

# The Partition of Korea after World War II

A Global History



Jongsoo James Lee



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AFTER WORLD WAR II

A GLOBAL HISTORY

*Jongsoo Lee*

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*To the loving memory of my mother,  
Chi-Hae Park (1939–2000)*

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## ROMANIZATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

I adhered, whenever appropriate, to the standard systems for Romanization: McCune-Reischauer for Korean and Library of Congress for Russian.

AVP RF	Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
<i>FRUS</i>	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
KPG	Korean Provisional Government
KPR	Korean People's Republic
RGASPI	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)
SCAP	Supreme Commander [for] Allied Powers [in Japan]
UNTCOK	United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea
USAFIK	United States Army Forces in Korea

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## KOREAN DIVISION AND REUNIFICATION: A TIMETABLE OF MODERN KOREAN HISTORY

- 1392 The Founding of Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1910).
- 1910 Korea annexed by Japan.
- 1941 (December) Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.
- 1943 (November) At the Cairo Conference, the United States, Britain, and China declare future Korean independence “in due course”; at the subsequent Tehran Conference, Stalin agrees.
- 1945 (August 8) The USSR declares war on Japan; (August 12) The United States proposes to the USSR the 38th parallel as the line of demarcation for accepting the surrender of Japanese troops in Korea: the USSR agrees; (August 15) Japan surrenders; (December) At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, the USA, Britain and the USSR agree to place Korea under a four-power United Nations trusteeship for a period of up to 5 years.
- 1946 (March–May) The First U.S.-USSR Joint Commission to implement the Moscow trusteeship agreement adjourns without an agreement.
- 1947 (May–October) The Second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission fails; in September, the United States takes the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly: the USSR protests.
- 1948 (January) A UN delegation to supervise general elections in the Korean peninsula arrives; (February) The UN Temporary Commission on Korea decides to hold elections only in the U.S.-occupied southern half of the peninsula; (August 15) The Republic of Korea (South Korea) established, with Syngman Rhee as President; (September 9) The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) established, with Kim Il Sung as Premier.
- 1950 (June 25) The Korean War begins with a large-scale invasion of South Korea by North Korea.

- 1953 (July) The Korean War ends in an armistice without a peace treaty; the DMZ (demilitarized zone) created.
- 2000 (June) South Korean President Kim Dae Jung visits Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, for a historic summit with Chairman Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader.

*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.*<sup>α</sup>  
*Prudens quaestio dimidium scientiae.*<sup>ω</sup>

<sup>α</sup> “Perhaps, one day it will give us pleasure to recall even these things.” (Virgil, *Aeneid*, i.203)

<sup>ω</sup> “Half of science is putting forth the right questions.” (Bacon)

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## INTRODUCTION

Sixty years after the partition of Korea into South Korea and North Korea, we still do not have a full understanding of how this partition occurred. With Korea's reunification looming as a challenge today for the international community, such an understanding cannot be more timely. This book seeks to facilitate such an understanding.

As a way of introduction, it might be worth noting that the international community is currently facing, or might be facing, tasks of nation-building in places as diverse as Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to name a few. In most of these places, nation-building is an exercise in overcoming the legacy of imperialism, as imperialism gave birth to unstable nation states caged within borders that were arbitrarily drawn without due consideration of existing ethnic, tribal, religious, and other boundaries. Indeed, a major challenge to international peace in the post-Cold War era is the transition to viable nation states in parts of the world where the legacy of imperialism combined with weak or predatory government has led to failed or failing states. In some corners of the Islamic world, poverty and alienation from the modern world have bred a deeply disaffected populace and a fertile soil for political or religious extremism.

While Korea is not usually mentioned as a case illustrating the challenges of nation-building after imperialism, the peninsula's modern history perfectly fits this description. Though not colonized by Western imperialism, Korea nevertheless underwent 36 years of colonial rule under Japan, a country that fully joined the ranks of modern imperialist powers at the turn of the twentieth century. When World War II ended with Japan's defeat, Korea found herself in a situation similar to Arabia at the end of World War I. Just as the defeat of Ottoman Turkey in World War I did not lead to Arab independence but led, rather, to arbitrary partition of the ex-Ottoman territories into French and British spheres of influence, Japan's defeat in World War II did not lead to Korea's independence but led, rather, to the arbitrary partition of Korea into two halves occupied by the United States and Soviet Russia. The partition of Korea along the 38th parallel in August 1945 was as arbitrary as any artificial border drawn by the European

colonial powers during the partition of Africa in the late nineteenth century. Just as such arbitrary national borders in postindependence Africa gave rise to wars and political instability, the foundation of the two Koreas in 1948 as a result of the arbitrary partition flared into an all-out war, the Korean War (1950–1953), and many years of tense confrontation afterward under the Cold War. Although South Korea's nation-building efforts since the 1950s have generated successes in economic development and democratization that have eluded nation-building efforts in many other parts of the world, North Korea stands today as a failure of nation-building. Moreover, the true test of South Korea's success in nation-building yet lies ahead, as this hard-won success might still be derailed by a failure to overcome the even greater challenge of nation-building called for in Korean reunification.

The United States and the international community have a crucial role to play in determining whether Korea's exercise in building a united nation succeeds peacefully. However, how they play this role will depend to a significant extent on their understanding of Korea and her history. It seems clear that a good understanding of how Great Power interventions 60 years ago led to the country's tragic division and the disastrous Korean War can not but be useful to those making policies affecting Korea's future.

This book seeks to facilitate this understanding. It is concerned, for a large part, with discussing those policies of the United States and the Soviet Union that led to Korea's partition in 1945–1948. This entails placing these policies in the context of broader world history, since a balanced and comprehensive understanding of these policies is not possible unless seen from this broader perspective. However, this book also addresses the issue of Korean nationalism and the question of agency in the unfolding of modern Korean history. This is because the occupation of Korea by the two Powers not only frustrated the unfolding of history that would have occurred in the absence of such foreign intervention but also served to exacerbate the various cleavages and fissures among the Koreans themselves that had existed prior to this intervention.

The division of Korea, I argue in this book, was sealed with the rise of the two Koreas in 1948 in part because the division effected in August 1945 by the two Powers led elements among the Koreans to ally themselves with either of the Powers, thereby themselves becoming forces that abetted and solidified this division. Those Koreans, mainly among the moderates and centrists on the ideological spectrum, who refused to ally with either of the Powers and insisted on a peaceful reunification of their country were marginalized and, in some instances, physically terrorized by the forces advocating the creation of the two separate Koreas. This was a classic dilemma

for moderates everywhere in the world under the Cold War, which forced all political forces, both domestic and foreign, into a bipolar ideological straightjacket of Right or Left, pro-American or pro-Soviet. Therefore, to borrow the apt phrase used by Karabell (1999), those Koreans who allied themselves with the occupying Powers and used the latter's support to gain political hegemony in the two Koreas were as much "architects of intervention" by these Powers as they were agents of such intervention.<sup>1</sup> In characterizing the actions of these Koreans, such as Kim Il Sung in the North and Syngman Rhee in the South, who used their respective foreign patrons to set up separate states under their own hegemony, it might indeed be appropriate to make use of Lenin's famous dictum, *Kto kogo?* (i.e., Who is using whom?). Certainly, it was true in an important sense that these Koreans were using the USSR and the United States for their own purposes as much as they were being used by these Powers.

Thus, despite the aptness of describing Korea as a "God's playground," that is, the historical image of Korea as a small-medium state with an unfortunate geographic location and hence victimized by rivalries among neighboring Great Powers,<sup>2</sup> it is necessary not to forget this flip side of the coin, namely, the ability of the Koreans to use their Great Power patrons in order to accomplish their own purposes, which may turn out to have devastating consequences for these patrons' own national interests.

Considering how the arbitrary partition of Korea in 1945 led to a failure of nation-building in 1945–1953 with the country's tragic division and the catastrophic Korean War, it is now worth asking whether possibilities for an alternative solution to the Korean problem existed and, if so, why these were not followed. These alternatives include the possibility that Korea could have been allowed by the USA and the USSR in 1945–1948 to become a united independent country with a foreign-policy orientation acceptable to both. This is a question worth exploring, as the USSR did allow, for example, both Finland and Austria after World War II to emerge as united independent countries: in the case of Finland, with a foreign-policy orientation friendly to the USSR and, in the case of Austria, a neutral foreign policy. Moreover, these two countries were not sovietized like others in East-Central Europe such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia; instead, they remained as capitalist democracies. It might be interesting to briefly explore here the factors accounting for what transpired in Finland and Austria.

A defeated ex-ally of Nazi Germany whose troops joined the Nazis in attacking the USSR and laying siege to Leningrad, Finland at the war's end had to give up a slice of its territory to the USSR and also paid the latter \$300 million in reparations. However, though Finland's independence itself seemed to be at Stalin's mercy, Soviet troops, which set up a base within

half an hour of driving distance from Helsinki, never actually occupied the country. Somehow Finland managed to survive as an independent capitalist democracy with full autonomy in domestic affairs, though it had to synchronize its foreign policies with the interests of the Kremlin's rulers. As for Austria, this *de facto* ex-ally of Nazi Germany—despite the nominally imposed Anschluss—was occupied at the war's end by troops of the USSR, USA, France, and Britain, which divided up both Vienna and the country as a whole into their respective zones of occupation. This four-power division and military occupation ended only in 1955, when a thaw in relations between the USSR and the West led to the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, by which Austria became a united neutral country.

Admittedly, there is still much scholars do not know about these two cases and, indeed, about Soviet policies toward East-Central Europe as a whole in the early postwar years. A recent attempt to provide some answers is Kreuzberger and Görtemaker (2002).<sup>3</sup> In this edited volume, essays by Büttner and Rathkolb suggested the following explanations for the Soviet policies toward Finland and Austria: Stalin's belief that Finland, as well as Austria, was a peripheral area of Great Power rivalries; Finnish and Austrian political solidarity against attempts by the local communists to gain greater power; Soviet memory of Finland's autonomous status under the Russian tsars and her stubborn resistance against the USSR during the Winter War of 1939–1940; Stalin's apparent fear that pressuring Finland too much would lead Sweden to join a Western defense pact; and Stalin's "desire to keep Austria separate from Germany and insignificant in the European balance" of power.<sup>4</sup> Bischof (1999) is another work, devoted to Austria in 1945–1955, which posits a roughly similar view: that Austria was permitted to emerge undivided in 1955 "probably because the Soviet zone was too small to be economically viable and too insignificant to be allowed to provoke a serious Cold War crisis."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Bischof, who describes Austria as "Europe's Korea," emphasizes Austria's importance as a contributing factor in the rise of the early Cold War and, echoing Karabell, argues that Austria, as a "weak" power, was able to shrewdly manipulate the Great Powers to its own advantage.

Similar to these works on Austria and Finland, I will attempt in this book to provide reasoned explanations for Soviet policy, in this case, toward Korea. A good way to start would be a brief look at previous works on Korea in the early postwar years. What one finds here is a paucity of scholarship devoted exclusively to examining Korea's division in 1945–1948.<sup>6</sup> In the works that deal, in one way or another, with Korea after 1945, one can observe a development similar to that discernible in works covering other areas of early-Cold War history: "traditionalists" of the 1950s–1970s

who blame the Soviets for the failure of Allied cooperation after World War II and for starting the Cold War; the “revisionists” of the 1970s–1990s who point to American “imperialists” as the culprits for starting the Cold War; and the “post-revisionists” since the 1990s, some of whose works can be described as “traditionalism plus archives.”<sup>7</sup> Representative of the “traditionalists” or “Cold Warriors” is the monumental two-volume work by Scalapino and Lee (1972); the most famous among the “revisionists” is the two-volume work by Cumings (1981, 1990); and examples of “post-revisionism” include Weathersby (1993).<sup>8</sup> However, on the issue of the Korean division in 1945–1948, a lack of conceptual clarity persists. Although the traditionalists and the revisionists differ sharply as to which side they blame for the Korean division, they have tended to assume that the division was inevitable and have not examined in depth the possibilities for alternatives to the division. In particular, scholars have paid inadequate attention to the issue of the UN trusteeship, namely, the wartime decision by Allied leaders to place Korea under a four-power trusteeship after Japan’s defeat and the agreement to implement this trusteeship reached at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945. No work has examined in detail how this trusteeship issue was central to causing both the military partition of Korea at the 38th parallel in August 1945 and the permanent division of Korea into the two Koreas in August–September 1948.

Among the few works that address Soviet policy toward Korea in this period, the consensus view has been that Stalin was intent on sovietizing northern Korea and that he never took the trusteeship seriously, utilizing it at best as a propagandist ploy.<sup>9</sup> However, as I argue in this book, this view both obscures and oversimplifies what was a fluid and uncertain situation obtaining in both Korea and the world during 1945–1948. It also fails to capture both the contingent nature and the complexity and self-contradiction inherent in Soviet policy toward Korea and elsewhere in the early postwar years.

I will thus make a *prima facie* case that a “Finlandized” Korea or a neutral Korea à la Austria after withdrawal of the U.S. and Soviet troops could have been a definite possibility especially if the Moscow trusteeship agreement had succeeded in creating a united Korean government. As we know, the actual outcome was the failure of all efforts to successfully implement the trusteeship agreement and the subsequent creation of the two Koreas, a case roughly along the lines of what happened in Germany at about the same time. However, upon the war’s end in 1945, it was by no means clear that either Korea or Germany would end up being divided into two separate states in 1948–1949. Norman Naimark, who has extensively studied postwar Germany and East–Central Europe, says as much in a

recent survey of Soviet policy toward Europe in 1945–1953:

Most studies of postwar Soviet foreign policy tend to focus either on single countries, on the emergence of the Cold War, or on the development of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. The European continent is considered to be divided almost from the very beginning. Especially for the immediate postwar period, however, the notion of a “Western Europe” and an “Eastern Europe” does not make much sense. Both the realities and the fate of the continent were much more fluid, open, and contingent than that. To be sure, the new borders of the Soviet Union carved out by Stalin as a consequence of the Nazi-Soviet pact meant that Moscow’s interests would inevitably move westward. Moreover, Stalin’s interest in a sphere of influence in the rest of Poland, in Finland, and in Romania were consistent parts of Soviet geostrategic considerations during the war. But beyond these military and political interests, which overlapped, not coincidentally, with traditional Russian tsarist foreign policy aims, there was enormous variation and flexibility in Stalin’s short- and medium-term goals, whether one is talking about Hungary or Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany, or France and Italy . . . Much like Stalin’s negative reaction to the later development of “West Germany,” the Soviets defined their interests after the war in such a way that the continent not be divided into west and east . . . There was no interest on the Soviet side in a divided continent at the end of the war.<sup>10</sup>

More specifically on Germany in 1945–1949, Naimark (1995) says the Soviets seemed to have pursued “a number of parallel policies for a German settlement that were fundamentally inconsistent,” and that this, combined with Stalin’s inherent opportunism, which allowed “sudden and unpredictable shifts of emphasis” in Soviet tactics and diplomacy concerning the German question, meant that the creation of the two separate German states in 1949 was by no means a foregone conclusion in 1945.<sup>11</sup>

Turning to the revisionist side of the scholarship on Germany in this period, we find, for example, Loth (1998), which makes a clear-cut argument that Stalin “wanted neither a separate state in the Soviet Occupation Zone nor a socialist state in Germany at all” but instead “sought a parliamentary democracy for all of Germany, one which would rob fascism of its social base and one which would allow the Soviet Union access to the resources of the Ruhr industrial area.”<sup>12</sup> Suggesting that the Soviets had a real interest in working with the Western Powers to create such a unified German state, Loth concludes: “The separatist socialist GDR is above all a product of Walter Ulbricht’s revolutionary zeal, which was able to unfold given the background of the Western walling-off policy.”<sup>13</sup>

One does not need to agree with Loth’s views in order to see that the recent scholarship on Germany’s division has produced no consensus.

