

Operational Lessons Learned in the Korean War

**A Monograph
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Abstract

More than 60 years since the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula, the United States Armed Forces continue to stand by the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of the Republic of Korea in an effort to deter further North Korean aggression. The purpose of this monograph is capture operational lessons learned during the Korean War that should be taken into consideration by operational planners as they prepare for future conflict on the peninsula. Looking at the Korean Peninsula's geography, weather and terrain, and place in the world highlight unique challenges operational planners will face. The strategic context of North Korea's proximity and alliance to China is important to understand and take into consideration during any operation in the region. China considers North Korea as a buffer protecting its region of Manchuria. Encroachment of this border by foreign forces is a threat to Chinese sovereignty. China's continued support of the North Korean regime is essential to their survival and must always frame the operational environment. The Korean Peninsula is subject to weather extremes, such as monsoons and harsh winters that have a direct impact on operations. During the winter of 1950-1951, marines and soldiers faced sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall that blocked mountain passes and clogged main supply routes. Fifty years later, soldiers and airmen serving in Korea experienced another such harsh winter that limited operations because of heavy snowfall and had an impact their ability to respond to threats from the north. The reason that weather has such an operational impact is because of the restrictive terrain found on the peninsula. The Korean Peninsula is primarily mountainous, with most valleys running north to south, and having limited east west cross mobility corridors. In the north, limited infrastructure, such as road networks and expressways, compounds the problem. Add to this, population centers based around crossroads along the valley floors, and the terrain becomes even more restrictive to ground maneuvers. By examining combat operations during the Korean War, it becomes apparent that operational planners must consider force structure. The allocation of force multipliers to enable independent brigade operations without the possibility of mutually supporting maneuver units is critical in Korea's restrictive terrain.

A look at the terrain and weather found on the peninsula, along with a short history of Korea, sets the stage for a look at the Korean War. Following United Nations forces through their first year of fighting through the lens of operational art highlights relevant lessons learned for the operational planner. Couching these lessons learned in the Korean environment of today, establishes a framework that is useful for operational planners.

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Introduction

With the realization of Kim Il-Jung's declining health and the announcement of his son, Kim Jong-Un, as his successor, the Korean peninsula has seen an increase in incidents described as North Korea's continued policy of brinkmanship and a possible move toward the consolidation of power.¹ In 2010, North Korean naval forces sank a South Korean military vessel, the Cheonan, killing forty-six South Korean sailors, exchanged gunfire across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), and exchanged artillery fire with South Korean forces on the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong.² Current defense agreements and the presence of United States forces on the Korean peninsula ensure the United States will be involved in any crisis between North and South Korea. The current generation of strategic and operational planners, however, is fifty-one years removed from the outbreak of the Korean War. Looking back at the Korean War, specifically the lessons learned from combat operations in that region, and comparing them to the current situation on the Korean peninsula will assist operational planners in preparing for crisis action planning.

Any future operations on the Korean peninsula must take into consideration the operational impact of the constraints of a limited war given the proximity of other competing world powers. A limited war, as defined by military strategist Bernard Brodie

¹ Tim Beal, "Korean Brinkmanship, American Provocation, and the Road to War," *Foreign Policy in Focus* December 26, 2010. <http://www.fpif.org/articles/ko> (accessed April 27, 2011).

² John Lyman, "North Korea and the Sinking of the Cheonan Warship", *Foreign Policy Digest* June 14, 2010. <http://www.foreignpolicydigest.org/2010/06/14/north-korea-and-the-sinking-of-the-cheonan-warship/> (accessed April 27, 2011).

writing about nuclear strategy for the RAND Corporation, is “restraint on an already mobilized and tremendously powerful force and deliberately resorting to less efficient measures.”³ The United States waged the Korean War in an attempt to contain communist expansion, but after the Chinese entered the fight, it changed into a limited war characterized by high intensity conflict and insurgency.

Part One: Historical framework leading up to the Korean War and the impact of Korean geography on combat operations.

Korea has a long and interesting history as a small country in the center of a region in the world surrounded by some of the most powerful nations. On the Korean Peninsula, the Korean people have lived and prospered in challenging terrain and extreme weather. Any framing of problems on the Korean Peninsula must consider these facts for planning for lines of effort in diplomacy, information, military, and economic.

The Korean Peninsula is in East Asia and extends 1,100 km southwards from the continent, 43 degrees north latitude to 34, into the Pacific Ocean between the Sea of Japan (East Sea) and the Yellow Sea. In the north the Korean Peninsula, and what is now

³ Bernard Brodie, *The Meaning of Limited War* (Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1958), iii. Note: Carl Von Clausewitz would say that by their nature all wars are limited because they fall short of total or the theoretical absolute war. In Bernard Brodie’s definition, he is describing a war self-restricted by at least one of the participants. (page 3-4) That is to say a country, although possessing the ability to apply more combat power such as nuclear weapons, makes the conscious decision not to employ the full force of their arsenal for fear of an escalation in the conflict. (page 7) Bernard Brodie further makes the argument that this kind of limited war is now the status quo since the emergence and employment of atomic weapons. (page 16) Because most of the United States’ potential adversaries possess nuclear weapons, all future conflicts will be limited under the threat of nuclear escalation.

North Korea, shares a 1,416 km border with China and in the northwest a 19 km border with Russia along the Yalu and Tumen rivers. The remaining 8,460 km is coastline. To the west across the Yellow Sea is China, to the south and to the east is Japan.

The Korean Peninsula's total area is "approximately 85,000 square miles, roughly the size of New York," but 70 percent is mountainous terrain.⁴ The two principle mountain ranges are the Taebak and Sobaek. The mountain ranges generally run from north to south, creating corridors that restrict movement from east to west. This highly restrictive terrain has an impact on maneuver and prevents mutual support between units operating in adjacent corridors. This also has the added effect of making any cross-corridors strategic to any war plans.

In South Korea, population density can affect maneuver because most population centers are at key points along corridors on the valley floor.⁵ North Korea, being less populated and more centrally located around the capital of Pyongyang, has less population density along choke points.⁶ But, because terrain is more restrictive in the north, movement of internally displaced civilians will have a significant operational impact on decisive points and lines of operations. These characteristics of Korean geography have the effect of restricting maneuver and complicating or hampering resupply operations via roadways.

⁴ Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 2001.), 3.

⁵ Andrea Matles Savada and William Shaw, ed., *South Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1992), 79-81.

⁶ Andrea Matles Savada, ed., *North Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1994), 59.

During the Korean War, limited road networks severely hampered United Nations operations. In the south, a road network existed from the port of Pusan through Taegu, Taejon, Osan, and then on to Seoul. Throughout the Korean War, United Nations (UN) forces used this road network for the transportation of supplies. Once UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel into North Korea, they began to “encounter a most difficult logistical problem.”⁷ The road network in the north consisted of “axial routes that followed the north and south trend of deep mountain valleys” and west-east routes were very few.⁸

In the 1980s, South Korea began a concerted effort to expand public roads with the expressed purpose of improving mobility of the population. Between 1967 and 1988, South Korea expanded the number of kilometers of expressways from 86.8 kilometers to 1,539 kilometers. In 1989, the South Korean government planned to add 1,243 kilometers with 9 additional expressways and by 1996, “South Korea was expected to have twenty-one expressways with a combined length of 2,840 kilometers.”⁹ South Korea continues to improve their road network.

North Korea continues to suffer from “inadequate and outmoded infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.”¹⁰ Because of this, North Koreans rely heavily on railroads for the transportation of freight. In 1990, “railroads hauled 90 percent of all

⁷ James Schnabel, *Policy and Direction The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1992), 191.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Savada and Shaw, *South Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., 178.

¹⁰ Savada, *North Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., 144.

freight” in the country.¹¹ The two major railroad lines run north south along the coasts and two east-west lines connect the capital city of Pyongyang in the west to Wonsan in the east.¹² During the Korean War the two capitals were connected by rail through what is today called the western corridor south of the Imjim River and the Kaesong Heights to the north of the river.

Northern Korea, to the east of Manchuria, is more mountainous than southern Korea. In fact, “all of the peninsula’s mountains with elevations of 2,000 meters or more are located in North Korea.”¹³ These mountain ranges have large mineral deposits mined by the North Korean government; therefore, it is the more industrialized of the two halves. Today, it still relies on industry for its economy and must import food because of its relative lack of arable farmland. This is a weakness used by countries in the region when negotiating with North Korea, using food as political bargaining chip.¹⁴

In North Korea, the weather is cooler and more online with the continent, specifically Manchuria. There are four distinct seasons, but “long winters bring bitterly cold and clear weather interspersed with snowstorms as a result of northern and northwestern winds that blow from Siberia.”¹⁵ During the Korean War, the extreme cold weather affected operations as soldiers and marines quickly discovered that any communications equipment that ran on batteries had a significantly reduced life. The

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 145.

