

## Inclusion of the Republic of Korea in the US Defense Perimeter after the Korean War

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The article describes the formation of a military and political alliance of the United States and the Republic of Korea in 1954. The article aims at defining the motives and priorities of the parties in the American-Korean negotiations held from June to November 1954 and at determining which factors influenced the negotiation outcome. On the whole, the significance of conflict elements in the US-South Korea relations increased in 1953–1954. While the Americans' goal was to stabilize the situation on the peninsula and create a strong security system in northeast Asia, the priority of the Koreans and their leader Syngman Rhee, the President of the South Korea, was to restore the country's unity. These priorities were not in line after the failure of the Korean talks at the 1954 Geneva Conference. Being totally dependent on the Americans in the military and economic spheres, Rhee was forced to comply with the armistice and cooperate in the implementation of the US initiatives regarding reunification of the country, which had very little chance of success. In exchange, he expected the US-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty to come into force and demanded the implementation of economic and military aid programs. Although the USA made concessions regarding all the points, they managed to create sufficient counterbalance to restrain Syngman Rhee: they established control over the South Korean military forces; assigned broad authority to the Coordinator of aid programs; had considerable armed forces on the territory of Korea. The Republic of Korea was included in the US regional security system on the terms of the Americans.

**Keywords:** USA, Republic of Korea, D. Eisenhower, Syngman Rhee, 1954 Geneva Conference, US-Korean relations.

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## Включение Республики Корея в оборонный периметр США после Корейской войны

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Статья посвящена формированию в 1954 г. новой региональной структуры — военно-политического союза США и Республики Корея. Ее цель — определить мотивы и приоритеты сторон во время американско-корейских переговоров, проходивших со второй половины июня до 17 ноября 1954 г., и определить, какие факторы оказали влияние на их итоги. В целом в период 1953–1954 гг. возросло значение и роль конфликтных элементов в американско-южнокорейских отношениях. Если целью американцев была стабилизация ситуации на полуострове и создание устойчивой системы безопасности в северо-восточной Азии, то корейцы в лице лидера Республики Кореи Ли Сын Мана в первую очередь стремились к восстановлению единства страны. В ситуации, сложившейся после провала корейской фазы Женевской конференции 1954 г., данные приоритеты оказались несовместимы. Находясь в полной зависимости от американцев в военной и экономической сферах, Ли был вынужден соблюдать условия перемирия и сотрудничать в деле реализации американских инициатив по восстановлению единства страны, имевших мало шансов на успех. Альтернативный список требований корейского президента включал в себя вступление в силу американско-корейского альянса и реализацию масштабных программ экономической и военной помощи Республике Корея. При этом в случае согласия американцев на условия Ли Сын Мана южнокорейский лидер сохранил и преумножил бы возможности для совершения второй попытки силового объединения страны в будущем. Однако, формально пойдя на уступки по всем пунктам, США сумели подготовить достаточные противовесы для сдерживания южнокорейской стороны, сохранить оперативное подчинение своему командованию южнокорейской армии, снизить до допустимого уровень угрозы и возобновления военных действий, не утратить достигнутый уровень контроля над ситуацией. В итоге, несмотря на то что полуостров продолжал оставаться потенциально опасной точкой региональной системы безопасности США, включение в нее Республики Кореи произошло на американских условиях.

*Ключевые слова:* США, Республика Корея, Д. Эйзенхауэр, Сынган Ри, Женевская конференция 1954 года, американско-корейские отношения.

In the modern world, international agreements on peaceful settlement of local conflicts can frequently be just a prelude to the search for a new regional modus vivendi based on the actual power balance. At the same time, local players can greatly influence its conditions. An example of such a scenario, which still remains relevant today, is the development of relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the second half of 1953 and 1954. This period is remarkable for the fact that the bilateral dialogue between Washington and Seoul developed along with the division of the world into two camps. At this time, the Eisenhower administration was shaping the doctrinal approach to foreign policy, strengthening NATO in any possible way. They also began to create new military blocs around the world. Another extremely dangerous round of an arms race started following the Soviet Union test of a hydrogen bomb. Various national

movements became active in the Eastern world. A complex and exceptional in its dynamism international context affected the character of the US-South Korea negotiations, which, in turn, gradually merged into the mainstream of the global bipolar confrontation. This resulted in the creation of the American “defense perimeter” in East Asia where South Korea was to play its role.

The article is devoted to the establishment of a new regional structure — the military and political alliance of the United States and the Republic of Korea in 1954. It aims at identifying the motives and priorities of the parties at the American-Korean negotiations which were conducted from middle June to 17 November 1954, and at determining which factors had a decisive influence on their outcome. These issues are addressed by Brands, Dwight, J. Ra, Park Tae Guyn<sup>1</sup> in their publications. In Russian historiography, these issues have not become a subject of special study, although some of them are discussed by Bogaturov, Bystrova, Denisov, V. Li, Manykin, Pechatnov, and Torkunov<sup>2</sup>, who make some valuable observations and conclusions.

The sources for this study are the published documents of the US Department of State and the US Congress, as well as the electronic archives of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Council (NSC), the Woodrow Wilson International Center, and some other institutions. The authors believe that the analysis of the documents in chronological order by the comparative historical method and the method of systemic analysis can ensure the achievement of this goal.

The armistice agreement signed in Panmunjom on July 27, 1953 formally ended the Korean War (1950–1953). It provided for ceasefire and the creation of the Demilitarized Zone, a border barrier separating the UN forces and the communist forces. The questions of restoring the unity of the country were to be addressed and settled at an international political conference<sup>3</sup>, which took place in Geneva from April 27, 1954 to June 15, 1954.

Washington, while preparing for this conference, came to the conclusion that it was unlikely that any agreement on the reunification of the country could be reached by the parties which were unwilling to compromise. Apart from peaceful settlement, the Eisenhower administration was seriously concerned with maintaining unity of its allies that were influenced by the public opinion in their own countries<sup>4</sup>. At the time the armistice agreement was concluded, the UN coalition member states signed a document stating that they would take the side of South Korea in case the war was resumed<sup>5</sup>. However, the reality

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<sup>1</sup> Brands H. The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the “Other” Geneva Conference of 1954 // *Pacific Historical Review*. 1987. February. Vol. 56, no. 1. P. 59–85; Keefer E. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the End of the Korean War // *Diplomatic History*. 1986. Summer. Vol. 10, no. 3. P. 267–289; Ra J. The Politics of Conference: The Political Conference on Korea in Geneva, 26 April — 15 June 1954 // *Journal of Contemporary History*. 1999. Vol. 34, no. 3. P. 399–416; Tae Guyn Park. What Happened Sixty Years Ago? ROK-US Deep Distrust between President Rhee and Eisenhower // *Journal of International and Area Studies*. 2014. June. Vol. 21, no. 1. P. 37–53.