What Naimark and the revisionists such as Loth both call into question is the traditional view that the division of Germany into two separate states was inevitable upon the war's end. Returning to the Korean case, I will similarly call into question the view that the division into the two Koreas in 1948 was inevitable in 1945. As in Germany and Europe at the same time, Stalin faced in Korea upon the war's end an uncertain and fluid situation. It is certainly true that, despite the recent opening of the ex-Communist bloc archives, archival or other primary evidence revealing what Stalin thought or said about Korea or, for that matter, other areas still remains fragmentary at best. That being said, there is now enough documentary evidence available to attempt a reconsideration of—or to take a fresh look at—postwar Soviet policy toward Korea and other parts of the world. Indeed, our knowledge of Soviet foreign policy in general and Stalin's role in it has improved significantly since the opening of the archives, and the researcher utilizing this knowledge can now make an informed analysis of Stalin's policies even where direct evidence is less than complete.

In trying to understand Stalin's "mindset" concerning Korea, therefore, one needs to consider what must have been the two basic alternatives he faced in August 1945: sovietizing northern Korea, which would create a buffer state in northern Korea presumably buttressing Soviet security but which would also lead the Americans and the Japanese to turn southern Korea into an outpost of a U.S.-Japan security alliance directed against the USSR; or working with the Western Powers to implement the trusteeship or some other mechanism for creating a unified independent Korea, which would be either neutral or friendly in its foreign-policy orientation to the USSR. I will suggest that Stalin in 1945–1948 was at best ambivalent about either of these choices and that his preference, if he had one, was actually for the latter, given that a unified independent Korea on the USSR's border would likely be more susceptible to dictates from Moscow than from Washington. Such a unified Korea, even if originally established as a capitalist state with a neutral foreign policy, would have been very susceptible to communist subversion and likely to have turned leftist. Much else, in addition, must have figured in weighing between these alternatives in Stalin's mind, such as: whether he believed that northern Korea under Soviet military occupation was ready for transition to socialism; whether he considered the strength of the Left in Korea sufficient to eventually turn a unified Korea socialist; whether he thought northern Korea was big enough to be economically viable as a separate state; and whether he even cared much about Korea, a peripheral area of Great Power rivalries like Finland or Austria, or about Korea's geostrategic value in the atomic age when American bombers and warships could easily attack the Soviet Far

East from their bases in Japan and elsewhere. In addition to all this was the fluid international situation: Korea must have been a pawn on the global geopolitical chessboard in Stalin's mind, as she must have been in the mind of Roosevelt or Truman, and Stalin's thinking on his options in Korea must have depended to a significant extent on his considerations of more important geostrategic goals elsewhere in the rapidly changing international environment.

In this book, therefore, I will make the *prima facie* case that, similar to the German case, Stalin seemed to have pursued seemingly contradictory policies for a Korean settlement, at least in the initial stage of the Soviet occupation of Korea, and that he apparently never entirely gave up on the possibility of reaching an accommodation with the United States in Korea even after the failure of the Moscow agreement until the very eve of the establishment of South Korea in August 1948. I will also suggest that Stalin took the Korean trusteeship plan seriously, at least more seriously than did the Americans, and that the trusteeship was actually Stalin's preferred policy for the Korean settlement. In this book, thus, I will attempt to answer, based on a consideration of both international and domestic factors, why such alternative settlements for Korea's future were not adopted. Answering this question will help understand why the Korean nation-building effort in 1945–1948 failed, leading not to peaceful reunification but, instead, to war.

### **An Outline of the Book**

After the foregoing introduction, it is now time to present a brief outline of this book so as to give an idea of what is to come in the pages ahead. Part I, composed of three chapters, begins with an outline of U.S. policies toward Korea since the late nineteenth century, when the United States established official diplomatic relations with the then Chosŏn Dynasty Korea, until the early 1940s, when the United States, engaged then in World War II, began to formulate its plans for Korea's future after Japan's defeat. This is followed by an outline of the policies toward Korea on the part of Russia-USSR from the beginning of the latter's interactions with Korea until the early 1940s, when Stalin began to take part in discussions with his wartime allies on postwar settlements including Korea's future. Special attention is paid at this point to the international context under which the Allied leaders agreed on implementing an international trusteeship over Korea in preparation for full independence. As will become clear later in part I and part II, this focus on the trusteeship decision and the impact of this decision on Korea's future is a vital element of this book. After this discussion of the wartime planning for Korea's future, the discussion

becomes more in-depth as it turns to the circumstances of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan and the process by which the division of Korea along the 38th parallel occurred in August 1945. The focus then shifts to the tensions in the international diplomatic arena in the fall of 1945, including the U.S.-Soviet standoff in East-Central Europe, which had a major bearing on U.S.-Soviet relations in Korea. Along with an analysis of the overall state of the U.S.-Soviet relations at the time, a discussion of the U.S.-Soviet relations in the Allied occupation of Japan and how this affected their relations in Korea is also offered. Coming next is a detailed look at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers of December 1945 and the decision on the Korean trusteeship reached at this conference. As I will argue in this book, the Moscow decision and its reception among the various Korean groups are crucial in understanding why the division of Korea, effected in August 1945 as a temporary measure, turned into a formidable barrier dividing not only Korea geographically but also the Koreans themselves into two mutually hostile camps according to whether they supported or opposed this decision. What comes then is an in-depth examination of the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission that met in 1946-1947 to implement the Moscow decision. Why this commission failed and how this failure led to the move on the part of the United States to refer the Korean question to the United Nations constitutes the meat of this section. The final part of part I is concerned with explaining why the UN Temporary Commission on Korea failed in its mission of supervising elections throughout Korea and the subsequent course of events that led to the establishment of a separate South Korea in August 1948, followed by the proclamation of a separate North Korea in September 1948. Throughout this discussion, an effort is made to place developments in Korea within the broader international context, especially that of the emerging Cold War in East-Central Europe, Japan, the third world, and elsewhere.

Part II is largely a brief effort at complementing the international dimension of the Korean division in 1945-1948 by providing a picture of the developments within Korea that interacted with Soviet and American policies to solidify this division. The voices of the various Korean actors throughout Korea and the organizations they represented—on the full ideological spectrum ranging from the Far Right to the Far Left—are examined as a basis for explaining why and how these Korean actors either opposed or supported the policies, in particular the Moscow trusteeship decision, of the United States and the Soviet Union. Special attention is also paid to the Soviet occupation regime and Kim Il Sung's rise to hegemony under this regime, since a grasp of this subject matter is necessary to understanding why northern Koreans either supported or opposed the Soviet occupation and the Soviet policy of firm support for the trusteeship

decision. The final part of part II is concerned with explaining how the various Korean groups, such as the northern communists led by Kim Il Sung and the southern nationalists led by Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, contributed to the difficulties of overcoming the Korean division and ultimately helped bring about the rise of the two Koreas in 1948. A discussion of previously little-studied but important Korean leaders and their actions, such as Kim Tubong in northern Korea and his support for the trusteeship, is offered to give a nuanced picture of the dynamics of power relationships among the various Korean actors.

PART I

U.S. AND SOVIET POLICIES  
TOWARD KOREA, 1945–1948

## CHAPTER 1

# U.S. AND SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD KOREA UNTIL AUGUST 1945

### **American Policy toward Korea until August 1945**

For the United States, Korea was never a foreign-policy priority until the sudden start of the Korean War in 1950 and the subsequent U.S. decision to intervene in that war. America's contact with Korea dates back to 1866, and the United States was in fact the first Western power to open up Korea to the outside world when it signed the Shufeldt Treaty of 1882. However, as scholarly works on this subject argue, the new bilateral relationship was asymmetrical from the start, as Korea was insignificant to America while America was significant to Korea in every way.<sup>1</sup> The United States was significant to Korea because it was not a neighboring power or a European colonial power that had territorial ambitions in Korea and was, thus, seen as a disinterested yet mighty Great Power that could be counted on to protect the country's independence from her predatory neighbors such as Japan, China, or Russia.<sup>2</sup> However, the main problem for Korea in her efforts to secure America's commitment to her independence was the fact that the foreign-policy priorities of all Western powers in East Asia in the late nineteenth century were the lucrative treaty port concessions and other economic opportunities in China and diplomatic relations with Japan, an emerging Great Power which increasingly threatened the balance of Great Power rivalries in East Asia. For all Western powers, including the United States, Korea, therefore, was a pawn that could be easily sacrificed in their need to meet these more important foreign-policy priorities. The scholars who wrote the edited volume, *Korean-American Relations 1866-1997*, characterize this asymmetrical relationship using a framework of duality and dominance. In this framework, the Koreans were often naïve and, because of their heavy dependence on the United States, tended to take the

Americans at their word, whereas, on the American side, the real policy was often at variance with what American diplomats in Korea told the Koreans or what the American missionaries on the spot thought it should be. Thus, the treaty of 1882 itself was given a highly asymmetrical interpretation, with the Korean side attaching a great importance to it as a pledge of the American commitment to Korea's independence and modernization, whereas the American side treated it as nothing more than a token document not very indicative of real American commitment or policy toward Korea.<sup>3</sup>

The lowest point in U.S.-Korean relations during this pre-1910 period, indeed one of the lowest points throughout the entire course of the bilateral relationship up to the present, was reached in 1904-1905 when U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt abandoned the prior U.S. approach of neutrality and nonintervention in Korean affairs and actually collaborated with Japan by siding with the latter's territorial claims on Korea and brokering the Russo-Japanese peace treaty at Portsmouth, which contained the so-called Taft-Katsura Agreement formally recognizing Japan's hegemony over Korea in return for Japan's recognition of U.S. hegemony over the Philippines. T. Roosevelt's Korea policy forms a classic case study of the influence of Social Darwinism on American and European foreign policies at the time.<sup>4</sup> An admirer of Japan's achievements in modernization since the Meiji Restoration but contemptuous of the Koreans who "couldn't strike one blow in their own defense," Roosevelt wrote as early as 1900 that he "should like to see Japan have Korea."<sup>5</sup> In February 1905, during the latter stage of the Russo-Japanese War, he wrote that, "if peace should come now, Japan ought to have a protectorate over Korea (which has shown its utter inability to stand by itself) and ought to succeed to Russia's rights in and around Port Arthur."<sup>6</sup> Echoing Roosevelt's pro-Japanese stance, the United States was the first among the Western powers to sever diplomatic relations with Korea upon the establishment of a Japanese protectorate over the latter in 1905. The United States did nothing as Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910.

The U.S. policy toward Korea from 1910 until the outbreak of World War II was marked by indifference, as the United States pursued a policy of noninterference in Japan's colonial possessions. When a massive nonviolent uprising against the Japanese rule, the March First Independence Movement, took place in Korea in 1919, the United States, like other Western powers, ignored the pleas of the Korean nationalists for coming to their aid, as it refused to intervene in Korea against Japan. This cold reaction of the Western powers, including the United States, showed that the Koreans once again misinterpreted the true intentions of the United States when they took the U.S. president Woodrow Wilson at his word. The

famous doctrine of national self-determination as articulated in Wilson's Fourteen Points was meant to apply, in reality, only to those European peoples subject to German and Austrian-Hungarian rule during World War I, but the Korean nationalists, desperate for any foreign help in their struggles against the Japanese, eagerly interpreted this doctrine as universal in its scope. It remains to be said that this official U.S. policy of noninterference in Korea is to be distinguished from the opinions of some segments of the U.S. society and citizenry, such as the U.S. missionaries continuing their work in Korea after the annexation of 1910 and a segment of the U.S. press and public opinion sympathetic to the Korean desire for independence. However, the expressions of sympathy by these segments of the U.S. society for the Korean cause only fueled the false hope of the Korean nationalists that the United States would intervene against Japan in Korea.

When Japan attacked the United States in 1941, a new phase in Korean-American relations dawned. According to American wartime planning, Japan, along with Germany, was to be thoroughly defeated until her unconditional surrender to the Allies, and all of her overseas possessions, including Korea, were to be wrested from her control. The earliest indication of American planning regarding the future of Korea was given when U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Nationalist leader, in December 1942, of the possibility that China, American, Britain, and Russia would become "the four 'big policemen' of the world" after the war and that Russia would have to be included in any military occupation or trusteeship over Korea.<sup>7</sup> This view was reasserted when British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden came to the United States in March 1943 and discussed with Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull a number of questions including the future of Japanese possessions in the Asia-Pacific region. During a conference at the White House, Roosevelt suggested that "Korea might be placed under an international trusteeship, with China, the United States, and one or two other countries participating." Eden, whose account of this suggestion in his memoirs identifies the "one or two other countries participating" as the Soviet Union, concurred with this proposal.<sup>8</sup> Next came the most important wartime policy statement regarding the future of Korea, one that proved to be of decisive importance in shaping the country's future for the next fifty years and beyond. At the Cairo Conference attended by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang in November 1943, the so-called Cairo Declaration on the war against Japan and postwar settlement for Japanese-held territories (including Korea) was issued, a part of which read that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent."<sup>9</sup> How and why this decision was reached is of utmost importance and of considerable interest.

The idea of granting Korea postwar independence was agreed to by all the Allied powers (including the Soviet Union), but there is some uncertainty regarding the origination and formulation of the decision to grant not immediate independence after Japan's defeat but, rather, one "in due course," which implied a transitional stage of some sort of international trusteeship before full independence. Given that Roosevelt had mentioned the idea of trusteeship to Chiang and Eden already months earlier, it seems highly probable that it was indeed Roosevelt who was the originator of this idea. However, in the preparatory papers for the Cairo Conference, Roosevelt, in discussing the proposed conference agenda with his advisors, makes it sound like it was Chiang who originated this idea.<sup>10</sup>

The drafting of the wording "in due course" itself went through a tortuous process, starting with the phrase "at the earliest possible moment after the downfall of Japan" in the initial American draft, of which there is a published record. This "initial" draft was actually a product of a revision by Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's personal assistant who was with Roosevelt in Cairo. At any rate, Roosevelt, upon reading this draft, changed the wording to "at the proper moment after the downfall of Japan," and, finally, the wording "in due course" was made after incorporating the British draft of the declaration. Thus, the facts regarding this rather complicated process stand as follows: while the wording "in due course" was definitely the work of the British, it was Roosevelt who changed the wording "at the earliest possible moment" to "at the proper moment," but it is not certain whether the wording "at the earliest possible moment" was the work of Hopkins who revised the original American draft or that of those American staff members (whose identities remain unknown) who had made the original draft for Hopkins' revision. Because the content of the very first American draft is unknown, the original wording in that first draft also remains unknown, but it is possible that the original wording was indeed "at the earliest possible moment." However, it is also possible the original wording actually proclaimed Korea's immediate independence, only to be revised by Hopkins to "at the earliest possible moment." Nevertheless, even if the original wording, probably the work of certain State Department officials, actually had proclaimed immediate independence, it would not have mattered, as Roosevelt already had his views on the need for a Korean trusteeship and was bound to change the wording to such as would allow room for a trusteeship.

While all this discussion of the differences in wording may seem, literally, semantic, it is of considerable importance and interest, as the differences in meaning between "at the earliest possible moment" and "in due course" are substantial. While the former conveys a sense of urgency and a desire to take all necessary measures to grant Korea her independence in

the speediest possible manner after Japan's defeat, the latter connotes a much more indefinite time frame, allowing for the possibility of a very long period of time, indeed stretching for many years, after Japan's defeat. What is intriguing here is the question of Britain's role. Considering that Eden and Roosevelt had already agreed in March on the need for a Korean trusteeship, it is most likely that, by the time of the Cairo Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill still shared this understanding on Korea. The interesting question is which of the two Allied leaders was more in favor of a shorter period of trusteeship. From the change in the wording, it seems Churchill actually favored an even longer period of trusteeship than Roosevelt, as "in due course" connotes a longer period of time—an extended process of necessary preconditions for independence being gradually fulfilled over time—than "at the proper moment" with the word "moment" denoting a quicker process, with the possibility of granting independence when the conditions become merely favorable, not necessarily fulfilled. This modification in wording made at Cairo indeed leads one to wonder if Churchill was actually the originator of the idea of a Korean trusteeship and had influenced Roosevelt to adopt such an idea. Because there is no written record identifying the originator of this idea, one can only speculate.

