the U.S. to occupy only the southern half of the Korean peninsula. Secondly, the U.S. assessed various Korean political forces on the basis of each group's self-governing capacity, leadership, and level of intimacy with different superpowers including the U.S. Predictably, then, Syngman Rhee and Koreans in America were classified as pro-American, the Provisional Government in Chungking was seen as pro-Chinese, collaborators within Korea as pro-Japanese, and guerilla forces in Manchuria and Siberia as pro-Soviet. These differences, however, were considered mostly factional in nature; at this time, at least, the U.S. did not have a clear position on which group to support. Thirdly, the difference between North and South Korea is presented as a local characteristic in "JANIS 75: Korea," a joint publication of the U.S Army and Navy which contains all strategic intelligence collected during the Pacific War. South Koreans, for example, were considered to be more phlegmatic and docile than the more ambitious and daring northerners.<sup>5</sup> Comparing these perceptions to those that came to predominate in the

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<sup>5</sup> NA II, RG 407 Administrative Services Division, Operations Branch, Foreign(Occupied) Area Reports 1945 ~ 1954, Box 2101, "Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies 75: Korea," p. X-7. The U.S. military issued a comprehensive report entitled "JANIS 75" in April 1945, which was a summation of intelligence reports regarding the Korean situation that have been collected for years. During World War II, in a joint effort the intelligence divisions of both the U.S. Army and Navy created a manual which included strategic information of many countries and would also ultimately prove useful in battlefield conditions. "JANIS 75" was one of them, and the number '75' was an identification code for the Korea. The contents of this report was so inclusive and filled with details of Korean politics, economy, society and cultural issues, that the OSS operatives in charge of Korean issues examined it and concluded that the contents "could replace all the Korean-related documents

period following the liberation, we can thus see that the division of Korea across the thirty-eighth parallel was anything but natural. The division was less an organic outgrowth of territorially expressed structures of difference within Korea than the result of politics of power on the global stage.

## 2) **American Military Government's Pursuit of Containment and the Image of Korean Communists**

Following Japan's surrender in 1945, the U.S. wished to occupy the entire Korea, but when the Soviet forces made their way down the Korean peninsula with alarming speed, the U.S. hurriedly decided upon the thirty-eighth parallel as the line of demarcation between American and Soviet occupation. The U.S. troops finally arrived in Korea on September 8, 1945 through the port of Inch'ŏn. The occupation force in charge of South Korea was the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps of the U.S. Army stationed in Okinawa, and the commanding general was the then Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge. Hodge, who has since been called a "precocious Cold War warrior," was a staunch anti-communist who believed that the goal of U.S. occupation was to turn South Korea into "a bulwark against the Soviet Union." Throughout the period of his command, Hodge did not swerve from the policy of preserving the status quo and suppressing revolution. In the process, the project of decolonization was largely ignored. The challenge facing any nation freshly liberated from years of colonial rule is the eradication of colonial vices and legacy; what the majority of Koreans saw as the most urgent tasks in post-liberation Korea were bringing pro-Japanese collaborators to justice and accomplishing sweeping land reform. Hodge, however, turned a deaf ear to repeated Korean demands to bring pro-Japanese collaborators to justice. Not only did he not listen to these demands, he employed pro-Japanese collaborators in key positions of the American military government. Moreover, the land reform which so many Koreans ardently desired was never implemented during the occupation. Hodge's position on American occupation of South Korea is encapsulated in such comments as "Koreans who worked for the Japanese can work for Americans," and "I know that revolution is under way in South Korea. But it cannot be carried out in a manner that threatens American interests."<sup>6</sup> Koreans' deep dissatisfaction with American military occupation erupted in the "October Uprising," but Hodge pinned this widespread opposition to the American rule entirely on propagandistic activities of communists and the Soviet Union rather than propose policy change to bring the U.S. occupation closer in line with what the majority of Korean people wanted.<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. military defended its occupation policy as a stopgap measure to preserve the status quo, but the policy's impact on Korean society was profound. The course of action the U.S. pursued in Korea aimed on the whole at persecuting the left and supporting the right, where the "right" represented a congeries of pro-Japanese, ultra-reactionary, and pro-

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created or issued before April 1945." ("P.G. 108/1, Implementation Study for the Over-all and Special Programs for Strategic Services Activities Based in China, Korea, 15 May, 1945," p. 20)

<sup>6</sup> NA II, RG 59 Records of the Wedemeyer Mission to China, Box 2 Folder 'Korea', "Verbatim Transcript of Gen. Hodge's Discussion with Wedemeyer Mission"

<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Military government in Korea officially propagated that the blame for the outbreak of the "October Uprising" should be placed upon communists of both North and South Korea, but internal reports indicated that the main reason for such breakout was the arbitrariness and act of barbarism of the police (which was the stronghold of pro-Japanese collaborators) and the public's objection to the economic policies of the U.S. military government, for example policy of collecting rice.

American elements in Korean society, rather than conservatives in the conventional sense of the word. The boundaries of the “left” as understood by the U.S. military shifted constantly according to specific exigencies, and later came to encompass even moderates and the conservative right. Lyuh Woon Hyung and Kim Kyu Sik, two leaders of the united left-right coalition committee whom Hodge supported at one time, were sometimes called democrats and sometimes communists by Hodge, despite the general consensus in Korean politics at the time that Lyuh Woon Hyung was a moderate left and Kim Kyu Sik a moderate right. Hodge’s opinion took such wild turns not because these men’s political tendencies underwent change over time but because their political utility to the U.S. was assessed differently at different times. Following the outbreak of the Korean War, Hodge labeled Kim Kyu Sik and even the rightist politician Won Sei Hoon as communists.<sup>8</sup> By calling most reformists communists and expelling them from the public arena of politics in this way, the U.S. occupation government succeeded in restructuring the South Korean political field around the extreme reactionary element.

To be sure, it was the U.S.-U.S.S.R. occupation and partitioning of Korea that set the stage for the eventual political division of Korean society. Still, it must be noted that the way in which the U.S. military government carried out the occupation expedited the process considerably and provided the classificatory scheme that reified political categories. If we examine the left-right opposition in Korean society from a historical perspective, the attempt to locate the reason for Korean division in the struggle between leftist Koreans and rightist Koreans during this period cannot help but strike us as absurd. Dividing political groups into left and right is simply a way of evaluating the political tendencies or radicalism of the groups in question, and is, therefore, inherently relative. From the position of the extreme right, even the moderate right is leftist. At a certain point in the post-liberation period, however, the terms left and right came to take on specific ideological content and fixed images. In short, from this point onward, the left came to represent communism while the right was equated with nationalism or democracy.

To see how foreign such formulations are in the Korean historical context, we need only go back to the colonial period when the distinction between the left and the right was a notion that separated the hardliners from those who espoused compromise in the independence movement. In 1927, for example, socialists and nationalists came together to fight Japanese imperialism by creating a united national liberation front called Shinganhoe. Throughout the colonial period, revolutionary forces in Korea sought to create a coalition between the left and right, seeing this as the most important goal whether tactically or strategically. Moreover, politicians who returned to Korea upon liberation all espoused the slogan of “unification and solidarity,” a slogan which reflected both their concrete experiences during the colonial period and the demand for unity by the Korean people at large. In short, the left-right distinction during the colonial period was not an opposition between irreconcilable ideologies but a question of which route to take or which means to adopt in the struggle for independence from Japanese imperialism. Even the manuscript written by U.S. Army, “History of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea,” noted that the distinction

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<sup>8</sup> Letter for Preston M. Goodfellow, by John R. Hodge, 1950. 9. 19. Kim Kyu Sik and Won Sei Hoon were all kidnapped to North Korea after the Korean War broke out, and Hodge considered every person who communicated with North Korea as communists.

between the left (socialists) and right (nationalists), which came into being after the March First Movement with socialists taking on the leadership of the independence movement, signified little more than individual differences between the leaders. It observed wittily that even the nationalist had rightist stomach but leftist mouth.<sup>9</sup>