<sup>2</sup> Bystrova N. E. SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoianiiia v Evrope (1945–1955). Moscow, 2007; Pechatnov V. O., Manykin A. S. Istoriia vneshnei politiki SShA. Moscow, 2012; Sistemnaia istoriia mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii. Sobytiia i dokumenty. 1918–2003. 1918–2003: in 4 vols / ed. by A. D. Bogaturov. Vol. 3: Events. 1945–2003. Moscow, 2003; Torkunov A. V., Denisov V. I., Li V. F. Koreiskii poluostrov: metamorfozy poslevoennoi istorii. Moscow, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Armistice agreement (July 27, 1953). URL: <http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/armistice/armistice.pdf> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>4</sup> Brands H. The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration... P. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Torkunov A. V., Denisov V. I., Li V. F. Koreiskii poluostrov: metamorfozy poslevoennoi istorii. Part 4, section 2.

was different. The armistice eased the tension in one of the most dangerous epicenters of confrontation<sup>6</sup>, and the US allies in the Korean War were reluctant to continue paying a high price to achieve reunification of this Far East country on the terms of South Korea<sup>7</sup>.

The main enemy of peaceful settlement with the Communists was Syngman Rhee, the President of the Republic of Korea, who sought to restore the country's integrity by force. In March 1954, he turned 79 years old. Being a strong-willed, committed anti-communist, a talented manipulator and a shrewd politician, he turned out to be a tough partner for American diplomats. Despite his advanced age, he was a charismatic leader. Thanks to his charm and fluent English, he managed to establish excellent relations with many US statesmen of the upper echelon. He was also well-connected with military and business officials. Vice President Richard Nixon, who visited South Korea in November 1953, was impressed by his intellect and strong-willed personality<sup>8</sup>. One more Rhee's admirer was John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, who appreciated Rhee's strong hatred of communism and his Christian zeal (the Secretary of State even associated him with the founders of the Christian church)<sup>9</sup>. Syngman Rhee was physically fit; he displayed irrepressible energy and the ability to work hard under prolonged stress and to cope with heavy workload which especially appealed to the Americans who knew him<sup>10</sup>.

The US-Korea Defense Treaty signed on October 1, 1953 (ratified by both sides in January 1954)<sup>11</sup> became a kind of "payment" for his participation in the Geneva Conference. According to Article 5, this treaty would come in force from the moment of exchange of instruments of ratification. In the event of a threat of attack on the territory in the Pacific Ocean which was under the administrative control of one of the parties, the parties of the Treaty undertook to consult and, either individually or jointly, take all necessary measures to repel an armed attack "in accordance with the current constitutional procedures". Furthermore, the Republic of Korea granted the United States a right to deploy military air, ground and sea forces on its territory.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, a few generous military and economic assistance programs were outlined. The US-Korea statement said that the armed forces of the Republic of Korea would be subordinate to the UN command until the entry of the Treaty into force and would not violate the terms of the armistice<sup>13</sup>.

At the Geneva Conference, the US delegation initiated an end to the search for a compromise and consolidation of Korea's divided status. Syngman Rhee was quite satisfied with this outcome, as the failure to reunite the country through negotiations meant they could bring pressure on the Americans in order to obtain all kinds of financial, economic and military preferences during an indefinite period of time. He also did not lose hope that, given the opportunity, it would be possible to persuade the United States to

<sup>6</sup> *Bystrova N. E.* SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoianiiia v Evrope (1945–1955). P. 438.

<sup>7</sup> *Lee S. H.* Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and the origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949–1954. Montreal, 1995. P. 253. — Regarding Churchill's point of view see, for example: *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953–1955.* Chapel Hill; London, 1990. P. 41–42, 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Nixon R.* The Memoirs of Richard Nixon: in 2 vols. Vol. I. New York, 1978. P. 157–158.

<sup>9</sup> *Kinzer S.* The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and their secret World War. New York, 2013. P. 94.

<sup>10</sup> *Chae-Jin Lee.* A troubled Peace: U. S. Policy and the two Koreas. Baltimore, 2006. P. 35–36.

<sup>11</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS). 1952–1954 / ed. by E. C. Keefer.* Washington, 1984. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1800–1802.

<sup>12</sup> *The Cold War: interpreting conflict through primary documents.* Santa-Barbara, 2018. P. 365–367.

<sup>13</sup> *Results of Secretary Dulles' Consultations with president Rhee // Department of State Bulletin.* Vol. 29, no. 732. P. 203.

implement a plan for forceful reunification of South Korea and North Korea under his leadership<sup>14</sup>.

On the third day after the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference was over, the US ambassador to Seoul Ellis O. Briggs offered to review the relations with Korea. He proposed a set of measures aimed at stabilizing the situation on the peninsula and related to America-South Korea relations preventing unilateral military action to unify Korea by Syngman Rhee, strengthening of the ROK Armed Forces, and entry into force of the mutual defense treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea as well as withdrawal of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) from South Korea. These measures were to be accompanied by re-examination of the state of ROK-Japan relations and determining the future of the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK). Finally, the ambassador suggested considering South Korea in regard to curbing the communist threat to Indochina<sup>15</sup>. Briggs expressed concern that the South Korea President would deem himself free from the obligation to refrain from unilateral military action after the Geneva Conference and recommended new consultations be undertaken with him<sup>16</sup>. The CIA also believed that Syngman Rhee would now renew his attempts to obtain US support for unification of Korea by force. The likelihood of risky and difficult-to-predict actions on his part in the event of any hope for their success was considered to be high<sup>17</sup>.

John Foster Dulles followed the ambassador's advice immediately and sent an official invitation to President Rhee to visit Washington reminding that the US-South Korea consultations had been agreed upon a year before<sup>18</sup>. The Secretary of State expected that President Rhee would come to address the joint session of Congress before it adjourned<sup>19</sup>. But these expectations did not come true. Rhee expressed his gratitude for the invitation — Briggs wrote that he looked pleased and flattered — but he declined it confidently. At the same time, he said that negotiations with the communists were a waste of time and added that he no longer considered himself bound by the terms of the armistice agreement. The Korean leader also threatened not to allow the Poles and Czechs, members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission<sup>20</sup>, to travel around the country any longer. He was going to make a public statement on this matter at the end of the month. The ambassador replied that his government was “in a proximate agreement” with Rhee's statement about the futility of negotiating with the Communists, and the Americans intended to end the NNSC persuading Swiss and Swedes to withdraw. Briggs got the impression that the South Korea President was guided not by momentary sentiments, but by deep feelings that “had been developing and hardening” ever since the armistice agreement was

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<sup>14</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI. P. 391.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1809–1811.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P. 1809.