In general, however, the idea of establishing trusteeships worldwide in the postwar settlement was Roosevelt's: the American president did believe in national self-determination of non-Western peoples, though he also believed in the necessity for a form of tutelage, such as the proposed system of trusteeship, for those peoples he deemed not yet ready for immediate full independence. As is well known, Roosevelt was opposed to the maintenance of European colonial empires after the war and saw the trusteeship system as a means to dismantle Britain's colonial empire. This attempt by Roosevelt, however, met with failure as Churchill vehemently resisted any attempts by the Americans to break Britain's grip on her colonies. Thus, it seems unlikely Churchill was the originator of the idea of trusteeship for Korea, given his opposition to the idea of applying trusteeships to Britain's colonies; yet it is still possible he was the originator of this idea given that, after all, trusteeship in this case was a means to dismantle the Japanese, not the British, colonial empire, just as British foreign policy had favored the League of Nations mandate system to dismantle the Ottoman and German colonial empires after World War I. No matter who was the real author of the idea of Korean trusteeship, it seems clear both Churchill and Roosevelt at Cairo did not judge the Koreans to be yet capable of immediate self-rule after Japan's defeat and that Churchill, the British imperialist par excellence, actually may have evaluated the Korean capacity for self-rule even lower than did Roosevelt.

An important aspect of the Cairo Declaration on Korea is that it was made by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang without the participation of Stalin, who was not consulted about it beforehand. Cordell Hull, who was not at Cairo and who himself was not consulted about this by Roosevelt, registers his disapproval of this decision in his memoirs, noting that Russia “had an interest in Korea.”<sup>11</sup> However, when Churchill and Roosevelt met with Stalin shortly after Cairo in Tehran (November 28–December 1, 1943), Churchill asked Stalin if he had read the declaration, to which the latter replied he had and that he approved of it. More will be said about this reaction by Stalin, but it is worth noting that the Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan at this point and that anything said by Stalin then with regard to Korea or any other Japanese possessions in Asia was tentative at best.

The great importance of the Cairo Declaration for Korea’s future was, first, that, by withholding immediate independence after Japan’s defeat and imposing a trusteeship in the interim period, it created an uncertain future for Korea after Japan’s defeat which allowed room for manipulation by those Great Powers with an interest in Korea to their own advantage and also for engendering complications especially between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is very important to note that, though the declaration was made without consulting Stalin beforehand, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang reserved room for Soviet participation in the proposed trusteeship and welcomed Soviet adherence to the declaration at any time.<sup>12</sup> Thus, a Soviet role in Korea’s postwar settlement was already accepted by the three leaders by the time of the Cairo Conference, which implied also allowing room for Soviet military occupation of at least a part of Korea. American and British military planning by this time called for Soviet participation in the war against Japan after Germany’s defeat, which naturally presupposed a Soviet role in defeating Japan and accepting the surrender of Japanese forces in Korea. An indication of the American military planners’ acceptance of a Soviet military role in Korea is given in a remark by George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, to Roosevelt during a meeting to set the agenda for the Cairo Conference, in which the general said the Soviets desired a warm water port (most likely Pusan) in Korea close to Japan.<sup>13</sup> As will be discussed in depth later when describing the establishment of the 38th parallel, this decision at Cairo to defer Korea’s immediate independence and to allow for a Soviet role in a trusteeship thus gave Stalin practically a free hand to militarily occupy as much of Korea as he could depending on the future progress of the Red Army’s operations in Korea against Japan. Given that the Cairo Declaration and his adherence to it already allowed him a military role in Korea, it was no wonder Stalin later did not list a claim on Korea as part of the preconditions for entering

the war against Japan which he presented to Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference in February 1945.

The great importance of the Cairo Declaration for Korea's future was also the more obvious one of deferring immediate independence on the grounds that the Koreans were not yet ready for self-government and needed a period of tutelage. As Hull, who disagreed with this decision, notes in his memoirs, "Koreans wanted their independence immediately, not 'in due course'" and "did not welcome the Cairo Declaration."<sup>14</sup> Roosevelt's view on this matter seemed to have been predicated on his opinion that, based on what he regarded as America's great success in preparing the Philippines for self-government, Korea, along with Indochina, Burma, Malaya, and the East Indies, could also be successfully taught in the art of self-government.<sup>15</sup> Proceeding from this assumption, Roosevelt concluded that, since it took the United States about 50 years to prepare the Philippines for self-government, Korea would need somewhere between 20 and 30 to be taught self-government, as he later told Stalin at the Yalta Conference.<sup>16</sup> It is to be noted that even this estimate of 20 to 30 years was on the low side, as the consensus, no doubt forged by Roosevelt and Churchill, at the earlier Tehran Conference seemed to have been 40 years as the duration of the proposed trusteeship.<sup>17</sup>

Questions of the length of the Korean trusteeship aside, a more immediate question is the precise nature of the system of trusteeship itself that was proposed by Roosevelt as an instrument of postwar settlement. What is clear is that Roosevelt considered himself to be a firm opponent of European imperialism and sought to undermine the European colonial empires at the end of the war. A major reason for this was the prevailing perception on the part of both the American public and the foreign-policy establishment that the real culprit for the collapse of the world order in the 1930s was the old imperialism of the sort practiced by Britain, which was seen as predicated on power politics, spheres of influence, preferential trading blocs, and simple greed. In this view, it was precisely this failure of the imperialist powers like Britain to establish a free, open, and just international order after World War I that gave rise to Fascism and Nazism. Given this perception, British imperialism was regarded by Roosevelt and his advisors as in some ways even more of a threat to postwar cooperation than the Soviet Union, which, though deeply distrusted and feared, at least did not bring about the rise of Nazism.<sup>18</sup> There is strong evidence that Roosevelt meant to apply the trusteeship system to British and European colonial possessions after the war, only to later back down on this plan upon meeting stiff resistance from Churchill and De Gaulle.<sup>19</sup> As Eden recounts in his memoirs, the British were deeply suspicious of Roosevelt's intentions when the latter broached the topic of trusteeships during his talk

with them at the White House in March, 1943.<sup>20</sup> This seething suspicion came out into the open during the Yalta Conference when Edward Stettinius, then the U.S. secretary of state, introduced a report on the subject of trusteeships. In a warning to the Americans, Churchill then burst out in a vehement statement affirming his intention that he would brook no "interfering fingers into the life's existence of the British Empire."<sup>21</sup> Stalin, who was present, obviously enjoyed this display of discord between his capitalist allies, as the usually calm and imperturbable Soviet dictator got up from his chair and walked up and down, beaming and even breaking into applause at intervals. An embarrassed Stettinius later explained to Eden that the trusteeship idea was meant to apply principally to territories that were to be taken away from Japan.<sup>22</sup>

This tension between the United States and Britain on the status of colonial empires after the war was reflected in the work of the delegates meeting in San Francisco in April 1945, to draft the Charter of the United Nations. In the proposals submitted to the Conference Committee on Trusteeship, there was a substantial divergence between the views of the British on one hand and those of the United States on the other. The proposals by the Soviet Union, China, and France were much closer in content to the American position.<sup>23</sup> According to a Soviet analysis of the positions taken by the various powers, the British position was the most "conservative," being that of the old imperialist camp, which provided for, at most, a gradual step-by-step evolution of colonial territories to the final stage of dominion status, thus precluding even the possibility of full national self-determination of colonial peoples. True to official Soviet propaganda of the time, the analysis hails the Soviet position as the most progressive, saying that the USSR stood for the quickest fulfillment of national self-determination of colonial and other dependent peoples, a stance which allegedly won the USSR moral leadership at the conference. The position taken by the United States, continues this analysis, was that of the middle ground, which, while acknowledging the possibility of granting independence to colonial and dependent peoples, still provided for withholding of full independence until such time as the people in question become mature enough in the exercise of self-government to assume such a responsibility. The analysis then adds that this American position was based on the thinking that informal economic expansion rather than old imperialism of the British variety was preferable as an instrument for spreading and consolidating American influence and interests overseas.<sup>24</sup>

However one interprets the differences between the positions taken by the major Powers, the outcome of the conference, namely the United Nations Charter, reflected the compromise made by the Powers. Although some delegations had argued for a forthright statement of independence as

a goal toward which all dependent peoples might aspire, others, including the British, argued against establishing such a goal for all dependent peoples without exception. The result was a compromise reflected in the Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories in Chapter XI of the Charter, which did not specifically mention independence as a goal for all dependent peoples but recognized it as one of the possible alternatives. The other major drawback of those chapters that concern trusteeship (Chapter XI, XII, and XIII), from the point of view of the advocates of national self-determination for dependent peoples everywhere, was not in the substance of their provisions but rather in the way they were intended to function. The Conference left the question of which specific territories were to be placed under trusteeship entirely up to the "states directly concerned," which also were entrusted with the initiative and the power to negotiate trusteeship agreements concerning territories under their control or in which they had a direct stake.<sup>25</sup> Thus, not only was a colonial power like Britain given full freedom of choice regarding whether or not to place under the trusteeship scheme one of its colonies or a mandate territory under its control, but even the effectiveness of any trusteeship agreement it might care to initiate and enter into depended in large measure on its own policies and actions. Furthermore, Chapter XIII provided for the establishment of a Trusteeship Council functioning under the authority of the General Assembly as a principal organ of the UN Organization, which was designed to be more important and effective than its predecessor under the League of Nations, the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League. However, at the subsequent meeting of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations in London, which was charged with working out, among other tasks, procedural rules for the Trusteeship Council, the British delegation spearheaded the introduction of a proposal to create a Temporary Trusteeship Committee, something the UN Charter did not provide for. According to the aforementioned Soviet analysis, this move was an attempt by the British to undermine the UN Charter's provisions regarding trusteeship, which the Britons allegedly found to be not entirely to their liking, and at the same time to postpone the creation of a permanent Trusteeship Council.<sup>26</sup>

Having mentioned the compromises and alleged drawbacks of the UN Charter concerning trusteeship, what, then, were its "strengths" or improvements over the previous League of Nations system of mandates, which, after all, did have a similar purpose of administering dependent territories detached from enemy states as an international responsibility in accordance with internationally agreed-upon principles? Furthermore, in general, how was the UN trusteeship system different from the previous system? In answering these questions, it is important, first of all, to state at

first the scope of applicability of the new UN trusteeship mechanism. The trusteeship system, as agreed at Yalta between Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill, was meant to apply to three categories of territories: first, those presently held under the League of Nations mandate system; second, those detached from enemy states as a result of World War II; and third, such others as might be voluntarily placed under it by the states responsible for their administration. The League of Nations mandate system was created to apply to former colonies of Germany and Ottoman Turkey, both defeated in World War I and deprived of their overseas territorial possessions. Among the Ottoman possessions, Lebanon and Syria became mandated territories administered by France, and, among the German possessions, German Southwest Africa (presently Namibia) became a mandate controlled by the Union of South Africa. In the mandate system, these former German and Ottoman possessions were divided into three classes—"A," "B," and "C"—according to their relative stage of development. The "A" category was deemed the most advanced and provisionally recognized as independent. The "C" category was considered the least advanced, and the "B" was considered as occupying the middle stage. Whereas territories in the "A" and "B" categories were open to equal opportunities for trade for all League members, those in the "C" category were considered almost within official possession of the Power administering the mandate and were closed off to these opportunities. Thus, the nature of this categorization was such that the temporary nature of the mandate administration and the prospect of independence in the near future were acknowledged only for those in the "A" category.

The creators of the UN trusteeship system, on the other hand, intended it to be not merely a substitute for the mandate system but an improvement over it. The new system avoided the former system's rigid classification into "A," "B," and "C" categories and was designed to be more "flexible" in that any trust territory was to be administered according to an agreement tailored to fit the particular circumstance and needs of that territory, taking into account such factors as its population, resources, geographical location, and level of development. Most important of all, the new system acknowledged, for the first time in an international agreement, the paramountcy of the interests of the inhabitants of the territories, whereby the administering authorities were "to accept the obligation to promote the economic, political, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants and the development of their free political institutions."<sup>27</sup> In an effort to promote the welfare of the inhabitants, the new system provided for periodic visits by representatives of the United Nations to the trust territories in order to monitor progress being made, something that did not exist under the old system. Moreover, the power to accept and examine petitions, oral or

written, from the inhabitants, which was practiced by the mandate system with respect to written petitions but which was not stipulated in the Covenant of the League of Nations, was formally stipulated in the UN Charter. As for the functioning of the new system, membership of the new Trusteeship Council was to be selected on a basis that would insure a balance between those states directly responsible for the administration of the trust territories and those having no such responsibility. In addition, all permanent members of the Security Council were to be included in the Trusteeship Council as permanent members, regardless of whether or not they were directly involved in administering the trust territories. Thus, as these new features of the UN trusteeship system indicate, the new system was designed to be more open, multilateral, accountable, transparent, and protective of the interests of the inhabitants of the territories than the mandate system, under which a single mandate Power administered a territory in a more unilateral and arbitrary way that even allowed it to exploit, especially in the so-called C category, the territory.

This analysis of the differences between the League of Nations mandate system and the United Nations trusteeship system is directly relevant to discussing the treatment meted out to Korea by the Allied Powers at the end of World War II and also is important in understanding the developments in Korea during 1945–1948. This is because it was precisely through the means of the proposed UN trusteeship that the division of Korea in 1945 was brought about, and it was also through this same UN trusteeship that the Allied Powers were to reunify the country for the next two years until their efforts finally failed by 1948. Therefore, it is crucial to understand why Roosevelt and Churchill, as well as Chiang and Stalin, thought that a trusteeship was the appropriate solution to Korea's postwar future.

That the UN trusteeship system had advantages over the mandate system, as discussed above, is indisputable. However, what mattered most in the end was not how it was designed to work but how it actually turned out to work in practice. In answering this question, it is necessary to remember that Roosevelt, the main author of the trusteeship concept, was dead before the work of drafting the UN Charter at San Francisco began in April 1945. There is strong evidence that Truman, Roosevelt's successor, left Roosevelt's policy on trusteeship intact in the two-week period between Roosevelt's death on April 12 and the beginning of the San Francisco Conference on April 25. Thus, it is legitimate to believe that the work done by the U.S. delegation at the Conference on this issue reflected Roosevelt's policy.<sup>28</sup> However, even within these two weeks, the change in the U.S. top leadership was already evident in the area of U.S.-Soviet relations,<sup>29</sup> and how the impending work of the delegates at San Francisco was to turn out in practice was highly uncertain at best. Jumping ahead of

the story, the actual trusteeship agreement on Korea reached during the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers (of the United States, Britain, and USSR) in December 1945 provided for a trusteeship of up to five years, a big contraction from the 20–30 years deemed appropriate by Roosevelt. This contraction was made no doubt in consideration of the stiff opposition to the trusteeship on the part of the Koreans, but the fact that the American delegation at the Moscow Conference initially proposed a trusteeship of up to 10 years (despite the Koreans' vehement opposition to any trusteeship) bespeaks the fact that the new trusteeship system as stipulated in the UN Charter was not interpreted by the Americans as providing for only temporary trusteeships. In this respect, the UN trusteeship system may be interpreted as not much more progressive in practice than the mandate system when it came to the speed with which a dependent people could receive independence. Also in this connection, it is worth noting that the UN trusteeship was actually implemented after World War II in only a small number of territories, such as Libya and Somalia, both detached from Italy, which became independent in 1951 and 1960, respectively. In Asia, Korea was the only territory detached from the Japanese Empire where a trusteeship was proposed but, there, the system was never implemented in part because of the failure of the would-be trustee Powers to cooperate in making it work.