¹³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁴ Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, 386.

¹⁵ Savada, *North Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., 52.

extreme cold would slow “the chemical reaction that generates electrons to supply electrical current inside the battery.”¹⁶

In the south, the climate is relatively warm and wet, supporting a more agricultural-based economy. The entire peninsula, however, suffers from cold in the winter, Yellow Dust from the Gobi Desert choking the air in the spring, monsoons in midsummer, and typhoons in autumn. Although “South Korea is less vulnerable to typhoons than Japan, Taiwan, the east coast of China, or the Philippines”, they can cause extensive damage with high winds, flooding, and landslides when mountain slopes become saturated by heavy rain fall.¹⁷ Massive flooding in the summer of 1998 destroyed large portions of at least two American Army bases, causing the 2nd Infantry Division to report they were non-mission capable until they could extricate themselves from the mud.

Because of its proximity, Korea has long been at the cross roads of struggle between the region’s competing powers. Over the course of history, Korea has seen invasions from Mongols, Japanese, and Chinese. Between these invasions, the regional superpowers exerted an influence on internal and external Korean politics that shaped Korean culture. In 1231, Mongols attacked through China into Korea and ruled until

¹⁶ Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company* (New York: Grove Press, 2009), 36.

¹⁷ Savada and Shaw, *South Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., 75.

1392 when General Yi Song-gye established the Chosen dynasty.¹⁸ In 1592, the first of several Japanese invasion attempts ended only after Admiral Yi Sun-shin's victory over a Japanese invasion fleet in 1598 using a new secret weapon, the Turtle Ship.¹⁹ Korea quickly adopted doggedly isolationist policies, limited trade across her borders, and closed her ports to foreign powers. Korea had become the Hermit Kingdom.²⁰

In 1866, the United States ventured into the Hermit Kingdom in an attempt to open this regional crossroads to trade. The ill-fated expedition of the ship General Sherman ensured that the United States would take an interest in the Hermit Kingdom. Dispatched to explore into the country by traveling up "the Taedong River in an attempt to reach Pyongyang," the General Sherman took hostages and fired on Korean citizens. The Koreans attacked and destroyed the ship.²¹ The next year, another gunboat entered Korean waters to search for survivors of the General Sherman, with no success.

The troubles begun by the General Sherman finally culminated in the Korean-American War of 1871 when "five ships armed with 85 guns and manned by 1,230

¹⁸ Andrew C. Nahm, *A History of the Korean People* (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym International Corp., 1988), 90.

¹⁹ Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), xi. The Turtle Ship was an ingenious construction that produced a ship enclosed with a top cover of sheet metal to make it more resistant to flaming arrows. The rowers were incased in the ship and protected from missiles and oars could be retracted when ramming. The forward masthead, which double as a ram, was almost always in the shape of a dragon's head, but when viewing this shelled ship it looked like a turtle.

²⁰ Richard C Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1960), 18 & 21.

²¹ Wilson Strand, "Opening the Hermit Kingdom," *History Today* Volume: 54 Issue: 1 (January 2004). <http://www.historytoday.com/wilson-strand/opening-hermit-kingdom> (accessed April 26, 2011).

sailors and marines invaded the country capturing several forts.”²² The Department of State dispatched the flotilla under the command of Admiral John Rodgers “to seek redress from the Koreans” for the sinking of the General Sherman.²³ The Americans suffered few casualties and after exterminating the Korean defenders in the forts, withdrew. The Americans would later depart the Peninsula without a trade agreement and the Koreans once again began a policy of isolationism. The Japanese, hungry for natural resources such as lumber, shortly thereafter began a campaign to assert their influence.

In 1876, the Japanese successfully opened Korean ports to foreign trade and six years later, the United States secured a trade agreement. Meanwhile, within the region war loomed between China and Japan. Hostilities finally broke out in 1894 with Japan handily defeating the Chinese and increasing its influence in the region, specifically in Korea. The Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905 establishing Korea as a Japanese protectorate. Five years later, Japan formally annexed Korea as a colony and abolished the Chosen dynasty (1392–1910).²⁴

Today, most Koreans look at the Japanese occupation as the darkest time of Korean history.²⁵ The Japanese began stripping Korea of natural resources, clear-cutting forests in the south and mining in the north. The Japanese also began a policy of eradicating Korean culture by outlawing the Korean language and Hangul, the Korean

²² Ibid.

²³ Robert T. Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 45.

²⁴ Cumings, *The Korean War*, xii.

²⁵ Nahm, *A History of the Korean People*, 223.

written language. The language of commerce was Japanese and all business was within Japanese social constraints. Japanese was the language taught in schools and the use of Korean resulted in corporal punishment. Japanese was the official language of record and used in government. The intent was for Korean culture to disappear over a generation.²⁶

Due to these repressive measures, an independence movement emerged. As the independence movement became more popular, the Japanese became more ruthless in combating the insurgents. Corporal punish was favored by the Japanese and, between the years 1913 and 1918, 294,000 individuals or “one out of every fifty-nine Koreans” were whipped as the result of summary police trials.²⁷ In an effort to counter the growing insurgent movement, the Japanese police forces in the colony increased from 7,700 to 19,000 between the years 1910 and 1930.²⁸

During World War II, Koreans served in POW camps in Burma and Indonesia as guards in the Japanese Army. Koreans also worked as construction workers on several south Pacific islands. Korean women, pressed into service as comfort women, worked as sex slaves to Japanese Army and Naval personnel.²⁹ Korean workers manned and operated industrial sites in Japan, working in high-risk environments.³⁰

²⁶ Savada and Shaw, *South Korea: A Study Guide*, 4th ed., 20-24.

²⁷ Cornelius Osgood, *The Koreans and Their Culture* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1951), 290.

²⁸ Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times*, 115.

²⁹ C. Sarah Soh, “Japan's Responsibility Toward Comfort Women Survivors” *Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper No. 77* (May 2001)

<http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp77.html> (accessed July 10, 2011). With the rise of women's movements in South Korea during the late 1980's, the issue of comfort women or *ianfu* was in the forefront of discussions about Japanese wartime reparations. The Japanese

Korean independence came with the end of World War II. The allies had agreed to share responsibility on the Korean peninsula. Not unlike Europe, with the Soviet Union in the east and the other allied powers in the west, Korea split between north and south divided roughly along the 38th parallel.³¹

At the time of the outbreak of the Korean War, the American public knew little about the Korean Peninsula and considered it of little strategic importance outside of the policy of communist containment. After the Korean War began, the proximity of Communist China and Soviet Russia became very real as hundreds of thousands of Communist Chinese forces flowed across the border with equipment produced by Soviet Russian factories. Today, because of its juxtaposition between the two major economies of China and Japan, and its proximity to Russia, the Korean Peninsula is key to the United States presence and policy in East Asia. In 2010, China was America's number two trading partner, Japan was number four, South Korea was number seven, and Taiwan was number nine.³²

Part Two: Combat operations from June 1950 until the application of constraints in limited war.

National Diet first acknowledged the issue in 1991 and the United Nations has since conducted investigations and hearings. Today the question of compensation for comfort women from Korea, China, and the Philippines continues to showed foreign relation discussions in the region

³⁰ Cumings, *The Korean War*, 39-41.

³¹ Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, 5-7.

³² "U.S. Trade Balance, by Partner Country 2010 in descending order of trade turnover (imports plus exports)", United States International Trade Commission.

http://dataweb.usitc.gov/scripts/cy_m3_run.asp (accessed August 17, 2011).

The Korean War has two parts; the first is the war that began on June 25, 1950 and the second is the limited war that ensued shortly after the retreat from the Yalu River through the winter of 1950-51. The first part of the war is sub-divided into three parts with the beginning of the war and the trickle of forces into the country, the Inchon landings and Pusan perimeter breakout, and the winter campaign into and out of North Korea. By applying the elements of operational art, it is possible to capture lessons learned from these major campaigns and operations.³³

Operational Art is the translation of strategic guidance into tactical tasks in time, space, and purpose. The elements of operational art include end state and conditions, centers of gravity, direct or indirect approach, decisive points, lines of operations/effort, operational reach, tempo, simultaneity and depth, phasing and transitions, culmination, and risk.³⁴ End state and conditions for tactical units come from policy goals. In World War II, the end state was the unconditional surrender of the Imperial Japanese and conditions associated with that would be the liberation of seized territory. To set the conditions for this surrender, operational planners focused on the enemy's centers of gravity. The concept of centers of gravity comes from the 19th century Prussian military philosopher Carl Von Clausewitz. The center of gravity is the "hub of all power and movement" and "is the point against which all our energies should be directed."³⁵

³³ *Operations FM 3-0, CI* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2011), 7-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 595-6.