<sup>17</sup> Probable Reaction of President Rhee to Termination of Korean Talks at Geneva. 1954. June, 17. URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5076def7993247d4d82b616a> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>18</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1808; Results of Secretary Dulles' Consultations with president Rhee // Department of State Bulletin. Vol. 29, no. 732. P. 203.

<sup>19</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1829.

<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note that the US Senate expressed similar concerns to the ones of South Korea about espionage of the delegations of the first two countries during this period. For details, see: Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 83d Congress. Second session. Vol. 100, part 6. Washington, 1954. P. 7368.

signed<sup>21</sup>. He expressed concern about Eisenhower's December 1953 statement to redeploy the US forces from Korea as the situation on the peninsula had stabilized<sup>22</sup>.

The fact that the initiative to start the next round of bilateral negotiations came from the United States spoke volumes. Their beginning was, in fact, a new stage in US-South Korea relationship. Strictly speaking, it started as early as the Geneva Conference, when the US delegation unconditionally supported the obviously unacceptable proposals of the South Korea side. At that time, the objective to reunite the ROK and the DPRK was not seen as an urgent task of the American diplomacy. On November 20, 1953, the Eisenhower administration approved of a top secret directive "US Objectives and Courses of Action in Korea" (NSC 170/1), in which the unification of Korea was seen as a long-range objective, while the current priority was specified as "to maintain a position of strength in Korea (a) in support of the United Nations commitment to oppose aggression, (b) to prevent the area from coming under Communist domination ... and (c) to ensure the continuance of a free government on the peninsula". It was also stipulated that the United States would seek to achieve these goals by peaceful means, if possible, without compromising their "obligations, principles, and military security"<sup>23</sup>.

This document extended the general strategy of the American foreign policy to South Korea, the main components of which were being shaped at that time. Initially, its provisions had a "dual purpose": on the one hand, to outline the "perimeter to deter communism" in the Far East<sup>24</sup>, including the south of the Korean Peninsula (in fact, it was about the militarization of the doctrine of deterrence, which from the very beginning was feared of and opposed by its author George F. Kennan). At the same time, the creators of the directive made sure to protect the United States from President Rhee's risky undertakings and prevent any military action in order to achieve Seoul's objectives. Washington had their own goals and objectives, and the South Korea line blended seamlessly into their global foreign policy planning<sup>25</sup>. In this context, NSC 170/1 was an integral link in the chain of interrelated events, and it consistently followed the same logic as the decisions made at the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the North Atlantic Council (Paris, December 14-16, 1953) on a new strategic defense policy of the West (which also implied the militarization of the doctrine of deterrence — in this case, it was already nuclear deterrence) and the speech of John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, on January 12, 1954 at the meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations in which the idea of "massive retaliation" was established<sup>26</sup>.

Added to this is the fact that President Eisenhower saw termination of hostilities in Korea as one of the major achievements of his administration with regard to foreign policy<sup>27</sup>, and realized that violation by the South of the armistice terms and involving the United States in the renewal of hostilities would cause significant damage to his authority and complicate relations with the country's allies. Considerations of prestige were as important for American policymakers as their geopolitical calculations: if the position of the

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<sup>21</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1812–1813.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P. 1679, 1815–1816.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. P. 1621.

<sup>24</sup> See: *Pechatnov V. O., Manykin A. S. Istoriia vneshnei politiki SShA*. P. 349–350.

<sup>25</sup> *Chae-Jin Lee. A troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the two Koreas*. P. 40–41.

<sup>26</sup> *Bystrova N. E. SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoiania v Evrope (1945–1955)*. P. 444, 448–449.

<sup>27</sup> *Hitchcock W. I. The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950-s*. New York, 2018. P. 182; *Kremeniuk V. A. Uroki kholodnoi voiny*. Moscow, 2015. P. 84.

United States in South Korea grew weaker so that it would allow North Korea and China, which were friendly to the USSR, to resume the hostilities, the reputation of the United States in Japan, Taiwan and the entire Far East would be seriously undermined<sup>28</sup>.

By the end of June 1954, the Department of State was of the opinion that the situation in Korea was not fraught with significant threats. The likelihood that Syngman Rhee would take unilateral military action was reduced, the size of South Korea troops was sufficient to maintain a week of active hostilities, and its officers were loyal to the UN command<sup>29</sup>. Briggs doubted Rhee would try to resume the hostilities. The Korean leader was confident that his negotiating positions were stronger in Seoul, where Rhee would not be influenced by the American public opinion, and this, in the opinion of the ambassador, was the reason why he declined invitation to Washington. As a matter of fact, the US Embassy was inclined to believe that the "difficult and perhaps at times unpleasant" negotiations with Syngman Rhee should be continued<sup>30</sup>.

A letter from the South Korean President to Dulles of July 2, 1954 confirmed these speculations. Although President Rhee saw renewal of war as the first alternative to further action on the peninsula, he immediately mentioned that he knew Eisenhower's opinion on this matter. The other alternative to the war, in the opinion of the Korean leader, was to carry out the American plans to strengthen ROK troops. In fact, he saw the possibility of his visit to Washington in connection with this plan. "Our enemy may push down anytime <...> taking advantage of our weakness. Some of our military leaders are impatient of my hesitation to order them north. If I were to promise that action would be taken when I return, the present unrest could be quieted down," Rhee wrote asking Dulles to let him know whether they would agree to either of the alternatives<sup>31</sup>. The Ambassador, having analyzed the letter thoroughly, came to the conclusion that President Rhee had little expectation for US support for military drive north and was just trying to negotiate as many concessions as possible<sup>32</sup>.

On July 7, Dulles discussed the situation with Eisenhower who said he had expected something like that from the Korean leader who "was being arrogant" attaching conditions to their invitation. As a result, it was decided to wait for the recommendations of the Defense Department on whether it was reasonable to strengthen the South Korean army, and only then make a definite reply to President Rhee<sup>33</sup>. However, on July 10, Rhee again made an unexpected move informing Briggs that he had changed his mind and decided to accept Washington invitation<sup>34</sup>. The ambassador associated this change with some factors: the news of Eisenhower's meeting with Winston Churchill which took place on June 25 that could lead to softening of the US anti-communist policy in Asia; as well as the news of the French defeat in Indochina. Besides, the Korean leader could expect that the recent protests of William Knowland, Senator (Rep., California), against China's membership in the UN, which were supported by Dulles and Eisenhower, had created a favorable background to present his ideas. Finally, the return to the United States of the

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<sup>28</sup> Lee S. H. *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and the origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949–1954*. P. 12.