It was over the trusteeship issue that came to a head in late 1945 and early 1946 that the left-right tension took on the character of a bitter feud. The trusteeship controversy served as the occasion for consolidating a pair of political formulas: the right was seen as anti-trusteeship, anti-Soviet Union, nationalist, and patriotic, and the left in contrast became aligned with pro-trusteeship, pro-Soviet Union, communist, and unpatriotic. What triggered the anti-trusteeship campaign in South Korea was an article published in *Donga Daily News* and *Chosŏn Daily News* on December 27, 1945. The article, which identified the Soviet Union, and not the U.S., as the proponent of trusteeship, was largely false. It failed to mention the gist of the decision reached at the tripartite Foreign Ministers Conference at Moscow regarding “the establishment of a provisional democratic government in Korea, agreed upon by the joint U.S.S.R.-U.S. committee, as well as political parties and social organizations in both North and South Korea,” and focused narrowly on the issue of trusteeship. A day before the text of the Moscow Agreement was released, the article was already in print in Seoul. U.S. intelligence brief called “Political Trends” identified the source of this article as *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, a newspaper for overseas U.S. servicemen which was published by the MacArthur headquarters in Tokyo.<sup>10</sup>

The article in *Pacific Stars and Stripes* which served as the source for *Donga Daily News* and *Chosŏn Daily News* false report came from the United Press in Washington, D.C., and was written by a reporter named Ralph Heinzen. I have tried for years, without success, to locate this article in the archives of UPI which inherited the UP. Though no major paper, neither *The New York Times* nor *The Washington Post*, picked up on this story, a similar article made its way onto the pages of *Washington Times Herald*. The *Herald*, as is well known, later became the flagship paper of McCarthyists, serving as the mouthpiece of McCarthyism in its heyday. Moreover, Ralph Heinzen’s reputation as a journalist was none too honorable. A correspondent for UP who was active in Europe from the 1930s on, Heinzen was a European expert with next to no knowledge about Asia. Among his colleagues, Heinzen had the reputation of being a notorious faker who was “known to do some writing off the wall using his imagination.”<sup>11</sup>

To sum up, then, we can say that a left-right split in Korean society became a full-scale conflict over the trusteeship imbroglio, which in turn was sparked off by the report in *Donga Daily News* and *Chosŏn Daily News* about the decision of the Moscow conference. This report, however, was highly specious. Suspicions cloud its source, its writer and the

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<sup>9</sup> “History of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea,” ‘Part II. Korean Politics: The First Year, Chapter II’, pp. 7-8. The military historian who wrote this section was Richard D. Robinson.

<sup>10</sup> “Political Trends,” No. 15, 1946. 1. 5 (Appendix, *G-2 Periodic Report* of 24th Corps)

<sup>11</sup> H. L. Stevenson’s record of interviewing Wallace Carroll, 1992( <http://www.auburn.edu/~lowrygr/history1.html>). Stevenson served as the former vice president and chief editor of UPI. UPI was the successor of UP. Wallace Carroll had served as a special correspondent since before World War II and throughout the war, in London, Paris, Geneva, Madrid and Moscow. He later moved to work at the U.S. government’s Office of War Information, and later moved to *New York Times*.

path by which its information was transmitted. Of greater interest, however, is the way both the anti-trusteeship movement and the leftist support of the Moscow decision were understood and represented by the U.S. military government. The American perspective and rhetoric on this issue are deeply revealing.

In the first days of the occupation, the yardstick the U.S. military government used to characterize political groups in Korea was not whether they were communist or nationalist, but whether they were radical or conservative. Reports submitted to the superiors in the immediate post-liberation period all describe the political field in South Korea in terms of the struggle between radicals and conservatives. George Z. Williams, who played a central role in his capacity as the adviser to General Hodge, the head of the U.S. military government in Korea, in bringing pro-Japanese elements and Korean Democratic Party personnel into the military government, went one step further and described this conflict as one between radicals and democrats.<sup>12</sup> To Williams, conservatives were those who complied with the U.S. military government, which was also the reason why they could be considered democratic. According to one military historian in the occupation headquarters, this was a routinely used method in the military government of classifying political groups.<sup>13</sup> Several factors accounted for the fact that the U.S. applied these categories. First, Americans could not help but be conscious of the Soviet Union's presence on the Korean peninsula as the other occupying nation. On the other hand, an atmosphere of revolutionary fervor reigned over the political terrain in post-liberation Korea which rendered ideological classifications irrelevant to a large extent, and such organizations as the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence and local People's Committees were coalitions between the left and right for the most part.

In the process of transmission, however, the Moscow Agreement sparked an impassioned debate on trusteeship, and the political terrain in which conservatives and radicals had struggled with each other came to be reconfigured ideologically in terms of the conflict between democrats and communists. The fierce dispute over whether or not to support the Moscow Agreement, political forces in Korea were pulled asunder and reconsolidated into two poles: the rightist bloc called Representative Democratic Council of Korea and the leftist bloc called the Democratic People's Front. By early 1946, the left-right split was the basic topography in domestic Korean politics. The central contest was no longer between national revolutionists and pro-Japanese collaborators as it had been perceived by Koreans until then, or between radicals and conservatives as Americans preferred to schematize it. The trusteeship imbroglio of late 1945 and early 1946 had turned the left-right opposition into a veritable feud.

As anti-trusteeship movement intensified in Korea, the U.S. military government reported its concern to the State Department and requested a copy of the official text of the

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<sup>12</sup> George Z. Williams was the son of a missionary who founded the Young-myung school at Gong-ju. He recommended Cho Byung Ok, a friend of him since childhood, to Gen. Hodge for the head of the police department. Cho Byung Ok was the member of the Korean Democratic Party, which was called as a extreme right-wing party composed of pro-Japanese landlords and ex-officials of Japanese colonial authorities. The party had almost no support from the public, but was armed with plenty of money, and was also a pool of human resources needed for the seats inside the American military government in Korea.

<sup>13</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Corps Staff Journal, "Interview with Lt. Colonel Williams," 1945. 10. 13.

Moscow decision,<sup>14</sup> but did not attempt to verify the facts regarding the false report in *Tonga Daily News* and *Chosŏn Daily News*. In other words, the military government felt no need to rectify the false perception that had led to agitations against the trusteeship. Hodge's comment that "the antipathy is not primarily aimed at Americans, but we happen to be here at hand. Russia comes in for the greater share,"<sup>15</sup> reveals in a straightforward fashion the American position on the anti-trusteeship movement. The military government sought to manufacture the belief that the Soviets were to blame for trying to impose trusteeship on Koreans, and the State Department took a similar line.

At the same time, when in January of 1946 Korean communists changed their position on anti-trusteeship and announced their "overall support of the decision reached in Moscow," the U.S. military government saw this as evidence that communists in South Korea were Soviet Union's lackeys. The critique was not completely groundless since it was only after Pak Hŏn Yŏng, the secretary of the Korean Communist Party, returned from P'yŏngyang that the position of the South Korean Communist Party changed. It is more probable, however, that this change reflects the general lack of ability on the part of the South Korean Communist Party to arrive at an independent understanding of international politics. They may have needed a certain amount of time to understanding the meaning of the "decision regarding Korea," and adapt themselves to the compromise between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. But the U.S. military government did not hesitate to manipulate the media in order to spread the view that the South Korean Communist Party's turnabout proved that the Korean left were Soviet puppets.<sup>16</sup>

The shift in the communist position on trusteeship served as the central occasion for reinforcing the U.S. military government's belief that Korean communists received their directives from Russia, but it was the attitude toward the U.S. that served as the basis for distinguishing between the left and the right in the conflict which began to be intensified during this period. This was acknowledged in the "History of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea": Richard D. Robinson, who compiled the section on Korean politics, pointed out that in addition to a given political group's activities and experiences during the colonial period and afterward, its attitude toward the U.S. military government served as an important factor in determining whether the group was to be considered leftist or rightist in the post-liberation period. Before liberation, nationalism and socialism were understood as two sides of the struggle for independence. In this context, the left-right distinction signified a difference in the approach to Korean liberation; following the liberation, however, the central question became whether one supported American occupation or not.<sup>17</sup> The opposition between the left and the right in post-liberation Korea, therefore, was not rather an outgrowth of political tensions within Korea but than a manifestation of the way in which American Cold War policies against the U.S.S.R. became transplanted and actualized in Korea.

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<sup>14</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, Vol. VIII, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Joint Chief of Staff, 1946. 1. 23

<sup>15</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Corps Staff Journal, "Corps Staff Conference," 1945. 12. 31.

<sup>16</sup> A classic example of this manipulation can be seen in the falsified content of the report on the so-called "Johnston-Pak Hŏn Yŏng press conference" that broke in mid-January. See CHUNG Yong Wook, op. cit., pp. 171-176.

<sup>17</sup> "History of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea," 'Part II. Korean Politics: The First Year, Chapter II,' pp. 9-10.