Direct or indirect approach is the manner in which units attack an enemy's center of gravity, causing one of four defeat mechanisms. These defeat mechanisms are to destroy, dislocate, disintegrate, or isolate.³⁶ Along this approach, decisive points, or geographic places important to the success of the operation are identified. By arranging these decisive points in time and space toward the enemy's center of gravity, lines of operations/efforts can be determined across units or systems which allows understanding of how critical tasks support the overall mission.³⁷ It also aids in determining phasing and transitions, which helps in simultaneity and depth. Units working along parallel lines of operations have greater effects on the enemy when leveraging simultaneity and execute operations throughout the depth of the battlefield. Fires is the best example of this, when long-range fires are used in shaping operations and direct support fires are used in the close-area and rear-area fights.

Operational reach is the extent of a commander's ability to employ military capabilities over distance.³⁸ The positioning of forces, the employment of fires throughout the battle space, and network efficiency can extend operational reach. The speed and rhythm of operations, as compared to that of the enemy, is the operational tempo. It is important for commanders to control the tempo in order to keep the

³⁶ *Operations FM 3-0, C1, 7-7.*

³⁷ *Ibid., 7-9.*

³⁸ *Ibid., 7-12.*

initiative.³⁹ By doing this, the commander can avoid culmination or the inability to continue the current operation.

In any military operation, risk is always present. Not only risk to individuals and equipment, but also risk to mission success must be taken into consideration. Risk identified can be mitigated or accepted as needed. In the Korean War, the risk of Chinese intervention was identified and ignored with devastating effects.

China was the largest country in the region that was relieved of the oppression of the Japanese at the end of World War II. Although liberated, a civil war between Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist and Mao's communist forces raged across the middle kingdom. The civil war continued until 1949 when Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists fled to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and Mao consolidated power. Left with over five million soldiers still in uniform, Mao was poised to continue the revolution with an invasion of Tibet and destruction of nationalist forces.⁴⁰ Other events in a small country east of Manchuria would determine China's next move in the spread of communism.

Chinese Communist policy in the region was very clear. On June 30, 1949, Chairman Mao announced the "lean-to-one-side" statement.⁴¹ Chen Jian, Cornell University History Department professor and author of several books on Communist China, points out in his book *China's Road to the Korean War* that this was the

³⁹ Ibid., 7-13.

⁴⁰ Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War Against the U.S. in Korea, 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 64-66.

⁴¹ Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia Press, 1994), 64.

beginning of the Sino-Soviet Alliance. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Chinese Communist People would stand together because of a common political ideology. There is little coincidence that this took place less than one year before hostilities began on the Korean Peninsula, where the USSR installed a leader who had served as the head of a communist guerilla cell.

This communist guerrilla and Captain in the Soviet Army, Kim Sung-II, had led a band of Korean freedom fighters against Japanese forces as part of communist Chinese forces in northern Korea and Manchuria. Educated and trained in Russia in military science and Marxist doctrine, Kim Sung-II led several successful raids against Japanese forces. With the defeat of the Japanese Empire, he returned from the Soviet Union. Relatively well known for his exploits during World War II, he was a leader behind which the Korean people could rally. Fluent in Mandarin and Russian, Kim Sung-II was the perfect man for Soviet aims; he had name recognition and bridged that gap between Soviet and Maoist policy.⁴²

In the south, Dr. Syngman Rhee led the democratic Republic of Korea. Dr. Rhee had been involved in the Korean independence movement since 1897. That year, Dr. Rhee was arrested for demonstrating against the Imperial throne and not released until 1904.⁴³ Upon his release, he went to the United States to study, earning degrees from George Washington University, Harvard, and a PhD from Princeton University. Returning to Korea in 1910, Dr. Rhee again became active in the Korean Independence

⁴² Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, 16-17.

⁴³ Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee*, 34.

movement, ultimately elected as the President for the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea. This shadow government, formed by all the major pro-independence organizations, conducted operations from Shanghai while Dr. Rhee lived and worked in Hawaii.⁴⁴

Dr. Rhee continued his work toward Korean independence during World War II, serving as part of the Korean Provisional Government operating in exile in the United States. With the collapse of the Japanese Imperial throne, he returned to Korea with the hopes of establishing a free Korean nation. His hopes were only partially realized on July 17, 1948 when he signed the Republic of Korea's constitution while another government controlled the north.⁴⁵

Fighting between the two Koreas broke out on June 25, 1950. It had been brewing since the end of World War II with the communist backed government in the north and an American backed government in the south. All along the line of division, there was guerrilla activity during the month of May, especially northwest of the South's capital of Seoul on the Ongjin Peninsula.⁴⁶ The North Korean forces crossed the Imjin River with "seven infantry divisions, one armored brigade, one separate infantry

⁴⁴ Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1954), 159.

⁴⁵ Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee*, 101.

⁴⁶ Cumings, *The Korean War*, 5.

regiment, one motorcycle regiment, and one border constabulary brigade.”⁴⁷ This force numbered approximately 90,000 men, spearheaded by 150 Russian T-34 tanks.

American response to this communist threat from the north was the deployment of Task Force Smith. Named for its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, the task force was a five hundred forty eight-man force formed around an outgunned infantry battalion with a battery of artillery in direct support.⁴⁸ The task force deployed with obsolete 2.36-inch rocket launchers and two cumbersome 75mm recoilless guns.⁴⁹ These weapons and the 105mm howitzers were hardly a match for the North Korean T-34s moving south.

The mission was to stop they enemy’s march south, or at least to delay their march to Pusan, in an effort to buy time for the build-up of forces around the ports of Pusan.⁵⁰ This small force would also signal the resolve of the United States to defend South Korea against communist aggression. Dug in on a small rise north of Osan, astride the main road running south from Seoul, Task Force Smith engaged North Korean forces suffering “twenty killed in action and one hundred wounded in action.”⁵¹ Task Force Smith’s valiant efforts were handicapped by poor resourcing, but delayed the North

⁴⁷ Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1992), 19.

⁴⁸ Bill Sloan, *The Darkest Summer: Pusan and Inchon 1950, The Battles That Saved South Korea - and the Marines - From Extinction* (NY, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), 28-9.

⁴⁹ Michael Hickey, *The Korean War* (Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 45.

⁵⁰ Sloan, *The Darkest Summer*, 28-9.

⁵¹ Michael J. Varhola, *Fire & Ice: The Korean War, 1950-1953* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2000), 3.

Korean advance south and allowed the 24th Division to occupy battle positions near the city of Taejon.

Not originally conceived as a delaying force, the 24th Division deployed to South Korea to stop the flow of communist forces south. Eventually the division retreated to the Pusan perimeter, pursued by North Korean forces. The original plan was for the 24th Division to block and hold the enemy to allow the 1st Cavalry Division to conduct an amphibious landing at Inchon, the port city west of Seoul. Clay Blair, in his epic volume *The Forgotten War* explained; “while the 1st Cavalry was landing at Inchon, the 24th Division would attack north, closing the pincers.”⁵² This ill-conceived plan however, lacked the resources and trained troops needed to execute such an amphibious landing synchronizing the employment of air and naval assets.

Eighth (US) Army had spent the last five years on occupation duty in Japan. With the postwar draw down, regiments fielded only two maneuver battalions instead of three, and those were manned at less than one hundred percent. Equipment was old and outdated, and soldiers’ readiness levels were abysmal. Training levels were very low because of the lack of resources and the absence of the veterans from World War II. The 24th Division was the worst of the divisions in Eighth (US) Army because it was at the end of the supply chain.⁵³

⁵² Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1987.), 88.

⁵³ David Halberstem, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 141.

Poorly supplied and undermanned, the 24th Division fought three major engagements between July and August 1950. These engagements were the battle of Kum River, Taejon, and the Notch. While the 24th Division pushed back from the Kum River and attempted to defend Taejon, the 25th and 1st Cavalry Divisions conducted administrative landings at the port of Pusan. Once unloaded, the fresh divisions where rushed to aid the 24th Division. The 24th Division fell back through the 25th and 1st Cavalry Divisions having “lost some thirty percent of their strength [and] more than 2,400 men reported missing in action.”⁵⁴ The two relieving divisions fared little better and eventually fell back into a hastily defense perimeter around the port city of Pusan.⁵⁵

Over the next month and a half, American forces fought along the west side of the Pusan perimeter. These battles raged over and around the Naktong River. The Eighth (US) Army Commander, Lieutenant General Walton Walker, faced the problem of building combat power while defending against a very aggressive enemy. Forces available included four ROK divisions and four United States divisions. The 27th Commonwealth Brigade and a provisional brigade of U.S. Marines also joined in the fighting. The British brigade was the only United Nation unit available for combat

⁵⁴ Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 80.