<sup>29</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1805.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1814–1815.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1818–1819.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1826.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1828–1829.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1830.

former commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> American Army and the UN forces in Korea (1951–1953), General James Van Fleet, could also contribute<sup>35</sup>, as Rhee hoped, to his success<sup>36</sup> — they had developed warm relations<sup>37</sup> that continued after Van Fleet's leaving from Korea.

On July 12, Ellis O. Briggs delivered an official invitation to Rhee to visit Washington from July 26 to July 30, 1954<sup>38</sup>. By the time he arrived, special precautions had been taken to prevent him from making statements that could discredit Eisenhower. As James Hagerty, Press Secretary of the United States, wrote in his diary, cameras recording sound could only be used as Syngman Rhee was welcomed by Nixon at the airport. Only photographers were allowed to be present at the meeting of the two presidents and their spouses<sup>39</sup>.

The US-Korea talks started on July, 27. Meeting with Hagerty before they started, Eisenhower said, "I feel sorry for the old man. He wants to get his country unified, but we cannot permit him to start a war to do it. But he is a stubborn old fellow, and I don't know whether we'll be able to hold him in line indefinitely"<sup>40</sup>.

The issue of restoring the country's unity was the first on the agenda of the talks. Syngman Rhee immediately stated that he understood the reluctance of the UN soldiers to remain in his country forever, therefore his government proposed to start some positive action at the front. This speech was interrupted by Eisenhower who said that Germany, Austria and Vietnam were experiencing the same tragic situation as Korea, and the United States wished to see these countries, including Korea, unified; they were even eager to consider subversion, but no one would force the United States to start a war over these problems<sup>41</sup>. In response, Rhee expressed his disappointment with the US policy, which had already resulted in China going down to the Communists. He said that, according to what he and all Asia knew, four years ago Soviet Russia had made a decision to conquer all the world, and this plan was being successfully implemented. Such countries as Italy, France, and Great Britain were free but they were afraid. The communists had won in Indochina: Vietnam was partitioned. Thailand would be soon gone, and South America would come next. Rhee stressed the fact that it was not just about Korea and its future, but this little spot in the south of the peninsula created courage and encouraged the free world to combat Communism. He added that if hopes of the Koreans for the unification of their country were just illusions, they wanted to be disillusioned then and there<sup>42</sup>. Dulles, wishing to defuse the tension, agreed with Syngman Rhee, but doubted that the war was the only possible alternative. Rhee persevered in standing his ground, and the discussion about the pros and cons of another World War continued quite a while. Eisenhower brought the issue to a close saying that the destruction of world civilization was not a way to save democracy<sup>43</sup>. President Rhee seemed to expect these arguments saying that they had a plan

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<sup>35</sup> On Eisenhower's order, the General visited Far East with a special mission to analyze the effectiveness of American military aid programs in the region's countries.

<sup>36</sup> This calculation was reasonable: on July 3, Van Fleet recommended that Defense Secretary Wilson postpone the withdrawal of UN troops from Korea and begin this process only after strengthening the South Korean army. See: FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1819.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example: *My Uncle Jim*. URL: <https://www.trafford.com/bookstore/bookdetail.aspx?book-id=SKU-000153438> (accessed: 13.09.2019); *Brands H. The Dwight D. Eisenhower...* P. 70.

<sup>38</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1834.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1838.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1839.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1841.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1842.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1842–1845.



that would not risk world war but would provide for the unification of Korea<sup>44</sup>. After that, the conversation turned to more practical matters. The main topic was strengthening of the South Korean army forces. It was decided to organize a meeting of the American and Korean military advisors. The parties also agreed to hold economic discussions on aid to South Korea simultaneously with military talks<sup>45</sup>.

On July 28, Syngman Rhee addressed both houses of the Congress calling for resumption of hostilities arguing that the USSR still lacked sufficient resources to defeat the United States. The logic of his reasoning was the fact that the achievement of peace on the planet was impossible in the context of coexistence of the communist and democratic camps. Since any armistice agreements played into the hands of the Kremlin, he believed they should act immediately and start by overthrowing the communist regime in China. In case of losing China, the USSR, according to Rhee, would not dare to go to war with the United States in the Far East. This could create favorable conditions to defeat communists in Korea and Indochina. If the Soviet Army still defended the People's Republic of China, he imagined a grandiose scenario of an all-out war which would give the United States the opportunity to destroy the Soviet industrial facilities before they started mass production of hydrogen bombs. He finished his speech with a reference to President Abraham Lincoln who was a firm defender of the unity of the Union that would not have survived "being half slave and half free"<sup>46</sup>. Such a radical program met quite a cautious welcome<sup>47</sup>.

The content and the very style of Syngman Rhee's declarations showed that he was well acquainted with the keynote and public speeches of the President of the United States and the Secretary of State. Rhetorically, they followed the logic of the "domino principle"<sup>48</sup> and "massive retaliation" and, most likely, were aimed at finding like-minded people in an ideologically aligned audience. But Rhee's expectations did not come true. The Korean issue was no longer the mainstream of the American policy; what had come to the fore was Indochina<sup>49</sup>. It also seems that Syngman Rhee was wrong with the choice of the audience to call to action — the American legislators were not at all happy about the prospects of a war renewal and its possible globalization in the thermonuclear context. Therefore, his speech to congressmen and senators was a major political blunder. The President of the Republic of Korea did not become the "hero of the day" in America, and his negotiating position was significantly weakened.

At the regular meeting on July 29, President Rhee reminded of his secret plan for the unification of the country and made it clear he would be able to reveal the plan to the American military authorities if they seriously considered any military measures that he deemed necessary. In response, Eisenhower only expressed the hope that Rhee would not deceive the trust, and his desire to strengthen ROK forces was not for purposes of attack<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1845.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. P. 1846.

<sup>46</sup> Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 83d Congress. Second session. Vol. 100, part 9. Washington, 1954. P. 12435.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Part 10. P. 13404; *Urnov A. Yu. Voyna v Koree // Aziia i afrika segodnia*. 2012. No. 10. P. 67.

<sup>48</sup> See: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954. Washington, 1960. P. 382–385.

<sup>49</sup> *Lee S. H. Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and the origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949–1954*. P. 14–15, 214–217.

<sup>50</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1850.

The next day was devoted to the issues of countering the Communists in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission and partial redeployment of UN troops from the peninsula. The Korean side also raised the issue of revising the Mutual Defense Treaty and signing a new document — similar to the one between Japan and America<sup>51</sup>. Dulles had to explain the discriminatory nature of the treaty between the United States and Japan. He expressed willingness to conclude such a treaty with Korea, but added that Koreans had to be crazy if they insisted on going for it<sup>52</sup>.