Most Koreans during this period also shared the view that the left-right distinction was an expression of foreign influence. Even after separate regimes were established in North and South Korea, one nationalist argued, “Now that separate North and South Korean regimes have been established, neither peaceful compromise nor military resolutions is possible any longer. What we need is a third way, a purely national action uncorrupted by foreign elements. In other words, foreign influence has shaped the opposition between the left and right. Very few Koreans would try to maintain this opposition to the end.”<sup>18</sup>

In the aftermath of the trusteeship imbroglio, North Korea also denounced the leaders of anti-trusteeship movement as anti-communist and undemocratic fascists, and further claimed that they were the henchmen of American imperialism. One propagandist pamphlet produced by North Koreans in the spring of 1946 decried that Kim Koo and Syngman Rhee were “traitors to the nation, both historically and practically. They were born of the marriage between traditional feudal and pro-Japanese elements, and they are now the henchmen of foreign fascism.”<sup>19</sup> In consideration of the contemporary political context, the pamphlet did not explicitly name the “fascist imperialist” power, but there is little doubt that the U.S. was the country implied. The labels used by North Korean propaganda such as “anti-communist, American henchmen” mirror the approach taken by the anti-trusteeship camp in South Korea. Both South Korean attack on communism and North Korean attack on anti-communism thus sought to present the leaders of opposing ideology as the henchmen of foreign powers. To put it in a different way, the communist-nationalist clash over the trusteeship debate proceeded in a manner that directly reflected the interests of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. This reveals the strong centrifugal force that the two superpowers commanded, and by extension, the important role played by international political factors in the formation of anti-communism in post-liberation Korea. Neither the standards used to assess the political field in pre- and post-liberation Korea, nor the left-right classification arose organically from within Korean society and history, but imposed from the outside.

Once the left-right conflict was proposed as the basic paradigm for understanding Korean politics, it was imposed violently on Korean society and culture as well. We have already seen how General Hodge defined the objective of American occupation as the creation of a bulwark against the Soviet Union. And when, through the controversy over trusteeship in early 1946, the central political opposition in Korea became rewritten in terms of the left-right conflict from that between nationalist and collaborator forces in the construction of the new state, the U.S. military government was able to simplify the goal of American occupation and insert itself into the schema, gaining the power to interpret the political field ideologically and to suppress the opponents of the U.S. military government as leftists in the process. Once established by the military government, the equation “left is the same as red” continued to spread outward, becoming more and more encompassing. From spring of 1946 when the military government began to persecute leftists in earnest, all actions

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<sup>18</sup> Yu Rim, “Keep the Line of Self-Reliance,” *Dae-jo*, 1948. 12

<sup>19</sup> RG 242 National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, Captured Korean Documents, SA 2013, “True Character of Fascist,” 1946, p.12.

opposed to the military government was seen as leftist and foreign (the Soviet Union) agitations.<sup>20</sup> This perspective was applied to mass movements as well.

The U.S. military government began the occupation of South Korea with a sense of wariness against the Soviet Union and of crisis regarding the domestic political situation in Korea, but managed to polarize the Korean political field into the left and the right over the trusteeship controversy. The left was equated with “Korean Communists” at this time, but there was not yet a consciousness that North and South Korean communists could be grasped separately: North Korean communists were part of a larger entity called Korean communists, and North Korea was simply a territory under their control. If anything, US military government saw the Interim People’s Committee which was established in North Korea in February of 1946 as the organizational foundation upon which administrations of North and South Korea might be combined, and even reported that the U.S. military government in the south and the Interim People’s Committee in the north could be brought together to create an administrative entity to oversee the entire peninsula.<sup>21</sup> Given the contemporary political context and the position of the U.S. military government, it was neither possible nor necessary to separate out the North Korean political entity and understand it in distinct terms.

In the context of relations between both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and North and South Korea at the time, the U.S. military government was not in a position to publicly argue the puppet theory. Throughout its occupation, the military government favored white over black propaganda, devoting its energy to praising American way of life and American democracy, as well as cultivating fantasies about America in Korean minds. Emphasizing the superiority of Western liberal democracy, white propaganda presented communism as alternative political and ideological system rather than an object to be annihilated. This was the basic tone of the U.S. propaganda before the intensification of the Cold War. “North Korea” began to be grasped as an autonomous political entity only when the possibility of establishing a provisional democratic government in Korea through the joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. committee faded away, to be replaced by the likely reality of separate regimes in North and South Korea.

Before analyzing the emergence of “North Korea,” we should dwell just a bit on how “Korea experts” assessed American policy on Korea in the immediate post-liberation period and the U.S. military government’s handling of the occupation. Owing to the staunch anti-communism that prevailed in the higher ranks of the U.S. military government, the policies the military government pursued were heavily anti-communist throughout the occupation, but there were some dissenting opinions. Liberal officials within the military government, for example, took issue with the support the U.S. lent to Korean reactionaries. Hodge’s name for them was “pinkos.” There were critics outside the military government as well. In their accounts of American policy toward Korea and their histories of the U.S. military

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<sup>20</sup> “Statement of Outside Influences upon the Recent Unrest and Civil Disturbances in South Korea,” by USAFIK CIC, 1946. 11. 14; “Anti-American and Anti-MG Activities of Democratic People’s Front,” by USAFIK CIC, 1947. 6. 20; “Soviet-Communist-Inspired Espionage in South Korea,” Hqs. XXIV Corps, Office of the Commanding General, date unknown.

<sup>21</sup> NA II, RG 554 Records of the U.S. Army Field Commands, 1940-1952, Entry 11071, U.S. Army Forces in Korea File and Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge Official File, 1944-1948, Box 123, “Tfgcg 305 Gen. Hodge to Gen. MacArthur,” 1946. 2. 23.

government in Korea, we can glimpse perspectives that deviate considerably from the official line.

Among the critics within the American military government were liberal officials such as Arthur C. Bunce, Richard Robinson, and Stuart Meacham who tried to push the occupation policy in the direction of liberal reform. Like their superiors in the military government and in Washington, these men saw North Korea and leftists in South Korea as Soviet lackeys, but felt that the middle-of-the-roaders within South Korea were “genuine democrats” through whom specific reform policies must be pursued and mass support of Koreans secured. Richard Robinson, the military historian who contributed the chapter on Korean politics in the “History of U.S. Armed Forces in Korea,” later wrote a manuscript called “Betrayal of a Nation,” in which he reassessed the history of American occupation in a less than favorable light.

Thus we can see that many contemporary “Korea experts” were highly critical of policies the U.S. pursued in Korea. Among these experts were many who began studying Korea before liberation. In varying degrees, articles on Korean situation carried by journals like *Far Eastern Quarterly*, *Far Eastern Survey*, and *Pacific Affairs*, observed that the extreme rightist tendencies of high ranking individuals in the U.S. military government, combined with American support for the far right among Korean politicians, had the overall effect of tightening American policy to such a degree that the occupation ultimately resulted in a failure. As can be seen in the comment that “Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee are Francos of the Far East,” denunciation of American policy toward Korea participated in the critique of the larger pattern that was emerging at the end of the World War II, namely, American support for dictatorial regimes in newly liberated areas around the world. In short, these were liberal critiques of American foreign policy. The atmosphere of McCarthyism in the early 1950s, however, dealt a heavy blow to the liberal position. As a result, American policy toward Korea as well as American perceptions of Korea came to be shaped mostly by academics with links to the military and the government, and individuals who had been directly involved in post-liberation policymaking and occupation planning in Korea.

## **2. “North Korea” as a Satellite State of USSR, 1948-50**

### **1) Local Background for the Emergence of “North Korea”**

With the establishment of a separate regime in South Korea, Korea policy experts in American government and military began to treat North Korea as a separate political and economic entity. Division of Korea took concrete shape through a series of events starting in the fall of 1947: the breakdown of US-USSR Joint Commission, the transfer of Korean question to the UN, Soviet opposition to the UN transfer and proposal of simultaneous withdrawal of both US and USSR troops from the Korean peninsula, the separate election held south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and finally the establishment of the separate governments of the Republic of Korea in the south and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the north. Even though the division of Korea is commonly seen as the result of Truman Doctrine applied to the Korean situation, historical and local factors specific to Korea influenced the decisions of American policymakers in important ways. The key event that led the military

government to conclude that US political objectives could not be accomplished through the Joint Commission was the American delegation's visit to P'yŏngyang and the meeting between General Brown, the head of the delegation, and Cho Man Sik.