Why, then, was trusteeship considered to be an appropriate solution for Korea by Roosevelt and the other Allied leaders? There are two components to answering this question apart from the obvious one of Korea's status as a territory detached from an enemy state at the end of World War II: namely, her status as a nation considered to be at a relatively high level of development and her historical significance as a buffer state for her neighboring Great Powers. The first consideration was made in light of the objective facts of Korea's history, namely her long history as an independent state prior to her annexation by Japan in 1910 and the presence of official diplomatic relationships prior to 1905 between Korea and Powers such as the United States, Russia, and Britain. The myriad activities of the many Korean groups agitating for national independence since 1910, especially those of Korean activists in the United States and China lobbying the U.S. and Chinese authorities and of the sizable Korean community in the Soviet Union, played their part in persuading the governments of these Powers that the Koreans were a distinct national group with their own history and past achievements, a people eager for their independence. Nevertheless, that trusteeship was thought appropriate for Korea and other parts of the non-Western world such as Libya but not for any part of the West reflects the obvious distinction between Western and non-Western countries held in the minds of the Allied leaders: trusteeship, despite its "progressive"

features, was intended only for non-Western peoples whose level of development was deemed lower than that of even the least advanced of the European nations.

The second component, namely Korea's importance as a buffer state, seems like an obvious consideration but one that has not been given adequate attention in this connection. Roosevelt apparently thought that, given the historical rivalries between the neighboring Great Powers over Korea (China vs. Japan, Russia vs. Japan, etc.), a trusteeship administered jointly by his four great policemen (the United States, USSR, Britain, and China) would be a way to prevent a recurrence of such rivalries leading again to war, as such a collective trusteeship would presumably put an end to the old politics of spheres of influence and balance of power over the Korean peninsula. His thinking, of course, was based on his belief in the ability of the four Allied Powers to work harmoniously with one another in effecting postwar settlements around the world, including in Korea. However, though this was the "official rationale" for his idea of the Korean trusteeship, Roosevelt may in fact have used this rationale to in effect concede Russia's old territorial claims on Korea dating to pre-1905, thus engaging in balance-of-power politics without himself admitting it. This interpretation has much to recommend itself if one believes that Roosevelt was not such a firm believer in postwar cooperation with Russia or in Wilsonian multilateralism as he has often been portrayed to be and that he was in reality a balance-of-power politician couching his policies under a rhetoric of multilateralism and cooperation with Russia. Under this interpretation, by proposing a trusteeship for Korea, Roosevelt used the trusteeship as a public-relation cover under which he could give the Russians their own "sphere of influence" in Korea. Therefore, military occupation of Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of the war and the ensuing permanent division of Korea by the two Powers was an eventual outcome Roosevelt was prepared to accept and even contemplated when he proposed the Korean trusteeship, according to this rather "cynical" interpretation of his motives. Alternatively, the following explanation may be held: that Roosevelt did propose trusteeships for eventual national self-determination of non-Western peoples and sincerely believed in their multilateral provisions successfully working out in practice but that he did not believe this to apply in the case of buffer states like Korea where important national-security interests of neighboring Great Powers clash and where he thus did not believe in the success of the proposed trusteeship.

Apart from these three considerations, namely Korea's status as territory detached from an enemy state, her historical status as a distinct entity with a long history, and her position as a buffer state, another important factor

certainly seemed to have been at work in the assignment of a trusteeship for Korea. This is nothing other than a simple lack of attention to and interest in Korea on the part of Roosevelt and his advisors including those in the State Department, whereby these American policymakers simply did not know what to do with Korea after the war and chose trusteeship merely as a means of postponing a definite decision on Korea's future. An important component of this was a simple lack of knowledge or expertise in Korean affairs on the part of both Roosevelt and his advisors as well as the broader U.S. policy establishment, including opinion makers in the press. Moreover, scholarship and education concerning Korea at universities and research institutions in the United States at the time can safely be said to have been almost nonexistent. Certainly, the officials dealing with East Asia in the State Department during the 1930s and 1940s were grouped into what John Dower calls the "China crowd" (such as Stanley Hornbeck) and the "Japan crowd" (such as Joseph Grew) and were engaged in various policy battles with each other.<sup>30</sup> As Dean Acheson describes in his memoirs, the State Department as a whole during the war was enmeshed in acute bureaucratic infighting, with the various division chiefs jealously guarding their turfs like "barons in a feudal system."<sup>31</sup> Policy paralysis was often the outcome. It was therefore nothing surprising that Korea was lost amid this turf war and received scant attention, with the result that training of officials specializing in Korean affairs simply did not take place. The few American specialists on Korea that there were, such as the brothers George and Shannon McCune and Benjamin and Clarence Weems, got interested in Korea and received their training only as a result of the activities of American missionaries in Korea.<sup>32</sup> In general, the major focus of U.S. policy for the Asia-Pacific region after the war was centered on Japan and, to some extent, China.

In terms of overall U.S. wartime planning for postwar settlement, the foremost emphasis was placed on making sure that Germany and Japan, the two main aggressor nations, would never again become a threat to world peace but, rather, would turn into democratic, peaceful, and responsible members of the world community. Another dimension of this vital goal was the creation of an open, liberal, and prosperous world order in which the rehabilitated economies of these defeated nations, the economies of which were the dominant industrial powerhouses in their respective regions, would play the role of engines of growth and contribute to maintaining a stable world economic order.<sup>33</sup> Given Japan's preeminent role as the industrial center of East Asia and her obvious strategic importance, postwar U.S. East Asian policy was predicated upon the creation of a democratic and prosperous Japan solidly allied with the United States and plugged into the U.S.-led liberal international economic system.

Considering this crucial role of Japan as the future lynchpin of the U.S. Asia-Pacific policy, it was no wonder the United States was doggedly determined to become the sole controlling voice in the Allied occupation of Japan and to brook no interference from any other power, including the Soviet Union, in its occupation policies. This preponderant importance of Japan for U.S. security and Asia-Pacific policy meant Korea was to become, during the Cold War years, a military outpost of the United States, a forward base for the defense of Japan. The creation of a separate South Korean state, in this geopolitical calculation, would have as its *raison d'être* South Korea's function as a military buffer zone between the Japanese home islands and Soviet Russia (as well as Communist China later on).

The next stage in the evolution of the U.S. policy toward Korea since the Cairo Declaration was the Yalta Conference of February 1945. At this crucial conference, Roosevelt got a reaffirmation of Stalin's promise to enter the war against Japan after Germany's defeat. As a precondition for this, Stalin asked for the following terms: return of southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union; lease of Port Arthur, Dairen, and the southern portion of the Manchurian railways; and a Soviet sphere of influence in Outer Mongolia and Manchuria. Roosevelt readily agreed. At the subsequent Potsdam Conference in July–August, the understanding reached on Korea at Yalta was reaffirmed by Truman, Stalin, and Churchill–Attlee. It was with this understanding on the preconditions for its entrance into the anti-Japanese war that the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8. Its defeat of the Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea was swift: the Red Army began its campaign against Japanese-ruled Korea on August 9 and completed its occupation of all Korea north of the 38th parallel by the end of August.<sup>34</sup>

### **Russian Policy toward Korea until August 1945**

Propelled by a search for fur-bearing animals, the Russian Far Eastern expansion that began in the sixteenth century after the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan in the 1550s by Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) made spectacular advances in the seventeenth century. Meeting little organized resistance, bands of Cossacks and fur-trappers advanced across the Urals and, on through the river networks that crisscross the Siberian plain, reached Lake Baikal by 1631. Shortly afterward, an expedition reached the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk. What became later known as the Bering Sea was reached by 1649, and Kamchatka Peninsula was conquered in 1697. The Russians may have been the first to sight Alaska, in 1732, when the explorers Fedorov and Gvozdev are said to have reached Cape Prince of Wales on

the eastern shore of the Bering Strait. The Russian expansion south along the river Amur provoked the Chinese, leading to skirmishes between the two sides that were halted only by the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1680, mediated by two Jesuit priests. This treaty, which fixed the frontier for the next 150 years and formed the basis for a mutually profitable trading relationship, was revised in 1858–1869 by the “unequal treaties” of Aigun and Beijing, which ceded to Russia the economically and strategically valuable Ussury valley. Close to her new border with Korea, Russia built in 1860 the port and naval base of Vladivostok, the very name of which (“Rule the East”) signified her expansionist designs in the region. The stage for the ensuing confrontation between Russia and Japan was thus set in this fashion.

Although formal diplomatic relations between Russia and Korea were established only in 1884, following on the heels of the Shufeldt treaty signed between the United States and Korea two years earlier, Russia’s interest in and knowledge of Korea began centuries earlier.<sup>35</sup> The earliest European record of contact between Korea and Russia dates from the thirteenth century when the Franciscan monk John of Plano Carpini met tribute envoys from both Korea and the Russian principalities in the Mongol emperor’s court and described the encounter in his travelogue.<sup>36</sup> Commercial contacts between the Russians and the Koreans took place as early as the latter half of the seventeenth century, when in Nerchinsk, among other places, Korean merchants bartered their silk wallpaper, silkworms, straw mats, and other goods for the Russians’ fur. After the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk, information about Korea coming into Russian hands was obtained mostly as a result of contacts between Russian officials and merchants and Korean envoys and merchants in Beijing at the Russian legation. Several participants on the Russian side of these encounters left memoirs, diaries, and other descriptions, in which they not only described Korea’s then tributary relationship to China but also introduced Korea’s history, geography, culture, language, economy, natural resources, and other aspects. They also wrote about their impressions of the Koreans they had met and about prospects for future trade and exchange between Russia and Korea.<sup>37</sup> After the building of Vladivostok in 1860, the sea lanes passing south in the Sea of Japan with the adjacent east coast of Korea became routinely traveled routes for Russian ships, often with Russian scholars and merchants aboard who specialized in the Far East. The first Russians to set foot on Korean territory were a group of sailors in the Russian navy on their way to Japan in order to establish diplomatic and trade relations with that country. In 1854, the Russian warship *Pallada* landed on the Korean coast, and I.A. Goncharov, the famous man of letters who was on board the ship as a member of the expedition, later published his reminiscences in

St. Petersburg, in which 60 pages were devoted to describing in detail what he saw of the everyday life in Korea, Korea's nature, customs, and the potential for trade between Europe and the maritime area encompassed by Japan, Korea, and Shanghai.

A new stage in the growing Korean-Russian relations commenced in 1860 when Korean peasants and slaves fleeing economic hardships and government misrule in northern Hamgyŏng Province adjacent to the new Russo-Korean border began entering the Russian Maritime Province in a steady flow. These refugees soon became immigrants who established their own Korean district in Vladivostok with their own administration, schools, stores, and, later, even newspapers.<sup>38</sup> The number of Koreans in the Maritime Province reached 24,000 by 1900 and, by 1914, over 64,000, according to official statistics.<sup>39</sup> In recognition of the growing need for dealing with Korea and Koreans, a Korean-Russian dictionary containing 5,500 words was compiled in 1874 under commission by the Maritime Province administration. These Korean immigrants in the Russian Far East turned out to be excellent farmers, who, along with the Chinese immigrant farmers, supplied Vladivostok and Khabarovsk with fresh vegetables.

With the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Russia in 1884, Russia's already growing interest in and knowledge of her new neighbor to the south increased exponentially. Formal teaching of the Korean language in Russia began in 1897 at St. Petersburg University and, in 1900, the Institute of Oriental Studies (*Vostochnyi Institut*) was established in Vladivostok, at which G.V. Podstavin, the great Russian Orientalist who spent an extensive amount of time in Korea and collected materials on language and culture, was to lead courses on Korea for 25 years.<sup>40</sup> Many more publications on Korea began to appear, largely as a result of the numerous Russian merchants, soldiers, and scholars visiting Korea after 1884. With the growth of Japan's imperialistic activities in Korea and the attendant rise in anti-Japanese feelings on the part of the Korean masses, some of these Russian works record friendly feelings toward Russia on the part of the Koreans they had met.<sup>41</sup> After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, which ended in Japan's total victory, Japan's imperialistic designs on East Asia began to worry the Russian government. Accordingly, the latter responded by leading the so-called Triple Intervention (the other two powers being France and Germany) against Japan's demands on China, which had been incorporated into the Treaty of Shimonoseki that ended the war.<sup>42</sup> Because of this intervention, Japan was forced to forego its claim on Liaotung Peninsula and was checked, at least for the time being, in her expansionist design to incorporate Korea into her territory. The subsequent period then marked the height of Russia's political influence in

Korea until the end of World War II, as the Koreans, especially King Kojong, increasingly turned to Russia as a counterweight against Japan. When the Korean king sought refuge in the Russian legation in Seoul in February 1896, after the Japanese had organized the brutal murder of the anti-Japanese Korean queen in October 1895, Russia gained a trump card vis-à-vis the Japanese. During the year or so that the Korean king resided in the Russian legation, under the protection of a Russian naval detachment of about 100 men, many of the reform measures for the modernization of Korea (the so-called Kabo Reform movement) that had been put into effect between October 1894 and February 1896 by reformist Korean ministers under Japanese influence were repealed. At the same time, a Korean cabinet consisting of pro-Russian and pro-American officials was formed. This cabinet proceeded to fire the Japanese employed by the previous government and hired a Russian financial advisor as well as military advisors in their place. Establishment of a Russian language school and a Russian bank followed.

However, this “Russian period” in Korea’s pre-1945 history did not last long as the growing Korean nationalist movement, many activists of which were unhappy with the king’s flight to a foreign legation and the economic concessions to Russia and other Western powers made during this period, demanded the king’s return from the Russian legation. In response, the king returned to a palace in Seoul in February 1897, and, in October of the same year, proclaimed the establishment of an independent Korean Empire. However, the newly proclaimed empire was an empire in name only, as the fate of Korea now hung on the balance of power between Russia and Japan in East Asia. This uncertainty was finally ended in 1904 when Japan, incensed at Russia for the Triple Intervention of 1895 and convinced that possession of Korea and a controlling interest in at least a part of southern Manchuria were crucial for her survival as a Great Power, launched a surprise attack on the Russian Far Eastern fleet in Port Arthur at the tip of Liaotung Peninsula, thus starting the Russo-Japanese War. The outcome of the war, which ended in Japan’s victory, effectively handed over Korea to be incorporated into the Japanese Empire, which proceeded to annex Korea in 1910 after turning her into a protectorate in 1905.

Much has been written about the Russo-Japanese War and its origins.<sup>43</sup> While the immediate *causa belli* were the continued occupation of southern Manchuria by Russian troops after the Boxer Rebellion and a rise in Russian economic concessions in Korea in the run-up to 1904, it appears that, overall, the war was caused by a fundamental disjuncture between the expectations and postures of the two belligerents.<sup>44</sup> While control of Korea and part of Manchuria was a matter of life and death for the Japanese who repeatedly made various overtures to the Russians between 1897 and 1904

for a compromise deal on this issue, Russia, on the other hand, ultimately failed to grasp the utter importance of this issue to the Japanese. Moreover, Russia's top leaders, who respected yet underestimated Japan's military power, were unprepared to entertain the notion that Japan might actually resort to a war with them and, even more unlikely, win. Not feeling the same strong need as the Japanese did to make a deal on this issue, the Russians, therefore, never took the Japanese overtures seriously enough. Russia's interests in Korea, which mainly took the form of a desire to gain mining, timber, and railway concessions as well as a warm water port and maintaining control over the sea lanes in the Sea of Japan down to the Tsushima Straits, were by no means insignificant, but they were not critical enough for Russia's national security or economic well-being in order to compel her to go to war with Japan. Moreover, there is much evidence that the policy-making process in the Russian government was marked by self-contradiction and even paralysis, at least with regard to policy vis-à-vis Japan and Korea. Given the absence of a prime minister between 1896 and 1904, the role of the coordinator of policy-making in the Russian government fell on the tsar, who evidently suffered from a lack of suitability for this role in both training and temperament. Receiving a deluge of often-contradictory reports and recommendations from a myriad of ministries, grand dukes, and the armed services (not to mention senior foreign monarchs such as Kaiser Wilhelm II offering him "friendly" advice), all of whom were competing for his attention and endorsement, the tsar seemed to have been unable to decide on a policy line and stick to it over a sustained period of time. Foreign officials dealing with the Russian government, therefore, often seemed to have been confused as to the true position of the Russian government on a given issue and as to which among the many voices claiming to speak for the Russian government represented its true voice.<sup>45</sup> Ensnared in this bureaucratic turf war and policy incoherence, the Russian government was totally caught by surprise when the Japanese attacked.