The final joint public statement of the two presidents stated the failure of the Geneva conference and reaffirmed the desire to create a united, democratic and independent Korea based on the principles of the UN Charter and General Assembly resolutions. Hagerty noted, “Syngman Rhee, who previously spoke about resuming the war, essentially agreed to sign a statement that in fact provides for the transfer of the Korean problem to the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.”<sup>53</sup> The American side considered signing this statement as an important achievement.

Close attention was paid to a draft of an agreed minute. The draft of this document was prepared by the American side and submitted to the Korean delegation for review a day before<sup>54</sup>. It stated mutual obligations of the countries: the USA promised to continue close cooperation with the ROK, to retain the US military forces in the peninsula gradually reducing them to one corps with necessary supporting units, and to protect the country in the event of an unprovoked attack of the Communists<sup>55</sup>. In return, the Republic of Korea undertook the following commitments: various economic measures, normalization of relations with Japan, as well as participation in Washington’s initiatives aimed at supporting the country’s unification. Of great importance was the point providing for the retention of operational control over the South Korean army by the command of UN forces. At the insistence of the Korean delegation, an article was nevertheless introduced into the document on the termination of this paragraph if the parties came to the conclusion that there were irreparable contradictions in their policies. It was crucial that there was a clause to retain the forces of the Republic of Korea under the operational control of the UN Command. However, the Korean side insisted on including a provision which stated that United Nations Command would withdraw in case they agreed after consultations that their basic policies diverged<sup>56</sup>. Tae Guyn Park considers, and he has good reason to believe so, that the Agreed Minute was more important than the Mutual Defense Treaty to the Eisenhower administration since it included an article on UN Command control over the South Korean army and a section on military assistance to the Republic of Korea<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> The South Korean side was most likely ignorant of the content of the American-Japanese treaties and agreements of 1951–1954 which did not impose any specific obligations on the American side in regard to the defense of the islands, which provided American citizens with the right of extraterritoriality, which recognized non-jurisdiction of the American military to the Japanese court, which entrusted the United States with police functions in Japan and imposed a financial burden on the Japanese side in the amount of \$150 million annually. See: *Safronov V.P. SSSR — SShA — Iaponia vo vremia kholodnoi voyny. 1945–1960.* Moscow, 2003. P. 227–237.

<sup>52</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1861–1862.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. The opening of 9<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly took place on September 21, 1954.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. P. 1857–1859.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. P. 1860.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. P. 1859.

<sup>57</sup> *Tae Guyn Park. What Happened Sixty Years Ago?* P. 50.

Syngman Rhee took part in the discussion of this document only at the initial stage and received the final draft after he had left Washington. Although the draft of Minute had already been agreed upon with the members of the Korean delegation, he postponed its signing until the details of the economic and military assistance programs were clarified<sup>58</sup>. On August 20, Dulles, Briggs and Robertson (the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) held a meeting where it was decided to obtain the signature of the South Korean president, and until then not to make any final commitments on US military economic aid programs<sup>59</sup>, which were still being implemented<sup>60</sup>.

General John E. Hull, the commander in chief of the United Nations Command, was delighted with this decision as it was in line with his state of mind. In early September he informed Washington in his memorandum that he had to face opposition or even outright antagonism of the Koreans, and he hoped that Washington would adhere to the position. He wrote, "Firmness on our part not only gives promise of success <...> but it may well serve to stiffen the resolution of those who are in opposition to President Rhee on matters vitally affecting the United States interest"<sup>61</sup>. The Koreans countered the American tactics with a string of statements listing their claims and regrets. In the second half of August, in his letter to Van Fleet, Rhee admitted that he was "getting disillusioned" with the United States, which did not act up to his expectations and refused to defend "democratic principles and freedom of man"<sup>62</sup>. An anti-American campaign flared up in the Korean press on a new scale. It also hit John F. Dulles, who was sometimes called the French and British collaborator, sometimes — accused of pro-Japanese sentiments, or dubbed an accomplice of Mao Zedong<sup>63</sup>.

The Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission continued to be a source of major concern for ROK Government. On July 30, Provost Marshal, General Won Yong Duk, issued a press release threatening that his department would take harsh measures against NNSC unless its Polish and Czech members left South Korea immediately. According to the National Security Council, the order was given to him by Syngman Rhee personally before leaving for Washington<sup>64</sup>. The next two days saw demonstrations, one of which was turned back by the US military police. In addition, shots were fired into the building of the Commission in Pusan, and homemade bombs were thrown at its compound in Kunsan, with one of them causing an explosion<sup>65</sup>.

In this regard, the Department of State said that the United States assessed the incident as a breach of the armistice agreement and demanded that Prime Minister Pyun Yong Tae should take immediate measures to stop these disorders and send law enforce-

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<sup>58</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1857–1858.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. P. 1866.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. P. 1876.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. P. 1874.

<sup>62</sup> Letter, Syngman Rhee to General James A. Van Fleet. August 20, 1954. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. B-012-004. Official Correspondences. President Rhee's Correspondences. Syngman Rhee Institute. Yonsei University. URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117671> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>63</sup> Situation in South Korea. National Security Council Briefing. September 08, 1954. DNSA: National Security Agency: Organization and Operations, 1945–2009. P. 2. URL: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1679072446?accountid=108701> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. P. 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ahn Cheol Kwan*. Koreiskii vopros i amerikanskie voiska v Iuzhnoi Koree. Pyongyang, 2003. P. 86; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1862, 1864.

ment forces to suppress illegal action against NNSC<sup>66</sup>. As a result, the order was restored, and Pyun assured the United States that his government would not take unilateral action without consulting Washington. The Americans, in turn, repeated that they were doing everything possible to disband the Commission through diplomatic means<sup>67</sup>. However, on September 1, Pyun, in his conversation with Briggs, doubted the effectiveness of the measures taken by the United States. The Prime Minister described the activities of the Polish and Czech members of NNSC as a threat to the security of the Republic and addressed a letter to Dulles in which he warned that their Government intended to ask NNSC to leave the country within a week of their notification<sup>68</sup>. This demand was backed by Briggs, usually skeptical of the South Korean authorities. Reporting to Washington about his conversation with Pyun, he recommended that General Hall should be given the authority to terminate activities of the Supervisory Commission. The ambassador admitted that the Koreans might otherwise again resort to unauthorized action and discredit the United States by renewing acts of violence. The Department of State did not come into line with these recommendations; Briggs was instructed to “express concern” and inform the Koreans that such threats prevented the United States from persuading Swedish and Swiss representatives to withdraw from the Commission<sup>69</sup>. On September 2, Hull sent a letter of similar content to the ROK Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea<sup>70</sup>.