While the Joint Commission was in session in 1947, the American delegation visited P'yŏngyang in late June and early July for a round of negotiations with North Korean political parties and organizations. The visit was intended to provide US with a grasp on North Korean reality. The delegation put together a schedule of interviews with a range of rightist and religious, especially Christian, leaders. US hoped that the visit would reveal that latent opposition to the "Soviet regime" was broad in North Korea, which would serve as the basis for attacking Soviet effort to exclude South Korean rightist organizations from being consulted in the Joint Commission negotiations.<sup>22</sup>

To that end, General Brown expressed to the Russians a strong desire to talk to Cho Man Sik and was able to arrange a meeting with him on July 1. A protestant minister, Cho Man Sik was a nationalist leader who commanded the largest influence in P'yŏngyang area since the colonial times. Following the liberation, Cho emerged as a central figure in North Korean politics, assuming the leadership of Chosŏn Democratic Party which he helped to organize. Chosŏn Democratic Party was a conservative party composed of entrepreneurs, landowners and intellectuals, most of whom were Christians. At first, the Soviet forces treated Cho Man Sik with respect and tried to reconstitute the North Korean political field around him. However, when the news of the Moscow Agreement reached Korea in late 1945 and Cho initiated a fervent anti-trusteeship movement, the Soviet forces placed him under house arrest in a hotel, effectively excluding from the North Korean political field from early 1946 on.

At the American delegation's meeting with Cho Man Sik, Brown asked the latter's opinion on trusteehip. Cho's response was unexpected: even though he believed that the ideal scenario would be unilateral US trusteehip, he would accept bilateral US-USSR trusteehip if it could not be avoided. At this talk, Cho expressed strong wish to move to South Korea and resume his political activities.<sup>23</sup> When Brown asked for Cho's views on the general situation in North and South Korea and specific political leaders in North Korea, Cho replied that it was a shame that Kim Koo and Syngman Rhee did not support the American delegation for the success of the Joint Commission. In late May, Cho had already sent a secret missive to Hodge to express his concern that Syngman Rhee's anti-trusteeship activities may hinder the Joint Commission's goals.<sup>24</sup> In addition, Cho stressed the point that land reform would have to be carried out in South Korea before any election is held or interim government established.

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<sup>22</sup> RG 43 Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Records of the American Delegation, U.S.-U.S.S.R. Joint Commission on Korea, and Records Relating to the United Nations Temporary Commission of Korea (UNTCOK), M1243, Roll No. 6, "Memorandum for Albert E. Brown," by Clyde B. Sargent, 1947. 7. 2.

<sup>23</sup> M1243, Roll. No. 6, "Memorandum for General Hodge," by Albert E. Brown, 1947. 7. 2.

<sup>24</sup> M1243, Roll. No. 6, "Memorandum for General Hodge," by Lee Myo Muk, 1947. 5. 27

It is surprising that Cho Man Sik, known until now as a firm opponent to trusteeship, expressed his willingness to accept it. What elicited such a response from Cho was the concern that the Joint Commission may fail to reach a compromise, and that the anti-trusteeship activities of Kim Koo and Syngman Rhee were jeopardizing the success of the Joint Commission. By July of 1947, Cho had changed his position on trusteeship, probably realizing that an insistence on anti-trusteeship would inevitably lead to the division of Korea. Moreover, the fact that Cho pointed out the necessity of carrying out land reform before the execution of trusteeship probably made the American military government look back a particular weakness in their rule. In North Korea, sweeping land reforms had been carried out in spring of 1946, a fact that both North and South Korean left-wing circle sought to advertise widely to Korean masses. In South Korea, by contrast, the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly was still wrestling over the land reform proposal. Even as the second Joint Commission talks were under way, it was far from clear how land reforms would be carried out in South Korea, if at all.

The purpose of American delegation's interview with Cho Man Sik was to verify that political opposition was indeed strong in North Korea; US could then argue for the participation of anti-trusteeship organizations in the negotiations and underscore the principle of "freedom of expression." Cho's unexpected response frustrated these goals. Upon the delegation's return from P'yongyang, US military government ordered each member of the delegation to submit a comprehensive report regarding what they saw and impressions they had received. These reports all pointed out that the People's Committee was already well established in North Korea and that the overall political administration was thorough.<sup>25</sup> In short, the visit to P'yongyang and the meeting with Cho Man Sik, rather than strengthening American position in the Joint Commission, had the opposite effect of identifying its weaknesses. Ultimately, the visit caused US to conclude that it would be difficult to accomplish American objectives through the Joint Commission.

Once US came to the conclusion that negotiations with USSR through the Joint Commission would be impossible, it sought to approach the Korean situation under the aegis of the UN. It was in October of 1947 that the dissolution of Joint Commission was formally announced, but as early as August of 1947, US had been making preparations to transfer the Korean question to the UN. The Wedemeyer Mission to Korea in late August played an important role in making final adjustments to this policy change. The discussions General Wedemeyer and his staff carried out with the military government authorities in Korea clearly reveal how American officials understood the political situation in Korea and what they saw as the fitting course of action for the US.

The Wedemeyer Mission was formed in summer of 1947 for the purpose of making policy recommendations to the President after investigating political situations in China and

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<sup>25</sup> M1243, Roll. No. 6, "Pyongyang Trip - American Delegation, June ~ July, 1947". It is generally acknowledged that coming into the latter half period of 1947 North Korean economy overcome the fluctuating situation and was stabilized. For an example, the currency reform in December 1947 can be cited. The work of Pang Sun Joo, "Analysis of North Korean Economy Statistics in 1946," *Asian Culture* No. 8, Institute for Asian Studies, Hallim University, which analyzed the economic changes happened in North Korea after the Liberation through various economic characteristics, could be consulted.

Korea firsthand and consulting the opinions of American officials in Asia.<sup>26</sup> US foreign policy in respect to China was in difficult straits. As a civil war between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party intensified in China following the end of the Pacific War, the US dispatched George Marshall in late December of 1945 to negotiate a compromise between the two groups. Marshall stayed in China for almost a year but failed to achieve much success in mediation. Marshall returned to the States to assume the post of the Secretary of State in January 7, 1947, and two days later, US announced that it will cease its attempts to mediate peace between the Nationalists and Communists in China. The Nationalist Chinese Forces experienced defeat in the ensuing hostilities and popular support for the Nationalist Party dwindled when the Party's internal corruption and general impotence became publicized. US government and military watched these developments in China with great concern. US military, in particular, maintained that military and economic aid to the Nationalist Party must be increased and the US must step in before the situation becomes even more exacerbated in China. The Department of State, on the other hand, argued that the Nationalist Party must make reforms prior to any increase in US support. The major newspapers shared the view that aid to Chiang Kai-Shek should not be increased before the Nationalist government embarks on a program of reform.<sup>27</sup>

By July of 1947, the situation in China had come to such a point that the US could no longer continue to pursue the policy of non-involvement. US government carefully weighed how much to aid to give and when to get involved, keeping a close eye on both the climate in the Congress and trends in media. The Department of State was exceedingly hesitant to get fully involved in the Chinese civil war. It wanted to achieve, through limited aid, the triple goals of stabilization of Chinese politics, reform of the Nationalist Party, and restoration of the Nationalist military.

Meanwhile in Korea, the Joint Commission had come to an impasse over the issue of which Korean organizations would take part in consultations. By early July, both the State Department and negotiators in Korea deemed it meaningless to continue the talks. Consequently, Washington felt the need to consult with the American military government in Korea to make practical provisions in the event of Joint Commission's failure. The Wedemeyer Mission was formed in this context. During its visit to Korea, the Mission assessed American policy for Korea and evaluated the military government's overall performance by conducting extended sessions with officials in the military government. In addition, the Mission examined practical measures that would aid the US in accomplishing its objectives in Korea. The Mission also interviewed Koreans, through which they were able to observe how Koreans saw American occupation and responded to the evolution of American policy.

By the time Wedemeyer was drafting a report on his investigative activities in Korea, the US government had already accepted the breakdown of the Joint Commission and was making preparations to involve the UN. One cannot claim, therefore, that the Wedemeyer

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<sup>26</sup> Regarding the activities of the Wedemeyer mission in China, William Stueck, *The Wedemeyer Mission: American Politics and Foreign Policy During the Cold War* (The University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1984) could be consulted. And the activities in Korea, CHUNG Yong Wook, op. cit., Chapter 9 could be consulted.

<sup>27</sup> William Stueck, *Ibid.* pp. 8-9, 18-19.

Mission spearheaded the shift in American policy in Korea. The Mission, however, did play an important role at a critical juncture when concrete measures had to be adopted in Korea in preparation for the overall policy change. In his discussions with the military government personnel, Wedemeyer stressed the following: the establishment of a separate regime in South Korea through a general election, the establishment of a firm anti-communist position centered on Syngman Rhee, and active economic and military aid to be rendered to the new regime thus established.