As for the significance of the Russo-Japanese War, apart from its obvious importance for Korea's future, it heralded the rise of Japan as a full-fledged Great Power set on a course of imperialistic expansion, and it served as the catalyst for the first Russian Revolution of 1905 which paved the way for the 1917 October Revolution. As the first victory in a war in modern times of a non-Western power over a major Western power, Japan's defeat of Russia gave inspiration and hope to leaders or future leaders of burgeoning nationalist independence movements in the non-Western world, including even the young Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung).<sup>46</sup> The Bolshevik leaders who opposed the war as an imperialistic war of aggression among capitalist powers later used the domestic confusion and

turmoil created by World War I, which they also denounced as an imperialist-capitalist war, to seize power in Russia and went on to set the country on a foreign-policy trajectory which was to engender fateful consequences for both Korea and the rest of the world after World War II.

After 1910, Russia maintained no diplomatic presence in Korea, now a Japanese colony, until 1925, when the Soviet Union opened a consulate general in Seoul shortly after establishing diplomatic relations with Japan. However, this should not be taken to mean that Russia-USSR had no active interest in Korea during this period. On the contrary, though tsarist Russia took a policy of noninterference in Korea after 1905, the newly founded Soviet Union, from its inception, took an active interest in Korea as part of its program of world revolution. The Comintern, established in Moscow in March 1919, began to extend aid and training to third-world revolutionaries fighting for independence from colonial powers, and the various Korean pro-independence groups in China, the Soviet Union itself, and elsewhere became recipients of such aid.<sup>47</sup> In this connection, it did not hurt the Comintern's efforts that the Korean community in the Maritime Province of the USSR already numbered more than 100,000 by 1923, among whom plenty of recruits could be found to become agents for the "liberation" of their ancestral homeland.<sup>48</sup> In fact, listening to the Bolshevik propaganda that promised national liberation of oppressed and dependent peoples, a substantial portion of the Korean community in Russia joined the side of the Reds in the Russian Civil War, and a few Korean Bolsheviks even became revolutionary heroes by dying as revolutionary martyrs in the hands of the Whites and the foreign interventionist troops.<sup>49</sup>

With the Bolsheviks now in power, much of the social sciences in Russia underwent a rebirth. The new Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy imposed a set of principles and methods by which all human thought and endeavors were to be analyzed and understood.<sup>50</sup> In the area of Soviet Oriental studies, this meant applying the Marxist framework of economic development to non-Western societies, most of which were now, with the possible exception of Japan, categorized as belonging to either the feudal stage or to what Marx called the stage of "Asiatic mode of production."<sup>51</sup> The rigidity of this interpretive framework, which, for the Marxist social scientists, possessed universal applicability, meant obvious shortcomings in analyzing non-Western societies. Because Marx was very much of a classical economist concerned with development of Western societies and lacked sufficient knowledge of non-Western societies, he failed to propose anything more sophisticated for non-Western societies than lumping them altogether in the crude periodization of feudalism or Asiatic mode of production. Profoundly influenced by Hegel in his teleological view of history,

Marx also seemed to have been influenced by Hegel's view of history concerning the Orient. In fact, Marx further developed Hegel's view of Chinese and Indian civilizations (i.e., that these were "stationary civilizations" lying "outside World History" because they had ceased developing—an "Orientalist" perspective on world history typical of nineteenth-century Europe) into an assessment of the Orient as a civilization altogether bypassed by history.<sup>52</sup> In a New York *Daily Tribune* article on British imperialism in India, Marx even went so far as to declare that because Asia lacked any internal dynamic of development, its only hope for amelioration was Western imperialism, thus justifying the Western domination over the Orient.<sup>53</sup> The crudity of this Marxist analysis notwithstanding, guided by this Marxist worldview and Lenin's new theory of imperialism articulated in his influential *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Soviet Orientalists and Comintern activists now had their hands full with the new tasks of both analyzing and resolving problems of national liberation in the non-Western world.<sup>54</sup>

Building on the already substantial knowledge base of pre-Soviet Russian studies of Korea, Soviet studies of Korea now defined their central task as that of understanding the problems of colonial exploitation and the aspirations for national liberation on the part of the Korean people.<sup>55</sup> Korea and her people were now described as living under the yoke of feudal and colonial exploitation, for which the only solution was a proletarian revolution in concert with proletariats in other parts of the world. At the Third Congress of the Comintern held in 1919, for example, the delegates, both Soviet and Korean, defined the Korean revolutionary movement as an integral part of the world socialist movement, emphasizing the positive influence of the October Revolution and the Bolshevik activists in the Russian Far East on the growth of revolutionary consciousness in Korea, as witnessed in the March First Independence Movement of 1919. In the 1921 *Bulletin* of the Comintern's Far Eastern Secretariat (no. 7) was an "appeal to the Far Eastern peoples from the Executive Committee of the Third Congress of the Comintern," which called on the proletariats of Korea, China, and Japan to unite and rise up against Japanese imperialism, arguing that victory was possible only under a united international movement in coordination with the Comintern.<sup>56</sup> Reflecting this upsurge of Soviet revolutionary activism, many articles and studies describing conditions of life in neighboring Oriental countries (including Korea) and growth of proletarian movements there began to appear in numerous journals and magazines. Most of the new studies and articles on Korea were written by officials of organizations such as the Comintern, the Foreign Affairs Commissariat, and the Agricultural Workers International, as well as by journalists, scholars, and professional revolutionary activists. Among the

founders of Korean studies in the Soviet Union were Pak Chinsun, Yi Kang, Nam Manch'un, M. Luk'ianova, S. Dalin, L. Savel'ev, and Nikolai Kim.

After the founding of a Japanese studies section on the Oriental studies faculty of St. Petersburg University in 1918, an institute of modern Oriental languages was set up in 1920 in Leningrad while courses on Japan were also introduced at a similar institute in Moscow. Graduates of these institutions of research and higher learning, mostly specialists on China and Japan, such as V.D. Vilenskii-Sibiriakov, also produced works on Korea. Training of Korea specialists in the Soviet Union at institutions of higher learning began in 1931 at the Institute of International Education in Vladivostok. Graduates of this institute, most of whom were ethnic Koreans, were fluent in Korean and could base their studies on Korean-language materials. The Institute of Pacific Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which opened in 1934, also conducted research on problems of modern Korea history and the current Korean situation. It was at this institute that some of the most important Korea specialists in the Soviet Union, such as F.I. Shabshina, G.D. Tiagai, and Georgi Kim, began their scholarly careers devoted to Korea. After the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which had been founded in 1930 in Leningrad, relocated to Moscow in 1950, it merged with the Institute of Pacific Studies, retaining its name but becoming as a result the most important academic center in the Soviet Union dealing with the nations and peoples of the non-Western world. The Korean section of this institute, established in 1956, would become the leading center for Korean studies in the Soviet Union. Following the discussions undertaken at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956, the Institute of Oriental Studies greatly expanded both the scope of its activities and its research personnel, with the result that its research staff at both its Moscow center and Leningrad branch would number almost 1,000.

The works of the Soviet authors on Korea published in the 1920s invariably discussed in detail the significance of the March First Independence Movement of 1919. Overall, while most of these acknowledged the role played by the Korean national bourgeois in the movement, they regarded the movement as an initial stage in the long struggles by the Korean masses for independence. Some also emphasized the influence of the Bolshevik revolution on the movement, as reflected in the role of key Korean activists such as Yi Tonghwi. As for the so-called cultural politics pursued by the Japanese Government-General in Korea after the March First Movement in order to placate the Korean nationalist feelings, Soviet analysts concluded that this "reform from above" succeeded in its goal of buying off a majority of the Korean bourgeois nationalists, with the result

that the national bourgeois now no longer played a significant role in the anticolonial movement in Korea. Most of the resistance to the Japanese, the analysts argued, would be carried on by radicalized elements of the Korean proletariat, peasantry, and student population, organized and led by socialist activists. After Japan's invasion of Manchuria and mainland China in the 1930s, most Soviet works on Korea emphasized the role played by Korea as a raw-materials-supply base and a springboard for Japan's expansion on the Asian mainland and her planned aggression against the Soviet Union. Most of these discussed an intensification in Japan's exploitation of Korean agriculture, the construction and use of factories for the war industries, the activities of the Japanese monopoly combines (the *zaibatsu*), and the building of roads near the Soviet border for military-strategic purposes. They also mentioned the role of the Korean national traitors found among the national bourgeoisie who actively supported Japan's aggressive campaigns.

These trends in Soviet studies on Korea in the 1920s and 1930s doubtlessly reflected the concerns of Soviet policy toward Korea during the same period. If Soviet policy in the 1920s can be characterized as interested mainly in encouraging and supporting revolutionary and national liberation movements both inside and outside Korea that worked for the country's liberation, the primary concern of Soviet policy after Japan's invasion of Manchuria and the Asian mainland in the 1930s became that of preventing the use of Korea by Japan as a springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union. For the USSR, which already had suffered the Japanese occupation of much of Siberia east of Lake Baikal during the Civil War (1918–1921), to say nothing of the prior tsarist defeat at the hands of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese were its mortal enemy in the East. After Japan concluded the anti-Comintern pact with Nazi Germany in 1936, the very survival of the Soviet regime depended on preventing a simultaneous attack by Germany and Japan on its Western and Eastern borders. Nikita Khrushchev summed up this Soviet predicament in the following way in his memoirs:

Before World War II, Japan had always been hostile to the Soviet Union. I'd go further than that: it was insolent and demanding. Japan pursued an intolerable policy, yet we were forced to sit still for it because we were weak and Japan was strong. Besides, we understood that the problem was not with Japan alone. We were up against Japan in the east, Germany in the west. We had to play diplomatic games, maneuvering in order to secure peace, or at any rate not allow the enemy to start a war. We didn't want to face a war on two fronts, east and west. We were then too weak to wage such a war.<sup>57</sup>

There is compelling evidence that the fundamental orientation of Soviet foreign policy underwent a change, at least outwardly, in 1925–1927, as Stalin during this period publicly retreated from the Leninist line of promoting world revolution to the more seemingly modest goal of promoting “socialism in one country.” Although Stalin continued to foment world revolution through the Comintern and other arms of the Soviet foreign-policy apparatus, it seems to be a fact that, under Stalin, Soviet foreign policy gave more public emphasis to consolidating the gains of socialist construction made within the Soviet Union. Recently, Narinskii (2001) went so far as to argue that Stalin’s policy of socialism in one country turned the very logic of the relationship between the USSR and the world communist movement upside down, namely from the previous one of the USSR supporting world revolution to that of the world communist movement rendering all possible aid to the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> In the 1930s, this new emphasis became not merely a matter for public propaganda vis-à-vis capitalist governments concerned with Soviet-backed communist subversion in their countries but a matter for the very survival of the Soviet regime in a hostile world increasingly dominated by the fascist powers. In Europe, Stalin did everything he could to appease the fascist powers, while in Asia his main goal was to prevent an attack by Japan. For the latter, he repeatedly offered Japan opportunities to conclude a nonaggression treaty while looking for allies to act against Tokyo. He thus reestablished diplomatic relations with China, now under Chiang Kai-shek, and concluded a nonaggression treaty with the latter in 1932. He also used the Chinese communists to exert pressure on Chiang to oppose Japan.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Stalin saw the United States as a potential ally in Asia against Japan, and, indeed, one of his main reasons for establishing diplomatic relations with Washington in 1933 was to use the latter as a check on Japanese expansion in the East. Correspondingly, when negotiations began in 1934 on settlement of old tsarist debts to the United States and future credits from Washington, Moscow linked payment of the debts with open U.S. support against Japanese expansionism.<sup>60</sup>

Stalin’s paranoia about the mortal danger of being attacked by Germany and Japan in a two-front war was to affect not only the conduct of Soviet policy toward other states but also, more fatally, the destinies of entire ethnic groups and nations within the Soviet Union. It became the unfortunate lot of the ethnic Koreans living in the Soviet Far East to become the first victims of Stalin’s paranoia when Stalin ordered in 1937 the forced deportation of all Koreans in the Soviet Far East to locations in Soviet Central Asia on charges that they were disloyal to the Soviet regime and were spying for the Japanese. The deportation of the Koreans was formally

authorized by a decree (*postanovlenie*) of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) of the USSR in a Politburo decision (Decision no. 734) on August 21, 1937. The text of this decision reads, in part, as follows:

With the goal of putting a stop to the rise of Japanese espionage in the Far Eastern District, undertake the following measures: 1. Propose to the Far Eastern District Committee, the District Executive Committee and the Administration of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs [NKVD] in the Far Eastern District that they expel all Korean population of the frontier regions of the Far Eastern District . . . and relocate them in the Southern Kazakhstan oblast in the areas of the Aral Sea and [Lake] Balkhash and in the Uzbek SSR . . . ; 2. Proceed immediately with the relocation and complete it by January 1, 1938; 6. The NKVD is to take measures against possible excesses and disturbances on the part of the Koreans in relation to the relocation.<sup>61</sup>

Copies of this directive were sent to, among others, Ezhov, the NKVD chief; Voroshilov, then the People's Commissar for Defense; and Molotov, then the chair of the Sovnarkom. About a month later, on September 23, 1937, another Politburo decision (no. 22) issued under Stalin's name ordered the deportation of all Koreans then still remaining in the Far Eastern District and instructed that this be completed by the end of October.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, in just a few months, the Soviet regime forcibly relocated over 170,000 Koreans halfway across the Asian continent; a large number of them died either on the way or after being dumped practically out of nowhere on the semi-desert lands of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In fact, the "success" for Stalin of this first experiment in large-scale ethnic deportation was such that it became the model for his later deportations of the Volga Germans, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and other groups during World War II on the charges that they were spying for Nazi Germany.<sup>63</sup> Apart from the obvious tragedy of human suffering involved in this act of Stalinist repression, the deportation of the Koreans, like other acts of Stalin's repression in the 1930s, resulted in a blow to the Soviet Union's human resources. In the area of Soviet Korean studies and expertise in Korean affairs, the Stalinist repression meant the elimination of a large number of Soviet experts on Korea, both ethnically Korean and otherwise, whether they be party activists, scholars, intellectuals, or teachers. This led later to an acute shortage of personnel trained in Korean affairs during the initial stage of Soviet military occupation of northern Korea in 1945.<sup>64</sup>