The announced redeployment of the United States forces became a source of alarm for the Koreans<sup>71</sup>. The Americans announced about their specific plans in this regard on July 30 during the Washington talks and immediately faced protests and attempts to bargain for guarantees of strengthening the South Korean military forces<sup>72</sup>. Briggs reported to Washington that Pyun forwarded litany of woe over their “abandonment”<sup>73</sup>. Rhee instigated a massive public campaign. A major target of criticism was the program of redeployment of the American land and air forces, which was assessed as “reckless” and revealing “the unwillingness of the United States to fulfill its obligations”. Military aid to the South Korean army was underestimated and declared insignificant<sup>74</sup>. The implementation of the economic aid program was characterized as incompetently handled. The Koreans demanded Tyler Wood be removed from the post of Economic Coordinator and replaced “with someone like General Van Fleet”<sup>75</sup>.

The Office of Economic Coordinator was established in 1954 and was equal to the rank of minister. He was given authority not only to supervise the economic aid program but also to coordinate the economic (and partly military) activities of the United States and UNKRA (the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency)<sup>76</sup>. The CIA reported

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. P. 1864.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. P. 1863.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. P. 1867–1868.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. P. 1869.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. P. 1869.

<sup>71</sup> Situation in South Korea. URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79r00890a000400050003-5> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>72</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1858.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. P. 1867.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. P. 1697.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> *Bong-youn Choy*. Korea. A History. Rutland; Tokyo, 1971. URL: <https://books.google.ru/books?id=X0nRAGAAQBAJ&pg=PT412&lpq=PT412&dq> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

that the conditions created in Korea for this mission were humiliating<sup>77</sup>. At first, Wood was not allowed to occupy the selected facilities for the staff members of the agencies he supervised, and then there were attempts to drive them away from the Chosen Hotel used for this purpose<sup>78</sup>. The Korean government was dissatisfied with the stern stance of the economic coordinator regarding the government's budgetary, credit and pricing policies. All Wood's attempts to influence the course of events were perceived as seeking dictate<sup>79</sup>. Ambassador Briggs characterized the situation as manifestly unsatisfactory and dangerous<sup>80</sup>. In this situation, however, Wood received 100 percent support from the Department of State<sup>81</sup> and the United Nations Command<sup>82</sup>.

According to Yong-Pyo Hong, Syngman Rhee's anti-American campaign was driven in part by domestic issues. The president of South Korea was trying to divert the public attention from disagreements with the opposition over the constitutional amendments proposed in September 1954, which would allow him to be re-elected to a new term after the current second one<sup>83</sup>. However, the main goal of the campaign was to bring pressure on the Americans<sup>84</sup>.

At the same time, signals warning about the increased public uneasiness of the South Koreans resumed. On September 1, the CIA informed the Secretary of State about plans for possible ROK action with a view to resuming hostilities on the peninsula<sup>85</sup>. General Hull also informed Dulles that unilateral military action was being planned at the headquarters of the ROK army. He admitted that military action was likely to be attempted in November 1954<sup>86</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Americans were now much less alarmed with such reports. Briggs reported that the people of South Korea would not welcome resumption of hostilities. According to the ambassador, Syngman Rhee had learned to understand the political realities and, ultimately, he would come to terms with the Agreed Minute<sup>87</sup>. The United States also came to the conclusion that the fact that such planning was going on was not particularly disturbing, given that, according to Hull, senior commanders in the South

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<sup>77</sup> Situation in South Korea. URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79r00890a000400050003-5> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>78</sup> Letter, General Maxwell D. Taylor to Sohn Won-Wil, Minister of National Defense of ROK. November 07, 1953 // History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. B-013-167. Official Correspondences. President Rhee's Correspondences. Syngman Rhee Institute. Yonsei University. URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/122905> (accessed: 13.09.2019); Letter, Prime Minister Baek Du-jin to Mr. C. Tyler Wood, the Economic Coordinator. January 09, 1954 // History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. B-013-172. Official Correspondences. President Rhee's Correspondences, Syngman Rhee Institute. Yonsei University. URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/122911> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>79</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1697.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. P. 1870.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. P. 1582.

<sup>82</sup> See: Letter, General Maxwell D. Taylor to Prime Minister Baek Du-jin. January 10, 1954 // History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. B-013-166. Official Correspondences. President Rhee's Correspondences. Syngman Rhee Institute. Yonsei University. URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/122904> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>83</sup> *Quee-Young Kim*. From Protest to Change of Regime: The 4–19 Revolt and the Fall of the Rhee Regime in South Korea // Social Forces. 1996. Col. 74, no. 2. P. 1185.

<sup>84</sup> *Yong-Pyo Hong*. State Security and Regime Security: President Syngman Rhee and the Insecurity Dilemma in South Korea 1953–60. London, 2000. P. 76.

<sup>85</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1870.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. P. 1874.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. P. 1871.

Korea did not delude themselves as to practicability of these plans. Americans, in turn, in their communication with Koreans, emphasized that the USA would not support ROK if hostilities were resumed by them, and would not allow being deceived by any “incident designed to cast the blame on Communists”<sup>88</sup>.

On September 9, 1954, the NSC approved of the final version of the Agreed Minute discussed and finalized with military experts and economists<sup>89</sup>. The following day the President of the United States approved of the document<sup>90</sup>. Compared to the July draft, the document defined the parameters of aid programs to Korea in more detail. The commitments of the South Korean government remained the same. These sections allowed the Americans to start implementing aid programs after initialing the Minute. The Department of State considered that the document reflected all the wishes of Syngman Rhee, therefore it was not intended to introduce any substantive changes to the document<sup>91</sup>.

On September 27, Syngman Rhee received Hull and Briggs and reminded them that the purpose of his visit to the United States was not to gain additional benefits but to restore the country's unity. Thanking for the military and economic aid already provided, he pointed out that if it continued, Korea should decide itself how to use the incoming resources. At the end of the conversation, Rhee promised to think about the proposals of America<sup>92</sup>.