In examining these measures agreed upon by the Wedemeyer Mission and the American military government in South Korea, we must note not only their content but also the perceptions that undergird them. Hodge shows clearly what the military government predicted would happen once the Korea situation was placed under the UN's jurisdiction.

The left will oppose the election and the UN will establish a separate regime in South Korea. Syngman Rhee and his supporters will take the majority in the National Assembly. The resulting government will be one that not only the Soviets but we ourselves would have to call reactionary and fascist, a regime with which it would be very difficult to deal, though not impossible. It will then take a war to reunify North and South Korea.<sup>28</sup>

On the whole, those who shaped American policy for Korea believed that the UN involvement would result in the establishment of separate governments in North and South Korea. They also knew that once this occurs, Koreans would agitate passionately for reunification, and that this could bring about a military confrontation. The Wedemeyer Mission's proposing policy was premised on the prediction that political tensions within Korea would eventually lead to military confrontations between North and South Korea. Not only did American officials begin to see North Korea as an autonomous political and military entity at this juncture, but they also forecasted from the very start that North-South Korean relations would devolve into one requiring a military resolution in the future.

## **2) The Policy of Containment—Words and Views**

While policymakers relating to Korea were busy preparing for a military confrontation that they saw would inevitably result from the UN involvement, foreign policy planners and intelligence analysts in Washington D.C. were drafting a justification of American policy in Korea. Overlooking Korea's local and historical background, the justification was couched entirely in the language of containment policy. A variety of reports published by the CIA and the State Department reveal the American logic behind the establishment of a separate South Korean government and the words in which this logic was rationalized.

We can look, for example, at a report called "Implementation of Soviet Objectives in Korea," prepared by CIA's Office of Research and Estimate in November of 1947. The paper was based on two initial conclusions: one, USSR will not accept the American proposal to establish Korean government by holding an election under the supervision of the UN Temporary Commission; two, US insistence on the UN involvement would lead the Russians to withdraw their forces unilaterally from North Korea. The report then analyzed

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<sup>28</sup> Telegram to George Marshall, the Secretary of State Department, sent by Gen. Hodge, 1947. 11. 21.

the impact such withdrawal would have on the Korean political situation and specific measures that the US must take in response. This paper was prepared in coordination with the intelligence organizations of the Department of State, Army, Navy and Air Force.<sup>29</sup>

The paper projected that if the US also withdraws its forces following the Soviet withdrawal, North Korea would attempt a North-South “coalition.” In the event that such coalition proves impossible, a military invasion would ensue. In South Korea, the Syngman Rhee group would embark on a dictatorial regime and would not share their power with other groups on the right. As a consequence, the Syngman Rhee group would make all moderates join themselves with left-wing circle; since the rightist youth organizations, police force, and constabulary in South Korea would not be able to withstand the North Korean attack by themselves, the withdrawal of the US forces meant that North Korea effectively would rule over the entire peninsula. The report provides detailed estimations of when and how the Soviet Union would withdraw its forces and what constraints such a development would place on American action. Rather than evaluate these projections, it would be useful to focus instead on the way the report justifies such an understanding of the Korean political situation. All analyses in the report start out from the premise that “Soviet tactics in Korea have clearly demonstrated that the USSR is intent on securing all of Korea as a satellite. In pursuing this policy, the USSR has, since V-J Day, adhered to a definite program of infiltration, consolidation, and control.” The paper thus claims that all the events which transpired on the Korean peninsula since its liberation from the Japanese colonial rule proceeded according to the “Soviet master plan for Korea,” and also claims that the projected withdrawal of the Soviet forces is simply an aspect of this plan. If post-liberation Korean politics is simplified as the unfolding of the Soviet “plan,” then North Korea can be acknowledged as an actually existing political entity only insofar as it is represented as a Soviet satellite. All documents produced by the US government and military thereafter referred to North Korea as a Soviet satellite and the North Korean government as a puppet regime controlled entirely by the Russians. This image became fixed in official foreign policy discourse as well: *Soviet Affairs*, first published in December of 1948 by the Department of State Division of Research for Europe, used the term “North Korean puppet regime” in its pages.<sup>30</sup>

To sum up, then, the urgent foreign policy task for the US government following the declaration of the Truman Doctrine was first to formulate the American position and strategy objectives vis-à-vis both the USSR and those regions under its influence, and second, to develop a logic that would rationalize and further publicize these actions. The process by which the actual political entity called “North Korea” became transformed into a Soviet “satellite” in the early Cold War climate of Washington represents an exemplary case of how the US materialized its anti-Soviet stance at the global level. In Korea, the process shifted the target of American policy of containment from an internal rival, called “Korean communists,” to an external enemy named “North Korea.”

American military government’s anti-revolutionary rule in post-liberation South Korea and Washington’s policy of containment in respect to the USSR were converged into

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<sup>29</sup> CIA, ORE 62 “Implementation of Soviet Objectives in Korea,” 1947. 11. 18.

<sup>30</sup> OIR Report No. 4800.1, *Soviet Affairs*, December 1948, published by Division of Research for Europe, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State.

one in 1947. From a bottom-up perspective, North Korea was a puppet regime; from a top-down perspective, North Korea was a satellite of the evil Soviet empire. The marriage between these perceptions produced the particular image of North Korea which predominated in the ranks of US government and military from then on. In the early days of the Cold War, there was still a great deal of ambiguity in how US distinguished North and South Korea. Prior to the establishment of separate regimes, the US saw North Korea not as a unified political or national entity but as one force among many competing in the struggle for power over the Korean peninsula. Even after the separate regimes were installed, the trajectory that the North-South conflict would take was understood in terms of immanent factors: the conflict would be kindled by agitations and political unrest within South Korea, the North would then infiltrate, and a civil war would ensue.

However, as the concept of containment and the Cold War worldview began to shape American foreign policy in East Asia, American perceptions of Korea underwent reinterpretation. American geopolitical interest in the Korean peninsula and Korea's place within the overall American foreign policy for East Asia determined American perceptions of North Korea, which in turn unfolded in the context of the importation and consolidation of Cold War perspectives. The pair of equations—the USSR as an evil empire and North Korea as a Soviet satellite—congealed into fixed formulas as the US strengthened its aggressive stance toward the USSR following the declaration of containment policy. The ferocious wind of McCarthyism was already sweeping across American society, and in Korea, red purge was under way across the entire society, through such measures as the National Security Law and organizations like the Enlightened Alliance for Coercive Persuasion. It was precisely through the process of perceiving and then representing North Korea as a separate entity that the US had effectuated the establishment of separate regimes and the policy of division in Korea.

### 3. Theorization and Expansion of the “Puppet Regime” Hypothesis

#### 1) American psychological warfare against North Korea

The Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, and amid the mayhem that ensued, demonization of North Korea intensified enormously. As a terrible war raged on, the theory that North Korea a puppet of the evil Soviet empire sprouted and grew.



Leaflet 1. A South Korean military leaflet distributed prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. Stalin has two horns while the “red devil” sports a single horn. Stalin’s face is sketched in the manner of “sheep’s head, dog’s flesh.” The three Koreans are presented through a dramatic contrast: the red devil has his arms raised toward Stalin, in a state of obvious exultation, as the North Korean soldier wastes away, while the South Korean soldier remains on watch, his eyes bright with alertness.

Psychological warfare had already been going on for some time when the war broke out; South Korea had focused on demonizing Korean Workers Party and its leaders as Soviet henchmen. The South Korean leaflet above, for example, depicts North Korean communist, possibly Kim Il-sung or Korean Workers’ Party leader—as the devil with a single horn. Stalin has two horns and is Janus-faced, or depicted in the manner of “sheep’s head, dog’s flesh”—a Chinese proverb referring to a good-for-nothing with grand exterior. The leaflet thus makes use of a classical Chinese proverb to belittle Stalin and Korean communists. For the most part, South Korean wartime leaflets urged North Korean soldiers to rebel or withdraw from the army. Pictures and texts contained in these leaflets either attempted political-ideological persuasion or sought to appeal to the individual soldier’s desire for personal safety and interest. The most frequently employed strategy in political-ideological leaflets was to attack Kim Il-sung as Soviet puppet and Korean Workers’ Party as

treacherous and tyrannical. The leaflet reproduced in Leaflet #1 integrates all of these themes. Noteworthy is the fact that Stalin and Kim Il-sung are depicted not as human beings but as horned devils. The leaflet shows demonization of communists in a remarkably literal manner. North Korean leaflets, on the other hand, rarely depict South Korean leaders or Americans as inhuman, preferring instead to present them as repulsive or weirdly distorted. The strategy may reflect communists' worldview that in order to heighten feeling of hostility in the viewer, these "traitors to the nation" or "enemies of the people" must preserve their essential human aspect.