⁵⁵ Included in the 2,400 men reported missing in action was the division commander, Major General William Dean. As the 24th Division was pulling back from Taejon, the General became separated from his command post. Taking to the hills with other stragglers from the division, the General hoped to infiltrate south or southwest to friendly lines. After wandering for thirty-six days he was captured in a village thirty-five miles south of Taejon and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner of war (POW). Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953*, 139.

operations because the other “forces demanded weeks of retraining and acclimatization exercises, also known as forced marches.”⁵⁶

These fights, the first battle of the Naktong Bulge, the Bowling Alley, and the second battle of the Naktong Bulge, denied the enemy access into the Pusan Perimeter and allowed United Nation Forces time to plan and prepare for Operation Chromite and the Pusan Perimeter Breakout. In the first battle, the badly mauled 24th Division, reinforced by the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade, fought to hold the heights overlooking the Naktong River along the west side of the Pusan Perimeter. The 4th Division of the North Korean People’s Army crossed the river and pushed into the perimeter, creating a salient that was only reduced after ten days of fighting by the 2nd and 25th Infantry Divisions.⁵⁷

The American forces had little rest as the North Koreans continued to apply pressure along the Naktong River. Along the southern portion of the Naktong River, an Army regiment from the 2nd Infantry Division and one from 25th Infantry Division, engaged North Korean forces. That battle was the Bowling Alley. The battle got its name because of the open road the North Korean forces used, thereby allowing U.S. forces to knock them down like pins in a bowling alley. The American soldiers had learned that by using captured flares, they could lure the North Koreans into ambushes covered by

⁵⁶ Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 They Came from the North* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 2010), 205.

⁵⁷ Varhola, *Fire & Ice*, 6.

“concealed US artillery and bazooka teams.”⁵⁸ This technique, as well as the application of air power in a close air support role, ensured the American forces inflicted heavy damage on the enemy.

In the first three weeks of September, the North Koreans continued to attack along the Naktong River in a major offensive. Elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade committed forces against an enemy that knew the key to victory was to deny United Nation forces an area to be able to build combat power. On the evening of August 31, 1950 North Korean forces attacked across the Naktong River with four divisions.⁵⁹ One of these divisions was directed at the village of Yongsan and Task Force Manchu. Task Force Manchu, formed around the 9th Infantry Regiment minus one battalion, sat astride a crossroads whose capture would allow the enemy a straight shot toward Pusan. Bitter fighting ensued in which the task force took devastating losses. If not for a surge in close air support missions by Fifth Air Force, the North Korean armored forces would have gained the road to Pusan.⁶⁰

The heavy fighting along the Pusan Perimeter fixed the North Koreans and allowed United Nation forces to prepare and execute Operation Chromite. This operation, set for September 15, 1950, was the amphibious landing of X Corps at the port of Inchon in an effort to sever North Korean lines of support and to regain the South Korean capital

⁵⁸ Brian Catchpole, *The Korean War 1950-53* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 2000), 31.

⁵⁹ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 453.

⁶⁰ Millett, *The War for Korea*, 230.

of Seoul.⁶¹ North Koreans continued to mass for a final assault of the Pusan Perimeter as two divisions assaulted across the mudflats of Incheon Harbor catching the enemy off guard and over extended. The simultaneous Pusan Perimeter Breakout would crush the North Korean Army between the two forces.⁶² The clearly defined end state and conditions set the stage for a very successful campaign.

By targeting the North Korean Army for disintegration, this campaign set the conditions that would give the operational-level commander, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, choices in the tactical employment of forces in support of strategic goals. Washington wanted to stem the growth of communism and push the North Korean forces out of a friendly South Korea. With the successful execution of Operation Chromite, United Nations forces would be poised to exploit operational gains and possibly take the fight into North Korea.

Following the 1950 Army doctrine, Operation Chromite would “provide for a rapid concentration of forces for employment in the decisive direction.”⁶³ In applying the elements of Operational Art, the operation was an indirect approach with the defeat mechanism of disintegration. In the language of the U.S. Army’s current doctrine, the forces were to “disrupt the enemy’s command and control system, degrading the ability to conduct operations while leading to a rapid collapse of the enemy’s capabilities or will

⁶¹ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 498.

⁶² Varhola, *Fire & Ice*, 7.

⁶³ *Field Service Regulation Larger Units FM 100-15*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1950), 18-19.

to fight.”⁶⁴ General MacArthur identified three decisive points, Wolmi-do Island, the port facilities at Inchon, and Kimpo Airfield, along the line of operations for X Corps’ seizure of Seoul.

Wolmi-do Island sits in the middle of Inchon Harbor, which is a mud flat subject to extreme tidal shifts. The island is important to defenders as a position to command the shipping lanes and critical to any attacking force as a position from which to project force into the port city of Inchon. With the securing of the city, Kimpo airfield would become an airhead and staging area for future air support, thereby reducing response time and problems of evacuating casualties across the mud flats.

The 1st Marine Division led the landings at Inchon Harbor, followed by the 7th Infantry Division. As the divisions attacked from west to east, the Main Supply Route running from north to south through the Munsan Corridor and Seoul was cut. This had the effect of severing the North Korean Army’s line of communication/support into North Korea through the Kaesong Heights, thereby setting the conditions for a breakout from the Pusan Perimeter by Eighth (US) Army. By blocking the enemy’s north-south corridor, it would force the enemy to withdraw.

As X Corps moved ashore, the marines and soldiers were limited to the direct operational fires available to the landing force from the Navy. Initially, the Navy provided fire support as marines stormed ashore. As the forces pushed inland, the marines to Seoul and soldiers to the southeast to cut the southern route from Seoul, units

⁶⁴ *Operations FM 3-0, C1, 7-7.*

became more dependent on their own organic fire support and air support. Because of this, Kimpo Airfield was a decisive point in the seizure of Seoul.

At the Pusan Perimeter, the breakout actually came later than planned. The Eighth (US) Army Commander, General Walker, explained that it was because of a shortage of artillery ammunition and bridging equipment.⁶⁵ Artillery rounds had been arriving at the port at a steady rate, but because of limitations in Logistic Command's ability to offload, ships would take as much as a week to discharge critical equipment and supplies.⁶⁶ The 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, 1st Cavalry Division, British 27th Infantry Brigade, and Republic of Korea (ROK) forces attacked North Korean positions on September 16, 1950 setting the conditions for crossing the Naktong River and pushing north to link-up with United Nations forces in Seoul. On the 17th, Air Force F-51s and F80s "were out in force, strafing, bombing, and napalming" North Korean units along the river.⁶⁷ Unknown to Eighth (US) Army, North Korean Army units were down to 25% to 50% strength.⁶⁸ By September 23, North Korean forces broke and the Pusan Perimeter breakout was complete. ROK forces raced up the eastern coast of Korea and United

⁶⁵ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 218.

⁶⁶ Max Hermansen, "Chapter 4: Korea and Pusan, The Battle for a Logistical Bridgehead," *United States Military Logistics in the First Part of the Korean War* (Spring, 2000). http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie_books/hermansen/4.html (accessed July 25, 2011).

⁶⁷ James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of the Korean War* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1988), 74.

⁶⁸ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 545-6.

Nations forces attacked to secure the port city of Kunsan and link up with X Corps elements.⁶⁹

Supply problems notwithstanding, United Nations forces controlled the tempo of operations during the landings and breakout. By reinforcing the effect of simultaneous operations in Inchon and all along the Pusan Perimeter, General MacArthur controlled the speed and rhythm of military operations. Air support from the Marines, Navy, and Air Force gave depth to the operations conducted during the months of September and early October. Planners dedicated “ten squadrons of Corsairs, three squadrons of Skyraiders, and four squadrons of Panthers” to provide coverage for the Inchon landings.⁷⁰

United Nations planners focused efforts across the peninsula by balancing the apportionment of combat power between the Inchon landing operation and the Pusan perimeter breakout. With two divisions, X Corps deliberately and logically accomplished its objectives with the seizure of Wolmido Island, Kimpo Airfield, and Seoul. Early the morning of the first day one marine battalion seized Wolmido Island in an hour and seventeen minutes.⁷¹ By the fourth day of the operation, Kimpo Airfield was secured and before the end of the month, President Syngman Rhee was back in the capital.⁷²

The United Nations forces did not experience a culminating point during this campaign because they were able to continue offensive operations into the next campaign

⁶⁹ Ibid., 573.

⁷⁰ John R. Bruning Jr., *Crimson Sky: The Air Battle for Korea* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's, 1999), 42.

⁷¹ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 505-506.

⁷² Ibid., 537.

of the war, crossing into North Korea. The success of the campaign however, set the conditions for General MacArthur's over-confidence. While the Inchon landings were a calculated risk, over-confidence would lead to disastrous decisions as the United Nations prepared for operations north of the 38th parallel.