While the president of South Korea was thinking about the future of the Minute, the anti-American campaign was in full swing in the country. The US assistance was assessed in official statements as “inadequate” and “poorly administered”; the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission was also under constant attacks; Japan was vilified<sup>93</sup>. Nervousness in bilateral relations was also fuelled by stronger disagreement over the exchange rate. The Americans were in constant need of the South Korean hwan which in February 1953 replaced the won depreciated during the war. In accordance with the agreement between the USA and ROK of February 25, 1953, the exchange rate was 180 to 1. It was supposed that the dollar would be exchanged for more hwan, and that the exchange rate would increase gradually<sup>94</sup>. The appendix to the Agreed Minute amended on September 15, 1954, had an article on the transition of the Republic of Korea to a “different and realistic exchange rate”<sup>95</sup>. However, the South Korean authorities immediately announced that from October 1, 1954, they would exchange hwan only at 180 to 1 rate and would no longer pay for hwan currency advances. The American proposal for an exchange rate of 254 to 1 was rejected. The hwan reserves of the United States were only enough to pay expenses for a limited period<sup>96</sup>.

The American foreign policy establishment discussed further steps in regard to Syngman Rhee. Briggs described the situation as “disquieting and dangerous”. The CIA admitted that all the actions of the president of ROK could be nothing but the attempts to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. P. 1873.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. P. 1944; *Brands H.* The Dwight D. Eisenhower... P. 82.

<sup>90</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1877.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. P. 1882.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. P. 1888–1889.

<sup>93</sup> South Korea NSC Briefing. 1954. October, 5. URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79r00890a000400020036-2> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>94</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 1. P. 797.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Part 2. P. 1878.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. P. 1891.

exert psychological pressure on the United States, but it called to take into account a high probability of irrational conduct as Rhee was in such an “agitated mood”<sup>97</sup>. There were even suggestions to overthrow this unreliable ally (Everready plan)<sup>98</sup>. However, milder options were usually discussed. According to Briggs, there were many influential Koreans who would not willingly follow Rhee’s “intemperate leadership” at the cost of the United States’ friendship and support. The ambassador also highlighted the fact that Syngman Rhee was sensitive to the US opinion and influenced by it, thus he recommended that the United States should be clear about its opinion on current matters and make it public, and that it should be done without taking Rhee’s interests into account: it was Rhee’s responsibility to extricate himself<sup>99</sup>.

Briggs reminded that Rhee’s anti-American campaign was actually unopposed on the peninsula. At his initiative, at the end of the year, Information Policy Coordination Committee was created, which consisted of representatives of all American agencies that provided economic and information support to Korea. The purpose of this body was to provide adequate coverage of American aid programs and help maintain the armistice agreement<sup>100</sup>.

On October 6, at a meeting of the NSC, Dulles stated that Syngman Rhee was becoming more and more unreasonable and cantankerous. The members of the Council, nevertheless, did not see any particular threats about his nervous demarches and, as it was suggested by Secretary Wilson, decided “to go slow in this matter” not to aggravate the situation<sup>101</sup>. Governor Stassen, the Director of the Foreign Operations Administration, agreed that Rhee’s actions could hurt South Korea more than it would hurt the United States and offered the Council members to wait when the Korean understood this themselves. There was general agreement by other members<sup>102</sup>. On the same day, the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded instructions to General Hull which ordered to be patient, to maintain security and prevent provocations, to ensure that the ROK observed the armistice terms, and to continue the process of redeployment of US armed forces from the peninsula<sup>103</sup>.

Meanwhile, Syngman Rhee tried to get the provisions of the Agreed Minute to be reconsidered so as to reduce the commitments of the Republic of Korea and to expand the US commitments<sup>104</sup>. On October 22, he made another unexpected move, handing Briggs the radically changed redraft of the Minute, which reproduced all the suggestions previously rejected by the Americans, including proposal that the US would support unification of Korea by any means, “even by force”. Briggs recommended that these proposals

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<sup>97</sup> South Korea NSC Briefing. 1954. October, 5. URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79r00890a000400020036-2> (accessed: 13.09.2019).

<sup>98</sup> *Tae Guyn Park*. What Happened Sixty Years Ago? P.50. See also: *Sadakov D.A.* For the extreme case: USA, Syngman Rhee and the «Everready» operation in the Korean war (1952–1953) // Perm University Herald. History. 2018. Issue 4. P. 40–49.

<sup>99</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1890–1891.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1890–1891, 1944; *Jooyoung Lee*. Making Democracy Korean: American Ideals and South Korean State-Building. 1919–1960: PhD Diss. Providence, 2012. P. 168.

<sup>101</sup> Secretary Wilson was the President of General Motors corporation in 1941–1953 and was experienced in this sphere.

<sup>102</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1892.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1893–1894.

<sup>104</sup> *Yong-Pyo Hong*. State Security and Regime Security. P.76.

should be declared unacceptable at an earliest possible date<sup>105</sup>. The Secretary of State was of the same opinion<sup>106</sup>.

On October 29, Syngman Rhee had a meeting with Briggs. In response to the lengthy statement of the Korean leader about the imperfection of the Agreed Minute of understanding, the ambassador pointed out that the American position was firm, and that they were unwilling to change anything in the document. The parties discussed the problems of the exchange rate, economic cooperation, normalization of the Japanese-Korean relations and the activities of the Supervisory Commission. No specific agreements were reached<sup>107</sup>. However, the next day Pyun sent a letter to Dulles, in which Rhee's lengthy rhetoric crystallized in two requests: to remove the phrase "by all peaceful means" from the article on US support for unification of Korea and the phrase "in violation of the armistice" from the American undertaking to protect South Korea in case of unprovoked aggression from the north<sup>108</sup>.

Having studied the suggested changes, Dulles asked Briggs to remind Rhee and Pyun that more than third current fiscal year had passed<sup>109</sup>, and their refusal to agree with the Agreed Minute cost their country millions of dollars. Briggs had to inform the Koreans that if they failed to reach an agreement on the Minute in the near future, the Department of State would have to inform the Congress that the developed aid program could not be implemented. He also pointed out that the Minute was regarded as package, and that it must be dealt as whole without negotiating its separate parts. Dulles also informed Briggs that the maximum concession the United States could make would be a complete exclusion from the document of the article on US undertaking to support Korea unification by peaceful means<sup>110</sup>.

On November 8, 1954, a meeting attended by General Hull, General Taylor, Briggs, and Wood was held in Tokyo. The participants agreed that US-Korea relations were in an unsatisfactory state and outlined a plan that consisted of four series of actions to influence Syngman Rhee; the choice of them depended on how serious the situation would be. The first of them, the mildest one, was to be applied in the event of Rhee's further refusal to sign the Agreed Minute. It included reducing the supply of strategic goods and slowing down military and economic aid programs. If the situation deteriorated, the Americans would continue to cut aid, to establish contacts with the political opponents of South Korea, and to accelerate gradual withdrawal of their specialists from the country. This would culminate in the withdrawal of American military advisers from Korea. The authors of the plan considered that the action described in Series 1 should be implemented immediately<sup>111</sup>. Briggs reminded that over 4 months had passed, and it was highly desirable to bring the developed aid programs to action, so it was necessary to resolve disagreement as soon as possible<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1899.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. P. 1906–1907.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. P. 1908–1910.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. P. 1915.