### **Soviet Policy toward Korea during and at the end of the Second World War**

Much remains to be researched and studied about Soviet policy toward Korea and other areas of the world during and at the end of World War II. With that said, in describing the policy toward Korea, it seems fair to propose two overall characteristics: a concern with preventing a recurrence of attack on the Soviet Far East from any future aggressor, and Stalin's flexibility and opportunism in pursuit of this goal. Stalin must have let out a deep sigh of relief when the Japanese, instead of striking at the Soviet Far East, struck against the United States on December 7, 1941. In this, he was fortunate to have had the capable service of military leaders like Georgy Zhukov, who had led the Red Army to victories over the Japanese at Khalkin Gol (known as Nomonhan in Japanese), Mongolia, in 1939, which contributed to the Japanese decision not to attack the Soviet Union in concert with Nazi Germany. Because of the Japanese turn away from an attack on the Soviet Union, Stalin could afford to transfer some of the divisions stationed along the Soviet-Manchurian border to the defense of Moscow in October 1941–April 1942, where these troops, trained in winter warfare, played a critical role in stopping the *Wehrmacht*. In general, Stalin seemed to have been acutely aware of the Soviet Union's vulnerability and weakness vis-à-vis the leading capitalist powers in the years leading up to the outbreak of World War II. In fact, it was a belief shared by most of the leading Bolsheviks at the time of the 1917 October Revolution that the Russian Revolution was only the prelude to the coming world revolution and that, without the establishment of socialist regimes in other parts of Europe, the fledgling new Soviet state could not survive for long encircled by hostile capitalist powers. It was, therefore, by no means an inconsiderable achievement that Stalin was able—by the brutal methods he employed—to force the industrialization of the USSR out of the rubbles of the Civil War to the extent where, by the outbreak of World War II, the country was already ready, in some areas of industrial and military production, for the coming war with Hitler. However, as Stalin himself and his lieutenants such as Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan recalled later, the Soviet leadership was deeply aware of the USSR's backwardness vis-à-vis the leading capitalist powers even at the end of World War II and into the early postwar years. Stalin's basic national security objective at the war's end was thus preventing a resurgence of German and Japanese aggression against the USSR and also any other possible coalition of hostile powers arraigned against the USSR.<sup>65</sup>

Given this deep sense of Soviet insecurity, Stalin's thinking on the Korean question in World War II must have been based, to a significant

extent, on the importance of preventing the use of the Korean peninsula as a springboard for aggression against the USSR by Japan or any other future aggressor. In pursuing this national-security objective, Stalin appears to have been greatly flexible and opportunistic regarding the specific means followed at different stages in time. Stalin evidently pursued such an opportunistic approach in his policies toward not just Korea but also other areas after World War II, including areas such as Germany where the Soviet national-security interests at stake were arguably even more important. As Naimark (1995, 2004) and others suggest, when the war against Germany ended in May 1945, the Soviets apparently had no ready answers to the future settlement of Germany and occupied the country with no specific goals in mind beyond that of ensuring a future Germany not hostile to the USSR.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the duration of Soviet occupation of eastern Germany, the USSR seems to have pursued a number of parallel policies for a German settlement which were based on mutually inconsistent alternative future scenarios, namely: a sovietized eastern Germany; a unified socialist Germany; a demilitarized, “neutral” Germany; or, as Loth (1998) would argue, even a unified Germany that is a capitalist parliamentary democracy.<sup>67</sup> Stalin’s opportunism on this German question left room for tactics and diplomacy as the time and circumstances required them.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, if Stalin’s approach to the German question serves as any guide, it seems well warranted to approach his handling of the Korean question bearing in mind this flexibility and opportunism in his *modus operandi*.

Thus, when one considers the first official expression of Stalin’s thinking during World War II regarding Korea’s future, namely his consent to the Cairo Declaration promising the postwar independence of Korea “in due course,” which he gave to Roosevelt and Churchill when they met with him in Tehran in November–December 1943, one must bear in mind that Stalin’s consent at this stage did not signify much at all in terms of his real intentions or planning regarding Korea. After all, the USSR was not at war with Japan at this stage, and, though the major victories at Stalingrad and Kursk earlier in the year had definitely turned the tide of the war in Europe, the promised “second front” in western Europe was still to take place, and it was still far from clear how fast the Red Army would be able to defeat the still-powerful *Wehrmacht*. Given this military and political uncertainty, anything Stalin said at that time with regard to Korea must be considered as tentative at best. However, the fact remains that Stalin did consent to the Cairo Declaration, and his calculation here needs some explaining. That Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang made the Declaration without consulting him in advance must have irritated Stalin somewhat, but this must have come as no surprise to him, given that, after all, the three nations represented by these three leaders had already long been at war

with Japan while the USSR was not. Still, Stalin could not have been displeased when Roosevelt and Churchill invited him to join the Declaration in Tehran. Given that the Declaration in effect proposed an interim period of preparation before full Korean independence after the war and this interim period was most likely to take the form of a four-power trusteeship with the USSR as one of the four powers, the Declaration in effect acknowledged the USSR–Russia’s historical role in Korean affairs and conceded a Soviet role in Korea’s postwar settlement. This, in military terms, meant most likely a Soviet military role in defeating—and accepting the surrender of—Japanese troops in Korea if the USSR were to take part in the war against Japan. Thus, depending on the future course of the war in both Europe and Asia, the Soviet Union could end up with a military occupation of at least a part of the Korean peninsula. Considering Stalin’s famous words to Milovan Djilas to the effect that political arrangement reflects military strength and the extent of military conquests, he might have seen in the Anglo–American leaders’ invitation to join the Cairo Declaration an easy chance to establish a Soviet sphere of influence on the Korean peninsula after the war.<sup>69</sup> In the final analysis, therefore, the Soviet dictator must have given his consent to the Cairo Declaration because he calculated that he had nothing to lose but potentially much to gain as a result of doing so.

The next expression of Stalin’s thinking on Korea took place during a visit to Moscow by Churchill in October 1944. According to the memory of George Kennan, who was present at the meeting between Churchill and Stalin, when the question of Soviet entry into the war against Japan came up, Stalin surprised his Western allies by asking in return whether they really wanted Russia to participate. “Would we not prefer to finish off the Japanese alone? If so, this was all right with him,” Kennan wrote, quoting Stalin.<sup>70</sup> Kennan then noted that this was a smart move on Stalin’s part, as it “wiped out his previous statement of intention to enter the war anyway, without compensation, and it put us at once in the position of supplicants.” Given the almost-desperate American desire to save the expected loss of hundreds of thousands of American lives in any massive land war against Japan in Manchuria and the Japanese home islands, Stalin clearly knew he had the upper hand in dealing with the Americans on this issue, and he played his cards well. When his Western guests replied that they of course still wanted the Soviet participation against Japan, Stalin replied that “the Soviet forces, in order to accomplish this mission [i.e., the defeat of the Japanese in Manchuria], would have to carry out an outflanking movement, which would take them around to the south through the vicinities of Peking and Kalgan, and that an occupation of the North Korean ports would also be necessary.” Stalin further observed, according to Kennan,

there were "certain political aspects that would have to be taken into consideration" in connection with Russia's entry into the war. To this reply by Stalin, his Western guests gave their enthusiastic assent. Kennan, however, being the shrewd strategist he was, noted that, "by virtue of these proposed operations alone, to which we gave enthusiastic assent, Stalin would be placed in a position to do what he liked with these areas, whether he was promised any special rights there or not."<sup>71</sup> Thus, according to the American diplomat, Stalin, already by October 1944, had obtained from his Western allies what amounted to a *carte blanche* for a Soviet sphere of influence in the area of the proposed Soviet military operations against Japan, including parts of northern Korea.

When Harriman, the American ambassador in Moscow, met with Stalin in December 1944 and sounded him out, on Roosevelt's instructions, regarding what he had meant two months earlier by "political considerations," Stalin "went into the next room and brought out a map."<sup>72</sup> Stalin then said, according to Harriman, "that the Kurile Islands and the lower Sakhalin should be returned to Russia." The Soviet dictator also "drew a line around the southern part of the Liaotung Peninsula including Port Arthur and Dairen saying that the Russians wished again to lease these ports and the surrounding area." Stalin also conveyed to Harriman his desire to maintain the Republic of Outer Mongolia as an independent entity, apparently to have this Republic serve as a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and any potential hostile power to the south. As will be discussed later, all of these demands by Stalin were satisfied by Roosevelt at the subsequent Yalta Conference. However, as Kennan notes, these demands went a step beyond restoration of Russia's possessions in the area pre-1905, as they included the Kuriles, which had been ceded to Japan by Russia voluntarily in an earlier settlement of 1875 in return for Japanese recognition of the Russian position in southern Sakhalin.<sup>73</sup> Subsequently, at Yalta, Stalin went even further in his demands, asking for Port Arthur and insisting on Russia's special interests in Dairen and the Manchurian Railways. An ailing and weary Roosevelt satisfied all these demands, though he did make the concessions involving Chinese ports and facilities conditional upon signing of a special bilateral agreement to be negotiated between the Soviet and Chinese governments.

It bears noting that, by the time of the Yalta Conference, the Red Army had conquered most of Poland and was on the throes of launching its attack on Königsberg (the present-day Kaliningrad), the capital of East Prussia. Defeat of Germany was expected within a matter of months, and it was with this expectation and also that of obtaining Stalin's definite commitment to the promised Soviet entry into the war against Japan that Roosevelt, now ailing and within two months of his impending death,

asked for Stalin's preconditions for entering the war in East Asia. Although Stalin did not mention Korea among the preconditions, he did not need to, given that he had already obtained the consent of his Western allies four months earlier for a military role in Korea, as we have seen. Besides, Korea's future was discussed at Yalta in a different context, namely that of establishing the proposed four-power trusteeship after the war. In the Anglo-American position paper on Korea's postwar status prepared at Yalta, the analysis was based on the recognition of the following three points: the traditional interests of Russia and China in Korea; the Cairo Declaration's provision of Korea's independence in due course; and undesirable political repercussions of military occupation of Korea by any single power.<sup>74</sup> The paper then took the position that "with the completion of military operations in Korea, there should be, so far as practicable, Allied representation in the army of occupation and in military government of Korea and that . . . such representation should be by those countries which have a real interest in the future political status of Korea, but the representation of other states should not be so large as to prejudice the effectiveness of American participation in that occupation." What this meant, in effect, was the recognition not only of a Soviet military role in the defeat of Japanese forces in Korea but also of a Soviet role in the military government after the cessation of hostilities and in the proposed trusteeship to follow. Given these arrangements being made at Yalta for a Soviet role in the future of Korea, it was no wonder that Stalin did not feel the need to mention Korea as one of his preconditions for fighting the Japanese. He already knew Roosevelt had recognized his "special interests" in Korea as early as 1943 when the U.S. president brought up the idea of the United States, USSR, China, and Britain as the "four policemen" of the world after the war.

However, according to the conclusions of this same position paper, Stalin did not even have to enter the war against Japan in order to establish his sphere of influence in Korea after the war. The paper, in discussing which countries should participate in the military occupation of Korea, argued that "the traditional interest of the Soviet Union in Korea raises the possibility that it will wish to participate in the military occupation of Korea even though the Soviet Union may not enter the war in the Pacific." It then went on to argue, regarding the proposed interim international administration or trusteeship for Korea, that "the position of the Soviet Union in the Far East is such that it would seem advisable to have Soviet representation on an interim international administration regardless of whether or not the Soviet Union enters the war in the Pacific."<sup>75</sup> It is not clear to what extent this pro-Soviet position reflected the personal views of Alger Hiss, who represented the State Department at Yalta, along with Secretary of State Stettinius. Given that Hiss was a Soviet agent, it is

very possible that he advocated a pro-Soviet position in drafting this policy paper.<sup>76</sup> However, the fact that Stettinius was also there at Yalta and must have approved the paper seems to indicate that the paper's conclusions reflected the thinking of the State Department as a whole on this issue, not just Hiss' personal views. Therefore, as this discussion shows, the question of a Soviet role in Korea after the war was not tied to any Soviet military role in the war against Japan but, rather, to the concept of Korea as one of the areas where Roosevelt's plan for a UN trusteeship was to be applied after the war, with the participation of the USSR as one of the trustees.

This point is supported by the fact that the only context in which Korea was discussed by Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta was not in connection with the impending Soviet entry into the war against Japan but, rather, in the context of discussing postwar trusteeships. The record of conversations between the two leaders on this subject sheds light on Roosevelt's conception of the proposed trusteeship and the possible reasons why Stalin agreed to such an idea for Korea. When Roosevelt turned to the topic of trusteeships, he started by saying "he had in mind for Korea a trusteeship composed of a Soviet, an American and a Chinese representative" and that the only experience the United States had had in the matter was "in the Philippines where it had taken about fifty years for the people to be prepared for self-government."<sup>77</sup> He then stated further that "he felt that in the case of Korea the period might be from twenty to thirty years." Stalin then said, "the shorter the period the better, and he inquired whether any foreign troops would be stationed in Korea." The President then replied in the negative, to which Stalin expressed his approval. Roosevelt then stated, "there was one question in regard to Korea which was delicate" and conveyed that "he personally did not feel it was necessary to invite the British to participate in the trusteeship of Korea, but he felt that they might resent this." Stalin replied that the British "would most certainly be offended," adding that "in fact, the British might 'kill us,' " and expressed his opinion that the British should be invited. Roosevelt then conveyed that he also had in mind a trusteeship for Indochina, though "the British did not approve of this idea as they wished to give it back to the French since they feared the implications of a trusteeship as it might affect Burma." Stalin in return expressed his opinion that Britain was not the ideal country to protect Southeast Asia, given its record of having lost Burma to Japan during the war through reliance on Indochina. Roosevelt then complained the French "had done nothing to improve the natives [of Indochina] since she had the colony" and added that "General de Gaulle had asked for ships to transport French forces to Indochina." When Stalin asked where de Gaulle was going to get the troops, Roosevelt replied, "de Gaulle said he was going to find the troops when the President [i.e., Roosevelt] could find the

ships,” but that “he [i.e., Roosevelt] had been unable to find the ships” until then.<sup>78</sup>

In interpreting this conversation, it is important to point out that the question of trusteeships for postwar settlement was a bone of contention between Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta and that Stalin apparently sought to portray himself as an ally of Roosevelt on this issue in order to win concessions from the latter on a range of important issues affecting the future of Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. As for the general Soviet position on the issue of trusteeships, the USSR had long portrayed itself as the champion of national self-determination of colonial and other dependent peoples in the non-Western world and had given its approval to Roosevelt’s idea of trusteeships as a means for the non-Western peoples to gain their national self-determination. Apart from the obvious propaganda value of advocating this policy line, namely that of winning friends in the non-Western world, this Soviet policy had the important aim of undermining British power after the war by effecting the dismantling of Britain’s colonial empire. In the breakup of colonial empires such as those of the British, French, Dutch, and Japanese varieties that the trusteeship idea originally envisioned, Stalin must have seen a golden opportunity for a drastic expansion of Soviet influence around the globe, as the trusteeship idea allowed a Soviet role in administering these trusteeships even in areas of the world where the USSR, or tsarist Russia for that matter, had traditionally maintained no interest. It was most likely with this strategic calculation that Stalin sided with Roosevelt’s idea of trusteeships. Encountering strong opposition from Churchill to his proposals for trusteeships, Roosevelt felt, in return, that Stalin’s position was closer to his than Churchill’s, and hence we find here Roosevelt talking to Stalin in an almost conspiratorial tone behind the back of the British prime minister or that of the redoubtable French leader.