Potential involvement by the Chinese in the Korean conflict loomed in the background of discussions in Washington. China's recent conversion to communism and their border with Korea is still today a very real strategic problem with operational implications. In 1950, the geographic fact of communist proximity "raised the specter of possible Chinese or Soviet intervention, especially after some of MacArthur's aircraft crossed the boundary and strafed a Soviet airfield."⁷³ President Truman felt the violation of airspace so provocative as "to meet with MacArthur at Wake Island and the Joint Chiefs to place some limits on his movements so as not to offer a provocation."⁷⁴ President Truman's focus was greater than just the Korean Peninsula; he also worried about communist encroachment in Europe and maintaining a balance. General MacArthur believed that Europe was lost and that the future of the world would be determined in Asia.⁷⁵ Crossing into North Korea was authorized solely for the destruction of the North Korean Army, but in no way were American forces to provoke the Communist Chinese and thereby widen the war.

⁷³ Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 185.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Matthew B. Ridgeway, *The Korean War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), 144.

The war in Korea now took on a very different character as United Nations forces had North Korean forces on the run. General MacArthur now thought it was time to attack into North Korea with the expressed objective of the destruction of any future North Korean offensive capability.⁷⁶ X Corps, under Major General Edward Almond, would continue to operate separate from Walker's Eighth (US) Army.⁷⁷ Its mission was to attack up the eastern side of North Korea after amphibious landings in the port cities of Wonsan and Hunsan.⁷⁸ Eighth (US) Army would attack north from Seoul across the Kaesung Heights to seize Pyongyang and continue to pursue North Korean forces.⁷⁹ The extensive mountain range running along the Dragon's back, the rugged mountains of North Korea, separated the two forces and made mutual support impossible.

The end state for this operation was unclear as forces began their march to the Yalu. The condition of the destruction of North Korean military's offensive capability was clear, but the occupation of North Korean territory sparked concerns of intervention by the Chinese Communists. Unclear guidance from the White House and confusing correspondence between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Far East Headquarters only muddied the situation. The message passed on to General MacArthur by Army Chief of Staff General Joseph Collins was that the consensus in Washington "was that there

⁷⁶ Lynn Montross and Capt. Nicholas A. Canzona, USMC. *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea Volume II The Chosin Reservoir Campaign* (St. Clair Shores, Michigan: Scholarly Press, Inc., 1976), 5.

⁷⁷ Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1990), 26-28.

⁷⁸ Roy E. Appleman, *Escaping the Trap* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M Press, 1990), 3.

⁷⁹ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 623.

should be no change in [mission]”, “but that there should be a course of action that” allowed a unified Korea while reducing the risk of involvement by other communist nations.⁸⁰ In essence, the guidance was to destroy a communist government without upsetting the communist allies.

The North Korean Army therefore continued to be the enemy’s center of gravity. Rumbblings north of the border soon proved to be a force overshadowing the North Korean Army. As United Nations Forces began a direct approach north and executed landings on Korea’s East coast, 380,000 Chinese soldiers massed in border towns and crossed the Yalu River. Fearful that the United States would not stop with the destruction of the North Korean Army, and take a positional advantage by crossing the Yalu River into Manchuria, China made plans for a direct approach with a defeat mechanism of destruction of the United Nation Forces.⁸¹

General MacArthur had identified decisive points along Eighth (US) Army’s line of operation, starting with the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. Besides the fact that the seizure of the capital city would boost the morale of South Korean forces and signal to the United Nations a measurement of success, the city sat astride the most direct route to Seoul by road and rail.⁸² All lines of communication within the Eastern corridor passed through the capital before moving up the coast, inland, or east across the peninsula in an east-west mobility corridor. In an October 17th directive, General MacArthur tasked

⁸⁰ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 425-426.

⁸¹ Spurr, *Enter the Dragon*, 117-118.

⁸² Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 352.

I Corps with the capture of Pyongyang.⁸³ Control of the highways and railroads into North Korea was critical to supply General Frank W. Milburn's I Corps as they led the attack.⁸⁴

General MacArthur also identified the next decisive points as the seizure of the villages of Sukch'on and Sunch'on, sitting astride the route in the critical east-west corridor. Seizure of Sukch'on allowed United Nations forces to block fleeing enemy forces and opened the route up the west coast of Korea and rescue American and ROK prisoners of war.⁸⁵ Sunch'on sat astride that same east-west route and was a critical road juncture that would allow United Nations forces to continue movement north inland from the west coast, or into the interior of the peninsula and on to the next east-west corridor. Control of these cities gave the operational commander options and was so important as to have airborne forces committed against them.⁸⁶ In Korea, crossroads are not just key terrain, but decisive points.

Eighth (US) Army continued to move north with two Corps abreast. I Corps, in the west, sent the 27th British Brigade north along the coastal route to seize Anju and Sinanju, cities at critical crossroads and a river crossing site.⁸⁷ The 1st ROK Division

⁸³ Ibid., 351.

⁸⁴ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 639.

⁸⁵ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 351.

⁸⁶ John Toland, *In Mortal Combat* (New York: Harper, 1993), 249. In World War II, airborne forces were used to seize and hold key terrain critical to the success of major operations. Examples include the night of D-Day in 1941 when airborne and glider forces were used to seize important bridges and cross roads, as well as Operation Market Garden in 1944 when airborne forces were used to seize a series of bridges leading into Germany.

⁸⁷ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 663-664.

crossed the Chongchon River to move on Unsan and in ROK II Corps' area, to the east, the Sixth ROK Division would make the farthest advance north in Eighth (US) Army's area before the Chinese Communist forces struck.⁸⁸

Up until that point, Eighth (US) Army had good operational reach. By focusing repair efforts along rail lines and bridging, Eighth (US) Army ensured the restricted flow of what supplies they received moved along a secure route. This further allowed them to establish distributing points at Kaesong.⁸⁹ Eighth (US) Army employed forces in-depth, echeloned fires throughout the area of operations and utilized phasing and transitions to set the tempo. Because of this, they had not realized a culmination point.

All that changed once the Chinese Communists attacked; Eighth (US) Army was forced into an operational pause to reorient forces and ensure Far East Command understood the changing environment. On October 26th, 1950, Chinese Communist forces attacked ROK II Corps, inflicting devastating damage and ensuring the destruction of Eighth (US) Army's "right flank along most of the eastern water shed of the Chongchong-gang."⁹⁰ This attack caused a change in Eighth (US) Army's rhythm of military operations, or a change in tempo. Eighth (US) Army was executing operations well across the breadth and depth of the battlefield when the Chinese attacked. Forced into an

⁸⁸ Sun Yup Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom* (Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 1992), 84-85. In August 1950, the ROK Army was reorganized and rebuilt as much as possible. The 1st ROK Division leading the way into North Korea consisted of three regiments of infantry and was led by the very capable General Paik Sun Yup, a native of Pyongyang and future four-star general.

⁸⁹ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 638-640.

⁹⁰ Millett, *The War for Korea*, 301.

operational pause, Eighth (US) Army relinquished the initiative to the Chinese Communist Forces.

With the loss of initiative and forward momentum, Eighth (US) Army eventually began a long retreat south as Chinese forces exerted extreme pressure. In addition to the soldiers, Eighth (US) Army had 17,000 prisoners and 200,000 refugees fleeing the communists. This complicated the Eighth (US) Army's logistical apparatus, as these were additional mouths to feed moving along the same limited road system used to supply the army. Medicine and food was used to entice civilians from major highways and toward railroad loading sites in an effort to keep lines of operations clear of civilian traffic.⁹¹

In the east, I ROK Corps had completed their march north from the Pusan Perimeter to penetrate North Korea well past the Wonsan area.⁹² X Corps began landing marines of the 1st Marine Division and soldiers of the 7th Infantry Division for the drive north. I ROK Corps continued its march up the coast, as X Corps began its movement into the interior of North Korea and north to the Yalu.

1st Marine Division would be on the left flank with responsibility for securing routes within the east-west corridors to keep contact with II ROK Corps, Eighth (US) Army's eastern most units. In the center, 7th Infantry Division would push north along the

⁹¹ Millett, *The War for Korea*, 353-354.

⁹² Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 634.

eastern shores of the Chosen Reservoir. A ROK division would be on the right to maintain contact with the I ROK Corps as they pushed up the coast.

End state and conditions remained the same for X Corps as for Eighth (US) Army, the destruction of the enemy's center of gravity, the North Korea Army. Using a direct approach to support the United Nations' defeat mechanism of destroy, X Corps' defeat mechanism was dislocation. X Corps sought positional advantage over the fleeing North Korean Army by reaching the Yalu River, thereby blocking their move into the sanctuary of Manchuria. Because of this, X Corps' movement in comparison to Eighth (US) Army looked like a race to the Yalu, with the ROKs leading the charge.⁹³

Understanding the importance of the cross maneuver corridors and the increasing restrictive terrain as the Marines moved north, Major General Oliver P. Smith began slowing the 1st Marine Division's movement to ensure security of decisive points along his line of operation.⁹⁴ This caution served the division well as the Communist Chinese attacked, forcing the Marines to fall back along this route. The marines' operational reach extended as they employed fires in depth, leveraging joint capabilities such as marine and United Nations air support.⁹⁵ Their air/ground coordination became the envy of Army units in Korea.⁹⁶

⁹³ Appleman, *Escaping the Trap*, 3-4.