In their leaflets targeting North Korean and Chinese soldiers and North Korean civilians, Americans also used two different approaches: political-ideological propaganda, and the appeal to selfish interests of individual soldiers or civilians. The former category was further divided into two groups depending on the message contained in the leaflet. Leaflets were classified according to the names of characters taken from the Shakespearean tragedy of *Othello* as either Iago or Desdemona.<sup>31</sup> Operation Desdemona disseminated such messages as "The UN forces are fighting for a just cause," and "The UN forces do not want to harm you". In contrast, central messages of Iago leaflets were: "Do not trust communists, your superiors, and what they say about the war objective," and "You are being used."<sup>32</sup> If Desdemona proclaimed the justified nature of the UN's involvement, Iago launched political-ideological attack on North Korea's war objectives, seeking thereby to foster fragmentation within the enemy camp. Desdemona was white propaganda, Iago black.

Of all leaflets in Korean that American military dropped on the frontlines from September 1950 and November 1951, Iago was the largest in number at 28.7%, while Desdemona comprised 7.8%. Of leaflets in Chinese, Iago was also the highest at 28.05% and Desdemona represented 11.6%. In the rear areas, however, Desdemona outnumbered Iago by comprising 34.8% of the total leaflets to Iago's 28.9%.<sup>33</sup>

On the frontlines, leaflets containing political propaganda composed only 40% and the other 60% sought to appeal to selfish interests of the soldiers. This was true for leaflets in both Korean and Chinese. The numbers were reversed in the rear areas, with leaflets containing political propaganda representing 60% of the total. Iago leaflets, however, comprised approximately 30% of both frontline and rear area leaflets. We can thus conclude that black propaganda was strategy the American military relied on the most in these leaflets. As we saw earlier, Operation Iago focused on attacking Communist Party as tyrannical, the North Korean regime as Kremlin's puppet, Kim Il-sung as a fake impostor. The "puppet regime" theory, in particular, reveals in an exemplary fashion the manufacturing of Cold War "enemy" on the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>31</sup> ORO-T-21(FEC) "FEC Psychological Warfare Operations: Leaflets," 1952. 8. 20, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-97.



Leaflet 2. Kim Il-sung insists on war even though those around him recommend peace. The words “Fake Kim Il-sung” are written on his chest, and his reflection in the mirror is faceless.

The below is the text contained in a leaflet on the theme of “fake Kim Il-sung,” a recurrent motif in the puppet regime theory.

This man has deceived Korean people in a countless number of ways, but the most pernicious of these deceptions has been his usurpation of the identity of the great Korean hero, General Kim Il-sung. He is not Kim Il-sung at all. The real Kim Il-sung was born in 1885 and died fifteen years ago in Manchuria. The fake Kim Il-sung, whose real name is Kim Sŏngju wasn't even born until 1910. He is a communist that the Soviets dispatched to Korea in 1945. By pretending to be Kim Il-sung, this fake poser tried to gather the trust of Korean people. He was successful for a time but the truth has finally come to light. The real Kim Il-sung was a great military leader who fought the enemies of Korea. Kim Sŏngju, on the other hand, causes Koreans to kill fellow Koreans. With his personal greed for power, combined with his overall impotence, this man has turned Korea into a bleak battlefield. Is there any doubt that this man is the real enemy of the Korean people?<sup>34</sup>

Let us compare the above with information on Kim Il-sung contained in the “Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army,” published on October 15, 1950 by the intelligence division of the U.S. Army Far East Command.

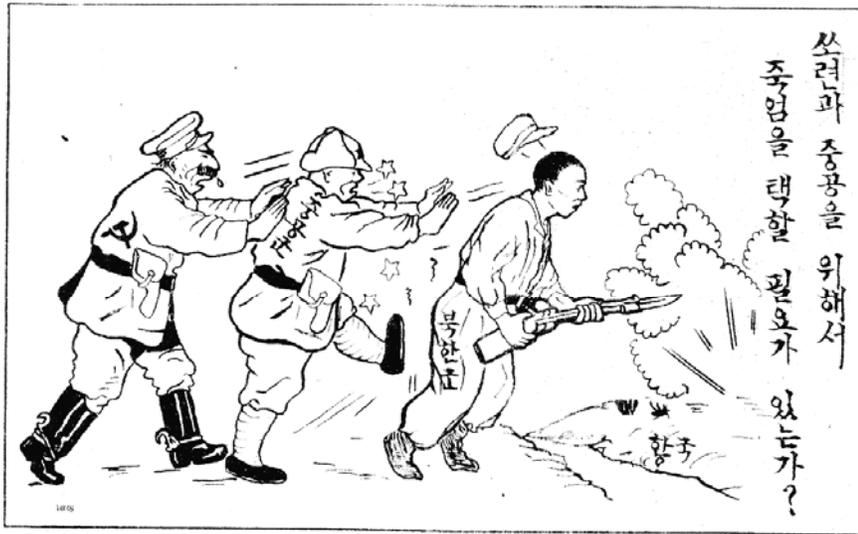
<sup>34</sup> Pang Sun Joo (comp.), *Leaflets during the Korean War*, (Asian Studies Institute, Hallim University, 2000), p. 212.

Kim Il-sung: Born 1911 in Daedong County, South P'yŏngan Province. Child name, Kim Sŏngju. Joined anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in Manchuria in 1930. For ten years thereafter fought in the guerrilla army led by the real Kim Il-sung, under the pseudonym of Kim Yŏnghwan. The highest rank held in the period between 1930 and 1940 was that of the secretary in the Communist Party of Northeastern Manchuria. In 1941, when the guerrilla army entered the USSR, the real Kim Il-sung, aged somewhere between 55 to 60, died from long-time exposure to hardships. The present Kim Il-sung, who was his nephew, adopted the name of Kim Il-sung, either on his own volition or following the dying wishes of the real Kim Il-sung... Kim entered a Soviet military academy in Havarovsk, and obtained the rank of captain in the Soviet military.<sup>35</sup>

This information is much more detailed than that in the leaflet, and appears for that reason to be factual. In light of recent studies on Kim Il-sung, however, we can now see how erroneous and patently false many of its claims are. The most direct way to prove that Kim Il-sung is an impostor is, of course, to establish the identity of the real Kim Il-sung beyond a reasonable doubt. But descriptions of the supposedly real Kim Il-sung found in the above two documents are not only contradictory to each other, but groundless as well: the “real Kim Il-sung” is a fabricated personage in actuality. A certain degree of maneuvering might be expected in the leaflet—it is, after all, an example of black propaganda—but it is curious that the information compiled by the U.S. Army on the highest ranked individual in the North Korean Army is based on a specious theory of “fake Kim Il-sung.” This appears all the more strange when we consider that U.S. Army Far East Command had the highest capacity not only to collect intelligence but to analyze it. Since the Command also had at its disposal all the information collected by the Japanese military and police over the colonial period, it would not have been difficult to verify information regarding Kim Il-sung. The fact that the Far East Command still retained such groundless report in its comprehensive intelligence report casts doubt on the reliability of the entire report. At the same time, it raises the possibility that the compilers of the report felt the need to preserve and elaborate the myth of Kim Il-sung the impostor. The report, if it is to be taken at face value, implies that what the UN forces risked their lives to fight during the Korean War was a mere puppet and an impostor.

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<sup>35</sup> NA II, RG 554 US Army Far East Command, G-2 Theater Intelligence Division, Operation Branch “Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army,” 1950. 10. 15. “Order of Battle” refers to a survey intended to find out the origin and strength of enemy units positioned along the frontline. The titles of the units, number of forces, chain of command, units, equipments, the history of both the units and the commanders are all included.



Leaflet 3. American leaflet depicting China and Korea as puppets controlled by the Soviets.

The “fake Kim Il-sung” hypothesis, which is also the definitive form taken by the “puppet regime” theory, first made its way into U.S. military documents after the trusteeship imbroglio of 1946 when the U.S. military government began to map Korean political terrain in terms of elements for and against the trusteeship.<sup>36</sup> Recalling the way American and British policy documents *before* liberation described Kim Il-sung as the leader of one of the most dynamic forces in Korean independence movement, we can see how fundamentally altered American perception of Kim Il-sung became in just a few years. The change in perception owed much to the American military command.