It is important to keep in mind that the UN trusteeship idea, as formulated by the delegates at the 1945 San Francisco UN Conference, never touched the colonial possessions of Britain or France after the war, as it was eventually applied only to territories detached from enemy states as a result of the war and to a few League-of-Nations mandate territories or other territories that were voluntarily under it by the states responsible for their administration. Nevertheless, that the idea was originally intended by Roosevelt to apply to British and French colonial possessions as well can be seen from the above conversation between Roosevelt and Stalin. What Stalin said, therefore, in response to Roosevelt’s statements regarding proposed trusteeships for Korea and Southeast Asia must be analyzed in light of the Soviet dictator’s desire to be seen as a champion of the original trusteeship idea. It is quite plausible that Stalin approved of the Korean trusteeship plan as part of his general approval of trusteeships worldwide,

which he probably regarded to be a useful tool for undermining colonial empires and thereby gaining new Soviet spheres of influence as well as friends in the non-Western world. Stalin must have approved even more the fact that, in some cases such as Korea, a Soviet role in the proposed trusteeships also involved a Soviet military role, considering that a Soviet military role in a trusteeship was even more likely to strengthen the USSR's hand in its attempts to make sure the territory held in trust would be friendly to its interests in the future. As for Stalin's question to Roosevelt regarding the stationing of foreign troops in Korea and his assent to the latter's answer that no foreign troops would be stationed, this shows Stalin was still uncertain about the precise mechanism by which he would exercise his role in Korea. This is understandable when considering that the USSR was not yet at war with Japan at the time and it was not clear how much of Korea the Red Army would actually end up occupying if the USSR did enter the war. Because the proposed trusteeship already guaranteed a Soviet role in Korea after the war, Stalin had nothing to lose if no foreign troops were to be stationed. If anything, Stalin probably thought this scenario of no foreign troops would be more advantageous to the USSR, which, as a country located on Korea's border unlike the United States, would then be better placed than the United States to influence events in Korea to its liking, especially through the usual communist tactics of infiltration and subversion. Finally, Stalin's advocacy of a shorter period for the trusteeship for Korea was only to be expected, given the official Soviet stance of championing the rights of non-Western peoples to national self-determination.

This rather complex commentary on the conversation between Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta on the trusteeships should be read with the awareness that Stalin was yet to fulfill his pledge to enter the war against Japan and that much would depend on the future course of Soviet military campaign against Japan. Furthermore, it is incumbent to bear in mind that Stalin's Korea policy as much as the American policy toward Korea would depend a great deal on the general state of U.S.-Soviet relations after Yalta. If, for example, Stalin were to not carry out some of the promises he had made at Yalta regarding important issues in Europe or elsewhere, this would most likely affect the future course of U.S.-Soviet relations in Korea. Any number of other important changes in the bilateral relationship could suddenly change Korea's future destiny. As things turned out, these would include the sudden death of Roosevelt in April 1945 and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945. However, this is getting ahead of the story. For now, it is necessary to focus on the partition of Korea along the 38th parallel, which took place in August 1945, and examine how this occurred.

## CHAPTER 2

### U.S. AND SOVIET POLICIES IN AUGUST–DECEMBER 1945

#### **The Creation of the 38th Parallel and U.S. and Soviet Policies**

According to Dean Rusk, the division of Korea along the 38th parallel was proposed during a meeting of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWINK or SWNCC) on August 14, 1945. The ex-U.S. secretary of state, who was then a colonel on the staff of the elite Operations Division (OPD) of the U.S. War Department General Staff in Washington, notes in his memoirs that the state and war departments held different opinions on where and when American forces should accept the surrender of Japanese forces. While the State Department desired to accept the surrender as far north on the mainland of China as possible, including key parts of Manchuria, the army did not want to accept responsibility for areas where it had no or few forces. “In fact, the Army did not want to go onto the mainland at all,” Rusk writes. Rusk then goes on to relate how the drawing of the 38th parallel took place:

We finally reached a compromise that would keep at least some US forces on the mainland, a sort of toehold on the Korean peninsula for symbolic purposes. During a SWINK meeting on August 14, 1945, the same day of the Japanese surrender, Colonel Charles Bonesteel and I retired to an adjacent room late at night and studied intently a map of the Korean peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Working in haste and under great pressure, we had a formidable task: to pick a zone for the American occupation. Neither Tic nor I was a Korea expert, but it seemed to us that Seoul, the capital, should be in the American sector. We also knew that the US Army opposed an extensive area of occupation. Using a *National Geographic* map, we looked just north of Seoul for a convenient dividing line but could not find a natural geographical line. We saw instead the thirty-eighth parallel and decided to recommend that.

SWINK accepted it without too much haggling, and surprisingly, so did the Soviets. I had thought they might insist on a line farther south in view of our respective military positions. No one present at our meeting, including two young American colonels, was aware that at the turn of the century the Russians and Japanese had discussed spheres of influence in Korea, divided along the thirty-eighth parallel. Had we known that, we almost surely would have chosen another line of demarcation. Remembering those earlier discussions, the Russians might have interpreted our action as acknowledgment of their sphere of influence in Korea north of the thirty-eighth parallel. Any future talk about the agreed-upon reunification of Korea would be seen as mere show. But we were ignorant of all this, and SWINK's choice of the thirty-eighth parallel, recommended by two tired colonels working late at night, proved fateful.<sup>2</sup>

Rusk's account of how the 38th parallel came into being offers glimpses into the way the U.S. State Department and the military approached Korea and, indeed, East Asia as a whole. Of great importance in understanding U.S. foreign policy during World War II is the fact that the State Department wielded little influence over the actual conduct of the war and it was the U.S. military that determined much of how the war was to be waged. Apart from the fact that Roosevelt largely bypassed Secretary of State Cordell Hull in foreign-policy decisions during the war and that the State Department itself was rendered ineffective because of intense bureaucratic infighting, the simple fact of the military's overwhelming role in conduct of warfare naturally resulted in the dominance of the military planners over State Department officials in the policy-making process.<sup>3</sup> When it came to U.S. policy regarding postwar settlements, this area, once again, was under the heavy influence of military planners like our colonel Rusk here, since postwar settlement also depended to an important degree on the reach of U.S. military power and influence upon the war's end.

George M. McCune, who was the chief of the Korean section in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department when Rusk and his colleague drew up the 38th parallel, was unhappy with the SWINK's decision regarding the 38th parallel in which military considerations prevailed over the department's political considerations. Writing less than two years after this decision, McCune observed the following: "Thus the division, obviously a temporary expedient, was an arbitrary line, chosen by staff officers for military purposes without political or other considerations. The State Department, and no doubt the Soviet Office as well, was presented with a *fait accompli* by the military staffs."<sup>4</sup> McCune's unhappiness with this decision later turned into a sense of despair and guilt over what he considered to be a gigantic failure of U.S. policy as he watched the 38th parallel turn into a permanent dividing line between the two Koreas.

Considering that actual U.S. policy in Korea and East Asia at the war's end was determined to a large extent by the requirements and capabilities of the U.S. military at the time, it is worth taking a brief look at these requirements and capabilities with respect to Korea. What one finds here is that these requirements and capabilities in August 1945 were such that Korea was given scant attention and, indeed, constituted an afterthought in the mind of General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the U.S. Army in the Pacific. Not only was MacArthur, whose area of responsibility included Korea, given almost no guidance from Washington planners regarding the occupation of Korea, his attention was then on the vast problems associated with the Japanese surrender negotiations and logistical hurdles of transporting his ground, air, and sea forces to Japan.<sup>5</sup> In fact, not only Korea but also China was ignored, in a sense, by the U.S. military. This was because the U.S. military regarded the acceptance of Japanese surrender in Manchuria and Korea as the Soviet Union's responsibility and, mainland China as the area of responsibility of Nationalist China, the power that was envisioned in Washington, after all, as one of the "four policemen" of the world after the war. The U.S. military, thus, was ready to "abandon" all of mainland Asia including Korea and to focus, in Northeast Asia, exclusively on the occupation of Japan. Consequently, almost all U.S. military force in East Asia was concentrated on occupation of Japan, and little resource was available for the occupation of Korea, let alone Manchuria or mainland China. The decision taken by the SWINK on August 14, 1945, to leave a token U.S. force on the Asian mainland, namely in the southern portion of the Korean peninsula, must thus be seen as an attempt to establish a forward base for the defense of Japan against any future threat from the Asian mainland. In drawing up the 38th parallel, therefore, the SWINK indicated Korea was an afterthought in terms of the priorities of the United States in East Asia: Korea was conceived not as a foreign-policy priority in itself but, rather, primarily as a military base for the defense of a much more important policy priority, namely, a Japan that was to become the lynchpin of U.S. strategy in Asia.

Given this low level of attention given to Korea, it was hardly surprising that MacArthur could find no vessels or troops available to occupy Korea quickly enough so that Rusk and his colleague on the night of August 14 could propose a demarcation line further north than the 38th parallel. On that night, the nearest American ground forces which could be transported to Korea were in Okinawa and the Philippines, and, had a demarcation line not been proposed at all, the Red Army probably could have seized all of Korea before the Americans arrived.

As for the reasons why the Soviet Union accepted the 38th parallel as the demarcation line, no evidence has been made available that shows the

policy debate in the Kremlin, if there was any, or Stalin's personal thoughts on this subject. Most likely, the decision was made by Stalin alone or after consultation with Molotov.<sup>6</sup> However, considering the circumstances in August 1945 and the history of Stalin's previous policy toward Korea, the following seem to be the most likely reasons, which, taken together, provide a convincing explanation for Stalin's behavior in this case. First, given the long-standing agreement dating back to 1943 on establishing a trusteeship over Korea after the war, Stalin was aware on August 15, 1945, that the status of Korea was to be determined later in an agreement with the United States, China, and Britain on the trusteeship. Given this awareness, Stalin likely thought the proposed 38th parallel was in fact highly advantageous to the USSR, when considering that this would mean the United States, China, and Britain combined together would receive only the southern half of Korea south of the 38th parallel as "their zone of occupation." In this, Stalin may have thought of the parallel with Germany and how his Western allies there received an area of occupation much larger than that reserved for the Soviet Union, even though their contribution to Germany's defeat was much smaller, in terms of human loss, than that of the USSR. Since Stalin was aware that the United States, China, and Britain contributed much more than the USSR to Japan's defeat, he must have been satisfied that the Soviet Union received half of Korea.<sup>7</sup> An important aspect of this is that the August 14 proposal for the 38th parallel was subject to any changes to be made in the upcoming trusteeship agreement and thus must have been accepted by Stalin as tentative in nature.

Stalin not only accepted the American suggestion of the 38th parallel but proceeded to scrupulously respect the integrity of this demarcation line, as seen by the behavior of the Soviet troops who had arrived in Korea almost a month before the Americans did but did not cross south of the 38th parallel when they could have easily done so. To understand why, one needs to consider Stalin's general behavior in dealing with his Western allies and especially his desire to avoid any potential armed conflict with states stronger than the USSR, such as Nazi Germany before the Nazi invasion of Russia or the United States after World War II. In general, Stalin was very cautious in his foreign policy in distinction to Hitler, who possessed a timetable of conquests and at times recklessly gambled on adventurist policies of expansion, such as his foolhardy decision to declare war on the United States in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Moreover, unlike Hitler, Stalin possessed plenty of patience and could wait for long until the right moment arrived to take a decisive action. Stalin's caution in dealing with strong foes like Hitler almost bordered on timidity and paranoia, as demonstrated in his obsession with scrupulously observing the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of nonaggression until the very eve of the Nazi invasion of

Russia.<sup>8</sup> After World War II, Stalin, deeply aware of the weakness of his country vis-à-vis the United States, was almost obsessed with avoiding an armed conflict with the latter, as demonstrated by his scrupulous care to avoid being entangled in a direct conflict with the United States in Korea. Torkunov (2000), a recent study of the Korean War based mainly on new materials from the Presidential Archive (AP RF) in Moscow, shows Stalin did all he could to avoid provoking an armed confrontation with the United States in Korea between August 1945 and the end of 1949. Torkunov writes: “From the moment of Korea’s liberation in 1945 up to the end of 1949, Stalin not only had no intention to use force in the Korean peninsula but in fact experienced a growing fear that the opposing side [i.e., the United States and South Korea] would violate peace and attack North Korea. Just as he had done in relation to Germany on the eve of the Second World War, the Soviet leader did all he could in order not to provoke Washington and Seoul and in order to preserve the status-quo in Korea.”<sup>9</sup> Given this determination to avoid armed conflicts with the United States, it was therefore no wonder the Soviet troops in Korea scrupulously adhered to the agreement concerning the 38th parallel.<sup>10</sup>

The second possible factor behind Stalin’s acceptance of the 38th parallel is that the Soviet dictator, by August 14, right after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was deeply aware of the USSR’s weakness in the new atomic age and likely deemed it too risky or premature to reject the American proposal even though he may have been militarily in a position to do so. In the middle of August, Stalin reportedly told I.V. Kurchatov, the scientific director of the Soviet nuclear project, and B.L. Vannikov, the People’s Commissar of Munitions during the war and the head of the First Chief Directorate in charge of the Soviet atomic project, his view on the importance of Hiroshima: “Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The balance has been destroyed.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Stalin seemed to have been deeply aware that the new balance of power taking shape at the end of the war as a result of the USSR’s hard-fought victory in the war was suddenly altered by this new destructive weapon.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary accounts of the Soviet reactions to Hiroshima suggest that Stalin and the leadership in Moscow were very much shaken and even depressed by the new American monopoly of this terrifying weapon. The sources cited in Holloway (1994) include Alexander Werth, the *Sunday Times* correspondent in Moscow from 1941 to 1948, and Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin’s daughter. Werth wrote:

The news [of Hiroshima] had an acutely depressing effect on everybody. It was clearly realized that this was a New Fact in the world’s power politics, that the bomb constituted a threat to Russia, and some Russian pessimists

I talked to that day dismally remarked that Russia's desperately hard victory over Germany was now "as good as wasted."

As for Alliluyeva, she wrote the following of her visit to her father's *dacha* on the day after Hiroshima: Stalin "had his usual visitors. They told him that the Americans had dropped the first atom bomb over Japan. Everyone was busy with that, and my father paid hardly any attention to me."<sup>13</sup>

That the new American monopoly of atomic weapons must have deeply shaken Stalin draws further support from any objective consideration of the American power at the end of the war to inflict a crushing blow against the USSR. Not only did the United States possess command of the seas and air in any possible conflict with the Soviet Union, thanks to its massive fleets of aircraft carriers and B-29s and its industrial capacity to produce far more ships and airplanes than the Soviets, it also possessed a network of air bases around the USSR's rim from which it could launch devastating air raids against the USSR's key population and industrial centers. To this overwhelming air power of the United States, which thus possessed the capacity to turn most Soviet cities into ashes in conventional carpet bombing raids, was now added the lethal power to drop atomic bombs on Soviet cities. The Soviets, on the other hand, had no means to attack the United States proper given their lack of sea and air power, though they did possess a clear superiority in troop strength. According to early American-intelligence estimates dating from around this time (November 1945), the Soviets lacked the resources to wage a protracted global war against the West, given that their losses in World War II in manpower and industry had seriously set them back, possibly for 15 years.<sup>14</sup> One of these estimates, the JIC 250/5, listed the following deficiencies of the Soviet Union: "trained technicians (a deficiency that would take five to 10 years to rectify), a strategic air force (five to 10 years), a modern navy (15 years or more for a war involving major naval operations), railway and military transportation systems (10 years), and, most importantly, the atomic bomb (five to 10 years, possibly less)."<sup>15</sup> The estimate then indicated that "Soviet oil, rail, and vital industrial centers were particularly vulnerable to long-range bombers; and their quantitative military weaknesses in the Far East, especially their naval assets, would take at least a decade or more to rectify." Another of these early intelligence estimates, the JIC 329, which was in fact the likely basis for the earliest-known nuclear-war plan against the USSR, focused on Soviet vulnerability to a nuclear attack and identified 20 Soviet cities for atomic destruction in an effort to thwart a possible Red Army offensive in Europe or the Asian mainland. These cities, which included Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Baku, Tashkent, and Irkutsk, were chosen on the basis of "certain militarily favorable

characteristics” such as “the highest proportion of research and development centers, specialized production facilities, and key government or administrative personnel.” Given these “favorable characteristics,” an attack on these cities, therefore, “would exploit the maximum capabilities of the weapon, produce the quickest, most direct, and certain effects on the Soviet Union’s immediate offensive capabilities, and achieve the greatest impact against her latent offensive power.”<sup>16</sup>

Recent works, based on new archival materials, about Soviet espionage in the West during and after the war show that Stalin was kept well-informed about the American atomic program and the military strength of the United States as well as of other nations. For example, concluding that Soviet espionage activities in the United States in 1943–1953 were successful overall, Pozniakov (1999) argues that this success helped Stalin to correctly assess the relative strengths, military and otherwise, of the United States and the USSR at the time, thus enabling him to achieve his foreign policy aims vis-à-vis the United States without incurring excessive risks of an armed conflict.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Khrushchev said exactly as much when, recounting how the Soviets felt insulted in 1945 by the American refusal to allow them any significant role in the postwar occupation of Japan, he wrote the following regarding how the Soviet leaders at the time regarded the balance of power between the United States and the USSR: “All these incidents [of MacArthur’s mistreatment of the Soviet representatives in Tokyo] irritated not only Stalin but all of us. We all felt indignant, yet there was nothing we could do. The United States had the upper hand. Were we to declare war on the United States because of that? No, of course not; that was unthinkable. We had no capabilities to do such a thing, and besides, wise statesmen don’t declare war in such circumstances.”<sup>18</sup>

Well aware of the American military superiority, therefore, Stalin was determined, in his relations with the Americans, to act as if he was uninformed about or ignored the reality of the American power. In testimony to his diplomatic skills, Stalin did succeed in not letting the Americans translate their newly found strength into tangible gains during the negotiations at the London Conference of Foreign Ministers and other forums later in 1945. Still, Stalin and the Soviet leaders must have been very much shaken in mid-August, precisely the time when the American offer to draw up the 38th parallel arrived.