⁹⁴ Halberstem, *The Coldest Winter*, 433.

⁹⁵ Drury and Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company*, 142-143.

⁹⁶ Edward J. Marolda ed., *The U.S. Navy in the Korean War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 297-299. Marine tactical air controllers served with the troops they were directing air support for, which made close air support extremely responsive. They talked directly

Major General Almond felt that X Corps' operational tempo depended on speed and urged his unit forward. This action prevented simultaneity and depth across the breadth of United Nations forces, specifically the possibility of operations in concert with Eighth (US) Army. Within X Corps, operations coordinated between the divisions became ever more difficult as the units moved into increasingly mountainous and restrictive terrain. By the time Communist Chinese forces attacked, the operation was not a Corps operation, rather a division fight by regimental combat teams and in some cases, task force struggles for survival.

This was apparent on November 27, 1950 as Task Force Faith fought for its survival along the east side of the Chosen Reservoir. Formed around the Army's 31st Regimental Combat Team, this task force was quickly cutoff from the marines operating to their west. Undermanned and isolated, the task force suffered one third of their number killed in action before finally breaking out to join the marines as they moved south, collapsing their line of operation back to the sea.⁹⁷

As Chinese forces encircled marine regiments on the west side of the Chosen Reservoir, they simultaneously attacked in overwhelming numbers at choke points such as Fox Hill on the south side of Toktong Pass. The restrictive terrain in North Korea meant that units became bottled up and cutoff from critical support along main supply

to the aircraft involved in the support. The Air Force the tactical air control party (TACP) routed their call for support through the ground unit, to the next-higher Army element, to the Joint Operations Center, to the Air Force TACC. Only then did the pilot talk to the TACP for further instruction.

⁹⁷ Roy E. Appleman, *East of Chosin* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M Press, 1990), 303.

routes. Toktong pass was critical because the marines' only connection to their supply base at Hagaru-ri passed through it. The pass was secured on the south side by a marine rifle company fighting to keep it open for the forces moving south as Chinese forces pursued. Suffering from the extreme cold of the Korean Winter, the company suffered heavy casualties but was successful in their mission.⁹⁸

This unplanned realization of X Corps' culmination point at the Chosin Reservoir, without forces positioned to take on the lead in the march north, caused X Corps to transition into the defense to assess their situation. This was not a strategic pause, but rather a hesitation allowing the Communist Chinese forces to continue to envelop United Nations forces. It also forced X Corps into a fighting retreat to the sea, complicated by Korean civilians fleeing south because of the fear of communist reprisals.⁹⁹

X Corps consolidated forces in and around Hungnam and Wonsan in an attempt to evacuate as much equipment and personnel as possible. Off the coast sailed Admiral James H. Doyle's Task Force 90, the Pacific's augmented amphibious force totaling 142 ships.¹⁰⁰ In preparation for evacuation, the United Nation forces "managed the development of Hungnam as an evacuation center, and civil affairs teams cared for thousands of Korean refugees that flooded the enclave."¹⁰¹ The coordinated effort

⁹⁸ Drury and Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company*, 284.

⁹⁹ Millett, *The War for Korea*, 349.

¹⁰⁰ Marolda, *The U.S. Navy in the Korean War*, 224.

¹⁰¹ Millett, *The War for Korea*, 349.

allowed X Corps and Admiral Doyle's Task Force 90, to successfully evacuate 105,000 American and Korean troops, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of cargo as well as 100,000 Korean refugees.¹⁰²

In conclusion, the attack north of the 38th Parallel had been an unrealized risk, taken on the heels of the successful Operation Chromite. The war now entered a new phase with the introduction of Communist Chinese forces into the fight. In the United States, political and military leadership began to fear the threat of an atomic exchange with the Soviet Union over a country that was little known before June 25, 1950. A new concept entered the lexicon and conceptual planning of operations called limited war. Limited war would place restraints on an already mobilized and tremendously powerful Far East Command and force operational leaders to resort to less efficient measures.

Part Three: Limited War

The Korean War would continue for two more years as the United Nations fought to maintain territory of South Korea, execute operations for limited gains, all the while balancing the concept of executing operations within a constrained environment. This is the most important part of the war for study by operational planners. The first year of the Korean War, with its large sweeping movements and risk taking, has books and articles written about it, but little written about the last two years.

¹⁰² Ibid., 354.

With the death of Lieutenant General Walker in a vehicle accident on December 23, 1950, World War II airborne hero Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway took command of Eighth (US) Army.¹⁰³ The situation seemed dire as Eighth (US) Army retreated in the face of pursuing Communist Chinese forces. Lieutenant General Ridgway, although having served in the European Theater during World War II, had an understanding of the operational environment. More importantly, he understood the strategic context in which future operations would take place. The Communist Chinese had entered the war because of a perceived threat to their country and the possibility of an escalation toward World War III loomed in everyone's minds. Clay Blair, in his *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953*, reports that in framing the problem Lieutenant General Ridgway asked General MacArthur three questions. In the unlikely event, Russia entered the war, what did MacArthur want to do with Eighth Army? Should the [Chinese Communist Forces] make further deep penetrations, was there a possibility that the ROKs would defect? If he found the combat situation "to my liking," would MacArthur have any objections to "my attacking"? From that conversation Lieutenant General Ridgway understood that he could withdraw to Japan if needed, could trust the ROKs not to defect, and could do what he thought was best with Eighth (US) Army.¹⁰⁴

From this understanding, Lieutenant General Ridgway directed that Eighth (US) Army continue to move south to ground that was more defensible. The Chinese XIII Army Group of the Fourth Army, after a tactical pause to reorganize attached North

¹⁰³ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 553-554.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 567.

Korean units; launch an attack south with 19 divisions and 57 regiments.¹⁰⁵ The South Korean capital of Seoul was again under communist control after the third Chinese offensive and the situation looked increasingly like the days before the Pusan Perimeter. Something had to happen and happen quickly. Lieutenant General Ridgway visualized defensive lines running roughly east to west across the peninsula. The Communist Chinese Forces continued to attack until Eighth (US) Army moved back to a line running roughly from Samch'ok to Pyongt'aek. Eighth (US) Army, arrayed with ROK I Corps on the east coast, ROK III Corps and X Corps in the center, IX Corps and I Corps on the west coast, stood ready for the assault and prevent further loss of territory to the Communist Chinese.

Eighth (US) Army's first campaign, the First U.N. Counteroffensive, under Lieutenant General Ridgway began with Operation Wolfhound. The operation would confirm or deny Chinese Communist Force build-up in the area, but would be conducted with a strong armored attack and cause maximum damage against the enemy. Spearheading this reconnaissance for I Corps was the 27th Infantry Regiment (The Wolfhounds), augmented by a tank battalion and two field artillery battalions. On their right two infantry battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division would support the attack with tanks and two artillery battalions.¹⁰⁶ Two ROK infantry battalions would protect their right flank.

¹⁰⁵ Roy E. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M Press, 1990), 38.

¹⁰⁶ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 634.

Attacking north along Highway 1 toward Seoul, the regiment attacked over ground that Task Force Smith had surrendered to the enemy six months before and then retaken by advancing Eighth (US) Army units. The ebb and flow of a limited war had begun. Because of the terrain, these fights would be largely regimental fights with little to no mutual support from adjacent units. Luckily for the Wolfhounds, this area was somewhat open and allowed the American forces to stand off and allow for them effective use of their tanks and supporting artillery.

Operation Wolfhound inflicted limited enemy casualties, but served as a sign that United Nations troops were no longer on the defensive and capable of conducting offensive operations. The offensive spirit General Ridgway desired of his new command was rising.¹⁰⁷ The next operation continued to build on this offensive spirit. Called Operation Thunderbolt, I Corps, IX Corps, and X Corps were to attack north to set the conditions for the liberation of Seoul. I Corps would seize the Kimpo Airport and Inchon while IX Corps attacked toward Ichon and Yoju to the east of Seoul.¹⁰⁸ X Corps supported the operation with attacks designed to divert the enemy to the east near the crossroads city of Chipyeong-ri.¹⁰⁹ Eighth (US) Army was now on the offensive with a direct approach to the Han River along a broad front.

Operation Thunderbolt was slowing moving as United Nations forces cautiously moved north in the face resistance along the front. In the east, I Corps captured Suwan,

¹⁰⁷ Schnabel. *Policy and Direction The First Year*, 326.

¹⁰⁸ Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom*, 123.