A highly significant aspect of the puppet regime theory is the occasion for its emergence. After the trusteeship debate in late 1945 and early 1946, the U.S. classified various political forces in Korea in terms of its own interests; it was in this context that the view “communist is the same as Soviet puppet” first emerged. The same was true in China. Only after the communization of China did the U.S. begin to see China as a Soviet puppet. As late as the immediate post-WWII period, George Marshall was dispatched to China to negotiate a compromise between Nationalist Party and Communist Party. When the attempt failed and the People’s Republic of China was founded in the mainland, the U.S. began to proclaim that China is a puppet of the Soviet Union. The U.S. formally declared China as a hostile enemy after the latter’s entry into the Korean War, and in May of 1951, the Secretary of State Dean Rusk proclaimed that the People’s Republic of China was “Manchukuo(puppet regime) of the Slavs.” Fierce battles were then being fought in what is now the Korean DMZ;

<sup>36</sup> “Tfgcg 305 Gen. Hodge to Gen. MacArthur,” 1946. 2. 23.

in the international political arena, the U.S. was lobbying the UN to impose economic sanctions on China.<sup>37</sup>

The image of the “enemy” that these leaflets contained was thus anything but naïve constructions. In Korea, the puppet theory was first propounded after the trusteeship controversy by that “precocious warrior of the Cold War,” General Hodge. In relation to China, the Secretary of State Dean Rusk voiced the same theory after China became formally established as the enemy. The puppet theory was, first and foremost, a product of the Cold War perspective on the world and peoples. At the same time, it was an integration of American interests in Asia as well as America’s policy attitudes toward North Korea and China. Finally, the theory was a projection of perceptions harbored by American leaders. Once the image of the puppet was produced, it gained solidity through repeated reproductions, and came to function as ideology through systematic theorizations. Twenty years had to pass before the normalization of U.S.-China relations dissipated the view that the Chinese were Kremlin’s puppet. In North Korea’s case, the puppet theory had even longer life span; its elimination had to await the collapse of the supposed puppeteer itself, the Soviet Union.

## 2) Perceptions of “North Korea” and methodological considerations

After the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. government and military began to examine North Korean society in earnest as a Cold War “enemy.” The Korean War provided the first opportunity for American scholars to come into direct contact with a communist society. The need to better understand the enemy led the U.S. government to mobilize a large number of social scientists. Their research was funded and otherwise aided by Operations Research Office of Johns Hopkins University (ORO), Human Resources Research Institute of the US Air Force (HRRI), Human Relations Research Office of George Washington University (HumRRO), and the Rand Corporation among others.

In spring of 1951, the U.S. Office of Information Research published *North Korea: A Case Study of a Soviet Satellite*, the comprehensive American study of North Korea.<sup>38</sup> In order to compile this study, the State Department sent to Korea an investigative committee composed of bureaucrats and academics. The committee’s attempt to conduct research in North Korea was mostly unfruitful due to rapid shifts in the tides of war, but it did succeed in performing three months of field work and interviews starting on October 28, 1950. The investigative committee relied on interviews with Koreans residing in P’yŏngyang and other areas, information obtained from questioning prisoners of war, North Korean documents seized by the U.S. forces, and various documents relating to North Korea in the possession of the State Department. This report analyzed changes in North Korean society from the period immediately following the liberation to the outbreak of war by examining a wide range of issues. Even from today’s perspective, the report is rich in the kinds of data from which researchers can forge a comprehensive understanding of post-liberation North Korean society. The committee, however, approached the material from the premise that North Korea was a satellite state and that its regime was transplanted from the outside. This premise constrained

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<sup>37</sup> *Department of State Bulletin*, No. 24, 1951. 5. 28, pp. 846~848

<sup>38</sup> Office Intelligence and Research, Report No. 5600, “North Korea: A Case Study of a Soviet Satellite,” 1951. 5. 20.

the overall narrative direction and analytic perspective offered in the report. Subscribing to the fake Kim Il-sung hypothesis as well, the report helped to theorize the puppet regime in an academically systematic way.

In approaching North Korean society, American social scientists applied wholesale the methodology that they used when studying the Soviet society, i.e., Sovietology. In these studies communism was always described as a force that demolishes “order” and “tradition.” Communist institutions destroyed stable social structures and subjected citizens to new ones of foreign origin. Underlying such a view was the fundamental assumption that U.S.S.R., China and North Korea were totalitarian societies in the manner of Nazi Germany under Hitler, pathological societies whose members are beyond ideological enlightenment or political persuasion. They could only be cured of their pathology or converted from their fanaticism.<sup>39</sup> According to the Cold War perspective of the world, North Korean and Chinese leaders were merely puppets of their Soviet suzerain, and individuals in these societies could respond only passively and follow the commands of their respective communist dictator. The image of the puppet contained in American leaflets was the logical result of such projections of Cold War perspective on the world and peoples.

Nor was it by chance that American military leaflets came to emphasize the desire for personal profit. In conducting psychological warfare, the U.S. military enlisted the expertise of social scientists, especially psychologists, communications theorists, and behavioral scientists. The Korean War provided the latter with the first comprehensive opportunity to test out their theories of behaviorism in real life. Groups of behavior scientists were sent to the frontlines, ceasefire negotiations, and ceasefire camps in order to come up with models of human behavior that could be used to aid the war effort.<sup>40</sup> These scholars disagreed with psychological warfare staff in the Far East Command. While the latter argued that political-ideological content must be the mainspring of the propaganda campaign, behavior scientists claimed that it was much more effective on battlefields to appeal to the innate individual desire for security and personal profit rather than highlight political tenets or ideology.

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that the U.S. officers who were in charge of POW education at the UN forces' POW camp at the Gō-jae island considered the rate of conversion to Christianity as a success rate in POW education.

<sup>40</sup> Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy* (Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 71.



Leaflet 4. Political and ideological leaflets aggressively utilized nationalist sentiments as well. One interesting detail is that Tangun in this leaflet has the physical aspect of a Western man, reminiscent of Zeus or Jesus. Considering the head-to-body ratio of all the characters depicted, one can surmise that the models were Westerners, perhaps the artist as well. The South Korean soldier and North Korean soldier are shaking hands. The slogan at the bottom reads, “Same Ancestor, Same Blood-line, Same Nation!”

This debate explains why leaflets emphasizing personal safety and interest were largely produced and also sheds light on the epistemological and methodological framework dominant in American studies on North Korea, as well as on prisoners of war and psychological warfare. In large part, American psychological warfare during the Korean War was built upon the inheritance of WWII. Based on their experiences fighting the Nazis, behavior scientists believed that a direct attack on ideological symbolism was less effective than making a non-ideological appeal. Rather than denounce Kim Il-sung, they preferred to raise questions about his actual existence. They opposed the claims of men who initially led the psychological warfare against North Korea, such as Charles A. Willoughby, the chief of intelligence and right-hand man to General MacArthur. Willoughby espoused clearly political themes expressed in strongly ideological language—glorification of democracy and assault on communism, for example. In contrast, behavior scientists argued on the basis that psychological warfare is productive only when the enemy is already experiencing confusion

or facing impending defeat, that the theme of material benefit should be stressed: physical comfort one would enjoy by surrendering, hardships one's family members were experiencing in the rear because of prolonged hostilities, and the promise of physical survival. Facing these opposing claims, Robert A. McClure, the then head of the office of psychological warfare, resolved the debate by using both kinds of leaflets in the campaign.<sup>41</sup>

What was the epistemological premise upon which American military could insist on similar psychological warfare tactics in both WWII and the Korean War, despite the vast difference between the societies and audiences to be targeted? Operative here was the coupled notion of assimilation and discrimination. Even though the two concepts appear to oppose each other, HRRI study on Korean rural society and the State Department's aforementioned study on North Korean society both reveal that these notions were simultaneously at work in American perceptions of Korea.