<sup>109</sup> In 1954, the fiscal year in the United States started on July 1. This existed until 1976, when the beginning of the fiscal year was moved to October 1, and the end of it, respectively, to September 31 of the following year.

<sup>110</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1915.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. P. 1911–1913.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. P. 1915.



As early as on November 14 it became clear that US diplomatic efforts were finally having an effect. Pyun invited Briggs and said that he was leaving for New York on November 16 to participate in the UN General Assembly, but first he wanted to close the issue of signing the Agreed Minute. He confirmed that his government's claims were only limited to two points that he had reported to Dulles in his letter of 30 October. After that, the parties were able to quickly clarify their position and amend the wording approved of by both Dulles and Syngman Rhee<sup>113</sup>.

The change in the attitude of the South Korean president, according to Briggs, was explained by his desire to win the support of the United States at the UN General Assembly. The domestic political situation had also had an effect: Rhee was going to pass off the settlement of the foreign policy questions with the Americans as his victory, which could strengthen his position in the parliament before voting on important amendments to the constitution. Furthermore, this time he had to face a really uncompromising opinion of the American politicians and chose to step back. At the same time, he might still act unexpectedly, so Briggs advised to monitor the Koreans' compliance with the Minute carefully<sup>114</sup>.

As soon as on November 17 these fears were confirmed. At another meeting with Briggs, Rhee suddenly returned to the rhetoric that he had used for the past four months, giving a long speech and reiterating all principal objections against the Minute and, finally, yielding on almost everything except two new points. He intended to add to the American commitment on support for peaceful unification of the country his own statement to proceed unilaterally if it was necessary at a later date. Briggs objected that this action would violate the Agreed Minute due to ROK position on cooperation toward unification set forth in the document, and an attempt to revise this section would lead to new delays in signing the document<sup>115</sup>. Rhee also declared his intention of making public appeal to nation to establish the exchange rate for hwan at 180 to 1. He added he would permit US to exchange for military needs at any rate they would consider fair but that the rate should be kept secret. In response, Briggs reminded that this proposal would also violate the provisions of the Agreed Minute. Interestingly, Pyun and Sohn (Defense Minister) who were present at the meeting tried to persuade their president to accept the terms of the Americans. They later expressed relief and satisfaction with the agreement and told Briggs that they were aware of Rhee's fantastic views on economy<sup>116</sup>.

Finally, President Rhee agreed with the American position on all points. As Yong-Pyo Hong points out, the disappointment of many South Koreans, who had previously supported their president's tough policies in regard to Americans, played a significant role. The reason for the change in public opinion was the growing awareness that Rhee's actions jeopardized implementation of US aid programs to Korea<sup>117</sup>.

The initialing and exchange notes ceremony was held on November 17. According to Briggs, it went off smoothly and in the atmosphere of marked good will<sup>118</sup>. The final Agreed Minute included the following provisions: economic and military programs of up

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<sup>113</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1917–1918; *Yong-Pyo Hong*. State Security and Regime Security. P. 77.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1920–1921.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1922.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1922–1923.

<sup>117</sup> *Yong-Pyo Hong*. State Security and Regime Security. P. 78.

<sup>118</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV, part 2. P. 1923.

to \$ 700,000,000 in the current fiscal year, expansion of ROK forces to 720,000 personnel, but it committed the ROK to some measures and cooperation for the effective carrying out of these programs. Instruments of ratification of the Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROK were also exchanged on November 17<sup>119</sup>.

In 1953–1954 the US–Korea relations developed in the context of conflict. While the goal of the Americans was to stabilize the situation on the peninsula and create a security system in northeast Asia, the Koreans, primarily, sought to restore the unity of the country. In 1954, it was not easy to reconcile these priorities.

There was a gap of a year and thirty-seven days between the signing of the US–South Korean Mutual Defense Treaty and its entry into force. While the strategic guidelines of the ROK leadership remained practically the same throughout this period, for the United States, it was the time of updating the doctrinal foundations of the entire foreign policy course. In the summer and early autumn of 1953, the Mutual Defense Treaty was considered in Washington an instrument of pacification for Syngman Rhee (who was, according to Eisenhower, an “unsatisfactory ally”), but starting in November (CNS 170/1), it was seen as an important element of the Far East US security policy. Within its framework, South Korea was assigned a role of a special link that had a continental front line with the communist world.

The bilateral relations along the Washington–Seoul line throughout this time was part of a long-term American policy in this region, which was clearly manifested in a sequence of interrelated events: March 8, 1954 — Japan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement; September 8, 1954 — Manila Pact which actually established SEATO; November 17, 1954 — an Agreed US–South Korean Minute that brought the Mutual Defense Treaty and economic and military aid programs into effect; December 2, 1954 — the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Taiwan-based Republic of China.

The American–South Korean dialogue at the end of 1953 and 1954 was characterized by both internal tension and a dynamic sequence of events largely brought into the negotiation process by the personal qualities of the South Korean President Syngman Rhee. Washington was aware that the leader of the Republic of Korea was a power-hungry nationalist, whose rule could hardly contribute to economic prosperity and democracy in the country. However, he was a consistent anti-communist and this was of decisive importance for the Eisenhower administration in 1954<sup>120</sup>. He had many admirers among the US leadership who were ready to close their eyes to the fact that a significant part of the American aid would support the authoritarian regime.

It is interesting that as South Korea was included into the geostrategic programs of the United States, American politicians and diplomats forgot about the arguments regarding the inability of the South Korean economy to provide for the modern army of many thousands. In 1954, the Eisenhower administration was primarily concerned with strengthening its “defense perimeter”, so to achieve this goal, the army of 720,000 people did not seem to be an unbearable burden either for the economy of South Korea or for the US budget.

Being totally dependent on the Americans in the military and economic spheres, Syngman Rhee was forced to yield on the main thing: he agreed to adhere to the terms of the armistice. The Korean president’s list of counter-claims included creation of the

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid. P. 1944.

<sup>120</sup> See: *Divine R. A. Eisenhower and the Cold War*. New York, 1981. P. 33–34.

US-Korean alliance and implementation of economic and military aid programs. Having made some concessions regarding all the points, the United States managed to create sufficient counterbalance to restrain Syngman Rhee: they established control over the South Korean military forces; assigned broad authority to the Economic Coordinator of aid programs; had considerable armed forces on the territory of Korea. The Republic of Korea was included in the US regional security system on the terms of the Americans.

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