¹⁰⁹ Varhola, *Fire & Ice*, 17.

the city south of Seoul along the main route north, on January 26, 1951. As I Corps continued to attack north to the Han River, they encountered resistance, followed by a loss in contact with the enemy. As I and IX Corps took positions along the Han River, it seemed as if the “Chinese main-force units simply disappeared from the western front.”¹¹⁰

X Corps began their part of Operation Thunderbolt, calling it Operation Roundup, with an attack north to secure the cities of Chipyeong-ri and Wonju, and then on to Hoengsong. Intelligence sources began to warn of a buildup of Communist Chinese Forces to the north of X Corps and Operation Roundup would disrupt any planned enemy counter-offensive with the seizure of these key crossroad cities. The operation however, had the opposite results; the 39th, 40th, 42nd, and 66th People’s Liberation Army launched their offensive with devastating effects.¹¹¹ One North Korean division and two Chinese divisions operating against I and IX Corps shifted into X Corps sector to launch a night attack “smashing through the United Nations lines and setting up roadblocks to hinder any allied attempt to retreat.”¹¹² Cut off and forced to fight their way back to Wonju, the 8th ROK Infantry Division lost “some seven thousand five hundred men and all of the unit’s equipment.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom*, 124.

¹¹¹ J.D. Coleman, *Wonju: The Gettysburg of the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2000), 140.

¹¹² Varhola, *Fire & Ice*, 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

The Fourth Communist Chinese offensive in this area “was part of a larger contest for control of the transportation arteries leading south through the central corridor.”¹¹⁴ Those transportation arteries crossed at the city of Chipyong-ri were the 23rd Regimental Combat Team under the command of Colonel Paul Freeman fought off repeated attacks by a “force comprised of five divisions.”¹¹⁵ Colonel Freeman commanded his regiment with distinction since the Pusan Perimeter. He led the regiment through the Breakout and up into North Korea. His cool head insured the survival of his regiment during the retreat southward after the devastating Chinese attacks sent other units into disarray. At Chipyong-ri, Colonel Freeman picked his position wisely. Although the village was surround by high ground, Colonel Freeman recognized that the small hills ringing the village presented a natural berm. This berm prevented enemy observation and direct fire into the village. Although surrounded, he had the enemy exactly where he wanted them.

Task Force Freeman inflicted devastating damage on Communist Chinese Forces through the echeloning of joint fires. During the battle, fighter-bombers from the Air Force, Navy, and Marines, converged on the perimeter for 131 sorties.¹¹⁶ Attached 105 millimeter and 155 millimeter fire support, in conjunction with these sorties, broke the Communist Chinese attacks and signaled a new turning point in the war.

¹¹⁴ Halberstem, *The Coldest Winter*, 519.

¹¹⁵ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 697 - 698.

¹¹⁶ Coleman, *Wonju*, 223.

Fighting still raged around Wonju as the next phase of the campaign began. Eighth (US) Army initiated Operation Killer, requiring the Marines to move up into IX Corps' area of operations and join 1st Cavalry Division, the 24th Division, and the Commonwealth Brigade in an attack northeast from Wonju on February 21st. X Corps attacked abreast of IX Corps to the east with two ROK Divisions and two United States Divisions along the Dragon's Back. The two corps attacking north and west would cut off a salient formed by two North Korean Corps in the previous fighting around Chechon.¹¹⁷

Logistically, this operation would be the toughest of the war.¹¹⁸ Early rains melted snow in the mountains, causing flooding and a deterioration of the road network. Supporting two corps attacking on such a wide front presented an almost impossible challenge. To overcome this problem, United Nation Forces employed twenty engineer battalions augmented by over 100,000 Korean laborers. They worked to improve roads and bridge-swollen rivers to keep main supply routes and lines of operations open. By March 1, Eighth (US) Army had closed up the UN line south of the Han, driving back the Chinese with huge casualties through the progressive and massive use of firepower.¹¹⁹

Seven days later, an attack across the Eighth (US) Army front called Operation Ripper began. This attack was an extension of the current fight, but had the lofty goal of putting UN Forces back on the 38th Parallel.¹²⁰ A discussion ensued between General

¹¹⁷ Appleman, *Ridgeway Duels for Korea*, 307.

¹¹⁸ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 716.

¹¹⁹ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 196.

¹²⁰ Appleman, *Ridgeway Duels for Korea*, 358.

MacArthur, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Lieutenant General Ridgway as they discussed the pros and cons of moving up to and possibly over the 38th Parallel. In Washington, there was concern that “crossing the 38th Parallel could increase opposition to the war.”¹²¹ General MacArthur felt that by hindering combat operations and preventing him from carrying the war into China, the war would result in a stalemate and ultimately an America defeat.¹²² Lieutenant General Ridgway called the 38th Parallel “neither defensible nor strategically important” and wanted to pursue Communist Chinese Forces north “not only to inflict further destruction but also to disrupt any assembling for an offensive.”¹²³

Lieutenant General Ridgway considered the strategic guidance and translated it into tactical tasks for the maneuver units as they moved ever closer to the mystical line of the 38th Parallel. This campaign of the Korean War ended with two operations. In the west, this would take the form of Operation Rugged where I Corps would attack up Main Supply Route 3, still used today, with two Divisions.¹²⁴ Operation Dauntless would be a continuation of those attacks, with IX Corps attacking into an area called the Iron Triangle in an effort to gain positional advantage and short up a new main line of resistance. The end state was the complete liberation of Seoul and establishment of a defensive line along the Imjin River.

¹²¹ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 731.

¹²² Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 319.

¹²³ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 731.

¹²⁴ Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 362.

At the same time Operation Dauntless was taking place, the discussions as to the future of the war came to a head and resulted in a double change of command with both strategic and operational implications. President Truman, unhappy with General MacArthur's comments to the press about widening the war and disregard for the President's authority, directed his removal. General Ridgway replaced General MacArthur as Commander in Chief Far East Command, while Lieutenant General James Van Fleet took over Eighth (US) Army.

Lieutenant General Van Fleet's first operation as the commander of Eighth (US) Army was bittersweet as "U.N. forces had once again liberated Seoul and had retaken and improved their positions along the Kansas Line."¹²⁵ At the same time, reports of a Communist Chinese buildup north of the British 29th Brigade along the Imjim River began to arrive at the Eighth (US) Army's headquarters. The 29th Brigade had established positions north and south of the river to secure the entrance into a corridor running from the river straight through to Seoul. This build-up signaled the Chinese Spring Offensive of 1951.

Part Four: Lessons Learned

The 29th Brigade committed everything they had against the Chinese attack, suffering devastating losses. On the first day of battle, one of the brigade's battalions was pushed south over the Imjin River and by the third day, elements of a battalion from the

¹²⁵ Varhola, *Fire & Ice*, 19.

Glosters Regiment were fighting for their lives from company strongpoints on hilltops. Chinese soldiers swarmed the positions and engaged in close fighting in an effort to reduce the effectiveness of United Nations fire support.¹²⁶

The Glosters were all but wiped out, buying enough time for the 3rd Infantry Division to prepare defenses to block the Chinese march toward Seoul. This battle signaled the beginning of a change in the Korean War in which United Nations forces engaged in a struggle across the Imjim River for key terrain while peace talks began. The war would continue for two more years without the large-scale operations with units maneuvering over large areas like the Pusan Breakout and Operation Chromite. Korea was now a war of outposts along the main line of resistance in an effort to inflict as many casualties on the enemy to gain favorable terms at the negotiation table.¹²⁷

By looking back to the Korean War and using operational art to evaluate operations, operational planners will realize that four factors stand out as important planning considerations for a possible contingency on the Korean Peninsula. The first is the strategic context and China's role in any action on the Korean Peninsula. China's presence in the region severely limits any response by the United States to action on the Korean Peninsula.

¹²⁶ Andrew Salmon, *To the Last Round: The Epic British Stand on the Imjin River, Korea 1951* (London: Aurum Press Ltd., 2009), 235-237.

¹²⁷ Lee Ballenger, *The Outpost War: U.S. Marines in Korea Volume 1: 1952* (Washington D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 3-4.

Understanding the strategic context in which the Korean War was fought is important for operational planners. In 1950, it was the communists lined up against the West in an ideological struggle for the future of northeast Asia. A newly communist China sought a buffer from encroachment on their borders and protection of their industrialized north. A confrontation with the United States also legitimized Mao's government and ensured China's rightful place on the world political stage.¹²⁸ Americans sought to stem the growth of communism throughout the region and saw Korea as the next domino to fall in communism's march to Washington.

Today, with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the movement of communist nations toward free market economies, the fear of communist encroachment is no longer seen as a threat. What is perceived to be a threat is an ever-growing Chinese economy that is seeking resources outside the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom. This economic juggernaut is investing in its military, modernizing current systems, and seeking to change from a purely defensive force into an army capable of projecting force across Asian waterways.¹²⁹ An amphibious operation such as Operation Chromite, within the restrictive waters of the Yellow Sea and with a Chinese naval presence is a significant challenge to operational planners.