During the Christmas season in 1950, three American scholars visited war-torn Seoul and studied the effects of Sovietization in North Korea and in areas that had been occupied by North Korean forces. All three scholars were renowned in their respective fields and served as consultants for HRRI. The head of the committee was Wilbur Schramm, one of the superstars in the field of communication studies during the 1950s and 60s, and was accompanied by John Riley, the chair of the department of sociology at Rutgers University and an important figure in the field of behavioral science, and John Pelzel, an assistant professor of anthropology at Harvard University and a polyglot fluent in East Asian languages. Twenty-five South Korean social scientists accompanied them during their fieldwork, and provided translation, guidance, political analysis, etc. Based on the findings of this investigative mission, the three men compiled a massive report called *A Preliminary Study of the Impact of Communism upon Korea*.<sup>42</sup>

In the work, John Pelzel offered a peculiar analysis of sociopolitical processes in Kūmnam District near Taejōn. According to Pelzel, the political fragmentation of the village in question and the widespread sense of discontentment among the villagers had to be traced back, not to concrete ideological and economic issues affecting their lives, but to traditional village customs, in particular, bad-blood between descendants of primary wives and descendants of secondary wives. Pelzel identified the inferior status given to children of secondary wives as the main cause of conflicts in Korean traditional society. He argued that the structure of Korean social stratification and not economic class was what divided Koreans. According to his generalization, the friction endemic to traditional Korean social structure was reorganized by opportunistic communist intruders. Descendants of primary wives became political conservatives and descendants of secondary wives were classified as progressives. Ideological and economic differences were not considered problematic, and only the obsession with the long-held tradition defined the fissures in Korean society. For Pelzel, problems of underdeveloped societies were to be located in tradition and confined to

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-104.

<sup>42</sup> *A Preliminary Study of the Impact of Communism upon Korea*, Psychological Warfare Research Report No. 1, Human Resources Research Institute, Air University, US Air Force, May 1951.

psychological conflicts between individuals, but economic struggle or ideology remained essentially foreign to them.<sup>43</sup>

The starting point for HRRI report was the denial of any relevance of economic class and ideology in understanding internal fissures of Korean society. Historical and social-structural factors such as the efforts of Koreans to overcome the colonial legacy following the end of WWII and the frustrations of these efforts, the attachment to land by Korean peasants under the Japanese colonial rule, indeed the legacy of the colonial rule itself were excluded from analysis, and the gap left open by this omission was filled with a specious hypothesis about the roots of disputes in traditional society. By positing communism as the catalyst that brought out these tensions on to the public arena, the report attempted to ascribe the grave effects of Cold War politics on Korea to scuffles between individuals based on traditions of Korean rural society. The historical context that led to the unfolding of revolutionary situations in post-liberation Korea, or particular characteristics of these situations were not considered important. Revolutionary fervor was merely an outcome of Sovietization, and Sovietization was a global trend that the U.S. had already witnessed in Eastern Europe and various other parts of the world.<sup>44</sup>

HRRI report clearly shows the dominant way in which American social scientists apprehended the nature of the Korean War as well as North and South Korean societies at large. The social fissures that became visible as the war advanced were not explained in terms of Koreans' historical experience in the modern period, or Korean political and economic structures, but misread as conflicts between individuals carried over from traditional society. What kindled such conflicts into full-scale conflagrations was communism, an ideology imported from outside. Subscribing to contemporary theories in behavioral science, HRRI report surmised that personal time in conflict with historical time had a much greater influence than social, economic, and cultural variables on the Korean response to communism. Understood this way, the Korean War became a conflict that could arise between individuals in any society governed by tradition on the one hand, and a fight between puppets carrying out the commands of a foreign ideology. By excluding historical context from Korean society, behavioral science theory thus translated the experiences of people in a distant country into simple vocabulary readily understandable by the American public.

If behavioral science theory addressed to Americans functioned to make a war raging in a newly liberated country on the other side of the globe explainable in a familiar language, it functioned vis-à-vis Koreans as an aggressive methodology to justify American perceptions. It sought to assimilate Koreans at the epistemological level by imposing American ways of understanding and seeing the world. Concomitantly, however, American social scientists performed Sovietology, a way of breaking up a given society into the mutually exclusive categories of "friend" and "foe." In this regard, Sovietology was a discriminatory act that retroactively posited irreconcilable difference between entities based on whether they are placed inside or outside the system of containment that the US had delineated. Even though

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<sup>43</sup> Dr. John Pelzel, with Special Reports by Major C. N. Weems, USAFR, "The Sovietization of Two South Korean Rural Communities," *A Preliminary Study of the Impact of Communism upon Korea*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>44</sup> Ron Robin, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

North and South Korea was historically considered a single entity bound by territory and historical experience, American social scientists applied different explanatory models to North and South Korea following the outbreak of the Korean War. South Korea, placed on hither side of the line of containment was understood in terms of modernization theory. North Korea, on the thither side of the same line, was submitted to Sovietology. The methodological difference suggests that the question of American geopolitical interest, rather than Korean social structures and history, constituted the primary basis for studies of North and South Korea in the United States.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Korean War was a strange war indeed. Politically and militarily, all the superpowers involved—the U.S., USSR, China—tried to limit the war proper to the Korean peninsula. One of the schisms between Truman and MacArthur that ultimately led to the latter's dismissal from his post was the disagreement over whether the military action should be spread to Manchuria and mainland China. Chinese soldiers were dispatched not as the official deployment of People's Republic of China but under the guise of Chinese People's Volunteers. The USSR also tried to evade official involvement in the Korea War, even though they supplied munitions to both Chinese and North Korean forces and sent war planes and pilots. In this regard, the Korean War was limited politically and militarily but unlimited ideologically and psychologically. Both sides, in fact, devoted their energies primarily to psychological warfare once the frontline became more or less stabilized near the present-day DMZ in the summer of 1951. When it became clear that neither side could militarily bring the other to its knees, both combat and negotiations, indeed all measures that affected the war, began to be interpreted psychologically and propagated accordingly. All the cases such as the disagreement over the principle of exchanging prisoners of war, the controversial claims made by the Chinese and North Koreans that the US conducted germ warfare, and the mistreatment of prisoners of war by both sides had been utilized from the psychological warfare perspective. From 1951 on, propaganda was more important than battlefield action, and "war of words" came to take up the combat itself.

Even more curious is the observation that Korea is conspicuously absent in the Korean War, despite the fact that the Korean people were its greatest victims. We can examine the case of North Korea first. After separate governments were established in North and South Korea, the US identified North Korea as a Soviet satellite, and North Korean leaders as Soviet puppets. Following the outbreak of the War, the US proclaimed that North Korea was a "Cold War enemy" and announced once again that it was a Soviet and Chinese puppet. These images were publicized not only to Americans and South Koreans but to the world at large. As a satellite and a puppet, North Korea disappeared from view as the actual subject of action in the War.

How about South Korea? In the Korean War Memorial in the Washington D.C. Mall, there are stones on which casualty figures from the War are engraved; one of them is read "Wounded U.S.A. 103,284, UN 1,064,453". Reading this figures, I thought at first that a mistake had been made. Because U.S. soldiers comprised the majority of the UN forces, it didn't make sense that they would represent only a small fraction of the total UN casualties.

Soon I realized that it was my thinking, not the numbers, that was in error. The casualty figure for the UN soldiers included the South Korean soldiers who made up the bulk of the casualties. I came to a sharp realization at that moment that South Korean soldiers in the Korean War were acknowledged only as a part of the UN forces. The Korean War, despite its name, was a UN War in which South Koreans could not represent themselves. It is no surprise, then, that South Korea could not participate as one of the signatories of the ceasefire agreement.

In the Korean War, North Korea could exist only as a puppet and South Korea only as a member of UN. Through the period of US military occupation which brought Korea from the euphoria of liberation to ravages of war, Korean agency was eliminated. Only “North Korea” and “South Korea” as redefined according to American interests came to remain. If Orientalism refers to an age-old intellectual tradition in the West that defines the East as “that something which is not in the East,” one might say that the Korean situation represented yet another opportunity for manifestation of Orientalism. And situated at the very heart of such perceptions were American Cold War strategies and East Asia policy.

Even though Korea was non-existent in the Korean War, the war left behind indelible scars and an enduring legacy that continues to pose difficult problems for Koreans. In American society, the spread of McCarthyism at the popular level had much to do with propaganda and politics of fear deployed by McCarthyists, but the mass media played an even more important role. Films such as *The Manchurian Candidate* show how images of the USSR and Asian communist nations like China and North Korea were formed and nurtured in popular culture. The media played a key role in the spread of anti-communism in South Korea as well, but unlike the States, anti-communism became deeply engraved in Korean people’s psyche through such violence as the war, massacres, and punishments of compulsory laborers. Through the experience of the Korean War, anti-communism came to take on indestructible power in Korean society. Red complex became a basic survival instinct that dominated individual psyches even after the end of the Korean War. A long time had to be passed for desire for peace and reunification to neutralize mutual hostilities between North and South Korea. The hostilities, however, persist in a corner of Korean society as knots that remain to be untangled.