¹²⁸ Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 214.

¹²⁹ Taylor Dinerman, "China's New Aircraft Carrier Program" *Hudson New York* August 3, 2011. <http://www.hudson-ny.org/2298/china-aircraft-carrier> (accessed August 11, 2011)

The ever-growing China is asserting itself politically and militarily within the region and projecting power into emerging markets on the African continent in an effort to secure natural resources.¹³⁰ By asserting themselves globally, China continues to grow as a world power. Despite this, they have not lessened their close ties with the rouge nation of North Korea.¹³¹ Any activity on the Korean Peninsula must take into account the power and influence of China. Operational Planners would do well to work hard to understand the Chinese strategic context as they plan for operations against North Korea or in support of South Korea's efforts at re-unification. Failure to do so will trigger another retreat from the north by American forces.

The second consideration is terrain and weather. The terrain on the Korean Peninsula presents a particular challenge to operational planners. As they did from 1950 to 1953, restrictive north-south corridors will hinder maneuver and limit the amount of combat power that can be committed forward. Just as in the Korean War, where the echeloning of fires insured a depth not easily countered by the Chinese, the synchronization of counter-land, close air support, long range fires, and direct support fires will produce increased effects in support of ground maneuver units.

Weather on the Korean Peninsula has not improved since the Korean War; it is still extremely cold in the winter and summer rains have an operational impact. The

¹³⁰ "China in Africa: Developing ties", BBC News. 26 November 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7086777.stm> (accessed August 11, 2011)

¹³¹ Jayshree Bajoria, "The China-North Korean Relationship", Council on Foreign Relations. October 7, 2010. <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-north-korea-relationship/p11097> (accessed August 11, 2011)

winter of 2000-2001 was called the worst winter since the Korean War. Not unlike the Korean War, heavy snowfall clogged roads and blocked mountain passes. Rainfall also continues to disrupt operations on the Korean Peninsula. In August 2011, the Korean Peninsula weathered incredible amounts of rainfall that led to flooding and caused destruction to United States Army posts Camp Casey and Camp Hovey. Landslides washed out roads and caused damage to motorpools, having direct impact on operations from these two camps. The camps are home to a heavy brigade combat team and a fires brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division whose primary mission is to deter North Korean aggression.

The third consideration for operational planners is force structure. Because of the restrictive terrain, battles in the Korean War quickly became regimental combat team fights. The U.S. Army's current structure and doctrine designed around brigade combat teams is well suited to address the challenges of another Korean War.¹³² The Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT) presents a powerful armored front needed in a direct approach to the enemy with 58 M1A2 Main Battle Tanks and 58 M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Even limiting the spacing between armored vehicles to 100 meters, the HBCT can cover a frontage of over 11 kilometers, which is sufficient to cover most of the restrictive corridors an HBCT would be operating in.

The ability to work independently while leveraging combat multipliers such as deep fires means brigade combat teams can operate within a maneuver corridor, without

¹³² "Delivering Capabilities to the Army's Brigade Combat Teams", U.S. Army: Army Brigade Combat Team Modernization. <http://www.bctmod.army.mil/> (accessed August 11, 2011).

the need for mutually supporting forces in the next corridor. Brigade combat teams come equipped with organic combat multipliers such as military police, intelligence assets that include unmanned aerial vehicles and signals collection assets, and combat engineers. Synchronization of external and internal assets gives the brigade combat team an extensive operational reach and allows operations throughout the depth and breathe of the battlefield.¹³³ The brigade combat team is form fitted for fighting on the Korean Peninsula.

Combined Forces Command (CFC), is the war-fighting component that controls the fighting forces of both the Republic of Korea and the United States during times of crisis on the Korean Peninsula. CFC controls over 600,000 Korean and American military personnel.¹³⁴ The Korean Army portion of that translates into 11 corps, 49 divisions, and 19 brigades.¹³⁵ Along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) these forces are distributed between two field armies, the strongest of which is the Third ROK Army (TROKA) defending the western and central corridors leading to Seoul. This defense is conducted in depth through a series of defensive belts from the DMZ to Seoul designated as FEBA A, B, C, D. These defensive belts take advantage of the restrictive terrain in the area to canalize the enemy into engagement areas.¹³⁶ Each FEBA is composed of trench

¹³³ *The Brigade Combat Team FM 3-90.6* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 2-1.

¹³⁴ “Mission of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command”, United States Forces Korea. <http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/content.combined.forces.command.46> (accessed August 30, 2011).

¹³⁵ “Republic of Korea Army”, GlobalSecurity.org. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/rok/army.htm> (accessed August 30, 2011).

¹³⁶ FEBA stands for forward edge of the battlefield. The author has spent six years assigned to units working along FEBA B & C.

lines, bunkers, firing points, supplementary and tertiary positions, as well as pre-emplaced communication systems.

Even with these impressive defensive networks and large number of forces, the CFC depends heavily on American forces for command and control, as well as for air power. Unlike the United States Army, where the BCT is the centerpiece upon which the force is built, the ROK Army is still constructed around the divisional system. This means they lack the ability to conduct independent brigade operations while leveraging additional capabilities.¹³⁷

The fourth consideration is civilians on the battlefield. Choke points along maneuver corridors will continue to present a challenge to maneuver units fighting on the Korean Peninsula. This challenge will be exasperated if large groups of civilians begin movement south in a search for food and water. It is believed that a large percentage of the North's population is already living under the strains of malnutrition.¹³⁸ A war on the peninsula would only increase the problem and contribute to the hardship faced by civilians. Forces attacking into North Korea must take into consideration the need to secure and protect civilians as part of an effort to ensure freedom of maneuver and to avoid a potential humanitarian crisis. Throughout the peninsula, small cities still straddle

¹³⁷ "The Conventional Military Balance on the Korean Peninsula", The International Institute for Strategic Studies. <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/north-korean-dossier/north-koreas-weapons-programmes-a-net-asses/the-conventional-military-balance-on-the-kore/> (accessed August 30, 2011)

¹³⁸ Christian Oliver, "Quarter of North Koreans starving, warns UN", *Financial Times.com* (Asia-Pacific). March 25, 2011. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f6f1e222-56fc-11e0-9035-00144feab49a.html#axzz1UjcEvXMC> (accessed August 11, 2011).

crossroads at vital east-west corridors. Civilian considerations will be a leading planning factor in any operation designed to seize or secure these vital pieces of terrain. Units attacking up Main Supply Route 3 north from Seoul through Uijongbu to the DMZ will maneuver in a forty-kilometer long corridor that is ten kilometers wide. In this short corridor, there are two cities, one of which has a population of 500,000. Add to this North Korean refugees and an HBCT will see their rate of advance reduced from kilometers per hour to meters per hour.

Any military confrontation with North Korea will have the desired end state of unification with the South. The South Korean government, specifically President Lee Myung-bak, has made it very clear that they consider unification a priority and desire it through peaceful means.¹³⁹ In the case of an attack by North Korea into South Korea, the ROK government will counterattack to re-establish South Korean sovereignty and then attack into North Korea with the objective of regime change and unification, not unlike the Korean War.¹⁴⁰

In conclusion, the presence of a growing China capable of projecting combat power or disrupting shipping in northeast Asia must be in the background of any problem frame utilized by operational planners when looking at the Korean Peninsula. China

¹³⁹ Kristen Chick, "South Korea says it will prepare for unification with North", *The Christian Science Monitor* December 29, 2010. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/1229/South-Korea-says-it-will-prepare-for-unification-with-North> (accessed August 11, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ David Martin, "What Would Happen if North Korea Attacked?" CBS Evening News, December 16, 2009. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/12/16/eveningnews/main5987983.shtml> (accessed August 11, 2011).

continues its relationship with North Korea while asserting itself in the region. Any operation on the Korean Peninsula by U.S. forces will be limited by Chinese presence. Operational planners must take into consideration terrain and weather for any operation on the Korean peninsula. Corridors and choke points along routes are key terrain that must be seized and controlled to ensure any mission's success. Because of the restrictive nature of the terrain, inclement weather has an exponential effect on operations just like in Operation Killer. The organization of units operating on the Korean Peninsula must be capable of independent brigade actions, just like Colonel Freeman's battle at Chip'yong-ri. Unlike high intensity operations executed over the last 20 years such as Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom in relatively open terrain, the next Korean War will be fought in corridors, through choke points, and over mountain passes. A high population density will further complicate these battles where cities sit astride crossroads. Internally displaced civilians will be a critical factor-affecting maneuver as well as world opinion and must be taken into consideration early in operations. It is not something that can wait until after combat operations.

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