Thus, it is entirely plausible that a deeply shaken Stalin too busy with absorbing the full implications of the new American superiority in mid-August accepted without much thought the American offer of the 38th parallel. This makes sense if one considers that this offer was among the first major policy-initiatives from the Americans that Stalin received after the two atomic bombings in Japan. There are two aspects to Stalin’s

reaction here. One is that Stalin likely judged it too risky to reject the American initiative when he had not yet formulated his concrete policy responses to the new global balance of power created by the American nuclear monopoly.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, because Stalin was too obsessed with the preponderance of American military power in the new atomic age when the USSR could be devastated by American air attacks launched from bases in Japan and elsewhere, he may have simply regarded Korea's geostrategic value as a buffer state in a land war no longer relevant for Soviet national security and accepted the offer without thinking twice about it.

A third possible factor is the likelihood that Stalin accepted the 38th parallel thinking that his acceptance on this issue would strengthen the possibility of the USSR occupying at least a part of Japan. In fact, Stalin did request Truman, on August 16, right after accepting the American proposal for the 38th parallel, that the Soviet Union be allowed to occupy the northern half of Hokkaido, citing the symbolic importance of accepting the Japanese surrender on at least a part of the Japanese home islands for the Soviet people, who had suffered the Japanese occupation of their Far Eastern territory in 1919–1921.<sup>20</sup> In this request, he was to be sorely disappointed by Truman, who politely but firmly refused in a reply dated August 18.<sup>21</sup> However, even though this request was refused, the importance of Japan's postwar settlement was something that would very much influence Stalin's subsequent thinking not only on the occupation of Japan but on any future Korean settlement.

A fourth possible reason, one advanced by an ex-CIA official, is that the Red Army actually may have lacked the troop strength to occupy all of Korea before the Americans arrived. According to this view, Stalin took no chances in planning the Soviet military offensive against the Japanese Kwantung Army, the fighting force of which he respected, with the result that the vast majority of Soviet troop deployments were in this Manchurian operation, and the operation in Korea was a tiny sideshow conducted by a poorly manned Soviet 25th Army.<sup>22</sup> Supporting this view is the fact that the size of the 25th Army that invaded northeastern Korea in August 1945 was small indeed and that the 25th Army itself was poorly manned, filled for a large part with ex-prisoners from Siberian labor camps, reflecting the heavy manpower losses the Red Army had suffered in the war. Furthermore, considering that the Soviet entry into the anti-Japanese war itself was very much conducted in a rush, after the atomic bombings in Japan had threatened Stalin with the real possibility of a Japanese surrender before he could enter the war, it is very plausible, as this interpretation argues, that complications arose in the Soviet war planning and operations so that the Red Army could not allocate a large enough force for the Korean operation in order to occupy all of Korea before the Americans

arrived. Therefore, given this military exigency and especially given Stalin's high respect for the operational mobility of American troops, which he must have deemed capable of not only landing in Korea very soon but also quickly occupying all of Korea shortly thereafter, Stalin, according to this view, decided to accept the 38th parallel as, in effect, a settlement advantageous for the USSR.

Finally, as Rusk suggests in his memoirs quoted earlier, Stalin may simply have interpreted the American suggestion of the 38th parallel as an offer to resurrect the old sphere-of-influence agreement between tsarist Russia and Japan and accepted this suggestion, with, of course, the modification that the United States was now to fill Japan's place in Korea.

Taken together, these explanations, which need not be mutually exclusive, make Stalin's acceptance of the 38th parallel nothing surprising but, rather, something entirely rational. In the chapters to come, it will become clearer how these explanations capture aspects of the highly fluid and complex situation that Stalin faced in Korea and elsewhere in the world upon the war's end.

### **U.S. Occupation Policy in Southern Korea and U.S. Efforts to Reunify Korea**

Reflecting the low priority and utter lack of preparation given to the occupation of Korea, the choice of the U.S. military commander to head the occupation fell on Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, a tough, hard-working division and corps commander in the Pacific war but one who had no experience in civil affairs and was "already known for his tactlessness, impatience and aggressiveness."<sup>23</sup> Hodge was chosen by MacArthur because he commanded the XXIV Corps, which was in Okinawa around August 15, 1945, and was the nearest army force that could be sent to Korea. As one commentator noted, "General Hodge was very possibly the first man in history selected to wield executive powers over a nation of nearly twenty million on the basis of shipping time."<sup>24</sup> To make matters worse, Hodge received almost no instructions from MacArthur or Washington when he was dispatched to Korea and, when he requested a political advisor, was granted a low-ranking foreign-service official with little knowledge of Korea. Hodge's corps did not arrive in Korea until September 8, nearly a month after the Soviet entry into Korea. From then on, Hodge was left largely to his own devices to deal with the daunting task of running the occupation regime, as MacArthur, his direct superior, was too busy running Japan to pay attention to Korea. Neither did Washington give Hodge any guidelines. The first general-policy guidelines Hodge received from Washington came only in mid-October in the form

of a SWINK directive. As Leffler (1992) notes, the United States had powerful “proconsuls” running its occupation regimes in Europe and Asia after World War II with little State Department supervision.<sup>25</sup> To the list of MacArthur in Japan, Lucius Clay in Germany, and Mark Clark in Austria must be added Hodge in Korea.

Hodge’s record needs to be examined in some depth because he, as the “proconsul” he was, left an indelible mark on the future of Korea in the approximately three years that he headed the USAFIK (United States Army Forces in Korea).<sup>26</sup> Given the almost nonexistent preparation for the task he was entrusted with, it is hardly surprising that Hodge’s policies in Korea were misguided and ill-informed from the very beginning. In this, however, Hodge had very little choice and certainly cannot be blamed alone, as he was given an almost impossible task with very few people on his staff knowledgeable about Korea. Furthermore, the very first policy decision he had to implement, namely, that of retaining for his administration the existing Japanese colonial government apparatus and even the Japanese governor general, was not of his own choice but that of policy-makers in Washington and of MacArthur, who decided to rule Japan indirectly by retaining a Japanese government in power that received and implemented policy directives of the SCAP (Supreme Commander for Allied Powers in Japan). This same policy was applied to Korea in the initial stage of the American occupation, again reflecting the utter lack of preparation or thought given to Korea, which was at this time regarded technically as part of the same enemy territory that the Japanese home islands were. In a telegram to the secretary of state, the American consul general in Manila (Steintorf) wrote the following on August 26, 1945, when Hodge was still in Manila before leaving for Korea: “Johnson [i.e., a U.S. consul in Manila] yesterday informally conferred with Lieutenant General John Hodge, Commander of the 24th Corps which will carry out the occupation of the portion of Korea assigned to the American forces . . . It is thought that the Department should know for its own information only that no JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) or other directive with regard to Korea has yet been received here and that it was apparently the plan initially to apply the Japanese directive *mutatis mutandis* to Korea, that is to utilize the Governor General and his Japanese staff for the administration of the country under the direction of the American Military Governor.” It is to be noted that the “Japanese directive” referred to here was President Truman’s earlier directive to MacArthur regarding the policies for U.S. occupation of Japan.<sup>27</sup>

Although this policy of retaining the existing government apparatus made sense in ruling Japan, as it was a concession to Japanese national pride and contributed to the SCAP’s effectiveness, it was a disaster in Korea,

where it deeply angered the Koreans who loathed the long Japanese colonial rule and naturally expected the Americans to get rid of the Japanese governor general and his governing apparatus the moment they arrived in Korea. Encountering fierce local resistance to this policy, a much embarrassed Hodge and H.M. Benninghoff, his political advisor, wrote to the secretary of state in mid-September, asking for "the removal of the Governor General and the Director of the Police Bureau, both Japanese, accompanied by wholesale replacements of police personnel in the Seoul area."<sup>28</sup> Feeling the acute need to replace the Japanese personnel with qualified Americans, Hodge also requested, "every effort be made to get high-powered officers for my staff who are experienced in governmental affairs and who know orientals."<sup>29</sup> As this request shows, ruling through the existing Japanese colonial government apparatus, however, was in a sense inevitable because Hodge lacked qualified personnel who knew Korean or had an expertise in Korean affairs. Ignorant of Korean history or Korean national sensibilities, Hodge may not even have been aware before he arrived that the Koreans very much hated the Japanese rule and were intent on getting rid of the Japanese. The notorious public remark attributed to him shortly after his landing in Korea, in which he allegedly labeled Koreans "the same breed of cats as the Japanese," shows, if he indeed said such things, that Hodge then lacked even an elemental awareness of Korean history or sensitivities.<sup>30</sup>

This ignorance of Korean history or Korean national sensibilities may certainly have been part of the reason behind Hodge's decision to rely on the conservative moneyed elements of the Korean society for advice and help in running his occupation regime. Another reason for this was the plain fact that these Koreans, most of whom were well-educated, including those trained in Japan and the United States, constituted the vast majority of the Korean leaders who could speak English well and knew how to deal with the Americans. Lacking staff trained in the Korean language who could work as interpreters for him, Hodge found the services of these Koreans not only useful but almost indispensable. The problem, unfortunately for Hodge, was that a significant number of these Koreans had a tainted record as having been collaborationists under the Japanese colonial regime and were thus very much hated by the Korean masses. It was therefore almost to be expected that these Koreans sought to influence Hodge in ways that would serve their interests and maintain the privileges that they had gained under the Japanese. A major element of the privileges these Koreans sought to maintain was the extensive amount of landholdings they had accumulated as landlords under the Japanese. Whatever the influence was that these Koreans carried with Hodge on the important issue of land reform, Hodge did not see a compelling need to do anything in order to

change the status quo regarding land ownership in Korea. Moreover, in the initial stage of occupation, Hodge upheld the private property rights of the Japanese, with the result that the land, factories, firms, and other property belonging to the Japanese under the colonial regime, other than those belonging to the Japanese colonial government which were confiscated and held in public trust, continued to be held in the same Japanese hands. All these actions undertaken by Hodge, needless to say, made for a highly unpopular occupation regime, with the consequence that, by mid-December 1945, Hodge was reporting to Washington: "the word pro-American is being added to pro-Jap, national traitor, and Jap collaborator. The only advantage of the Russian presence [i.e., in Korea] is to absorb a portion of the people's resentment against the partition of Korea."<sup>31</sup>

These highly unpopular policies of Hodge regarding land reform and the use of former collaborationists in his service must also be examined in relation to the perceived threat, as seen by Hodge, MacArthur, and others, of a communist revolution in southern Korea. It was a widely known fact that MacArthur was a staunch anticommunist, whose almost unseemly zeal to suppress any signs of leftist unrest had been already manifest in his brutal crackdown, as the U.S. Army chief of staff, of the so-called Bonus March of veterans (the Bonus Expeditionary Force) in 1932.<sup>32</sup> Later on, in his tenure as the military advisor to the government of the Philippines before the outbreak of World War II, MacArthur formulated his vision of the Philippines' future. In his view, Philippines was a citadel of Christian civilization in the East, a model of democracy and Christian values at the center of Western civilization, but at the same time a successful blend of the core values of Western and Eastern civilizations.<sup>33</sup> It was evident MacArthur's long tenure in the Philippines had a formative influence on his opinion concerning the future of the Asian peoples he came in contact with, including the Japanese and the Koreans after World War II. In his program to democratize Japan after the war, MacArthur sought to carry out this vision, although the Japanese were not to be forcibly Christianized.<sup>34</sup> As for Korea after the war, it is clear MacArthur was very much concerned about the threat of a communist revolution there and did his best to suppress leftist activities. For example, in a memorandum for President Truman dated October 19, 1945, Edwin Locke reported on the situation in Japan and Korea after a visit to MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, during which he held extensive talks with both the general and his staff. The following part of his memorandum is of considerable interest:

General MacArthur gave considerable emphasis to the influence of Russia on Japanese affairs, expressing concern over "underground communist activities" in Japan. Many of the so-called liberal elements of Japan are

Communitic, he stated, and in his opinion, Japanese communism is dominated from Moscow. He indicated that the Russian desire to share in the Supreme Allied Command in part grows out of an intention to demoralize Japan so as to create the environment for a successful Communist revolution . . .

He revealed particular concern over the situation along "the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel," the border between the Russian-occupied part of Korea and the American-occupied section. American Navy pilots from aircraft carriers, he said, on several occasions flew over the Russian side of the Korean line by accident or through sheer youthful exuberance and were warned off by the Russians . . . No incidents have been reported, the General stated, in which Russians had penetrated over the American side of the Korean line.

General MacArthur remarked that in Northern Korea the Russians were following what he termed their invariable policy: removing industrial property and killing people, thus causing social unrest which they can then exploit for their own revolutionary purposes. As a result, many Koreans have fled to the American side of the line, but lately those attempting to cross have been stopped by the Russians. The General stated that on the Korean dividing line the Russians had assembled large quantities of arms, including "the biggest tanks I have ever seen."

He had no information as to what the Russians were doing in Manchuria, the General said, but he would expect them to act there as they did in Korea and elsewhere . . . The General remarked that in the event of a clash between America and Russia in the Far East, "North China is going to be pretty important."<sup>35</sup>

Given this concern with a communist threat in Korea, Japan and Manchuria, it was no surprise that MacArthur found in Syngman Rhee, the right-wing Korean nationalist leader long in exile in the United States, a staunch ally in his fight against communism and also a strong candidate to lead a future Korean state allied with the United States. Locke's memorandum, quoted above, is valuable, as it gives a good idea of MacArthur's anticommunist views regarding Korea and Japan at precisely the time (mid-October) when Rhee visited the American general in Tokyo on his way to Korea after his many years of exile in the United States. Though there survives no known record of the meetings between Rhee, MacArthur, Hodge, and George Atcheson, MacArthur's State Department advisor in Tokyo, which took place in Tokyo in mid-October 1945, the content of the conversations can be readily ascertained from the fact that Atcheson, after the meetings, cabled the secretary of state to convey his view that the prior U.S. policy of withdrawing official support from any particular Korean politician now needed to be changed and that Rhee was the right person to receive U.S. support in Korea. After reporting on the "respect with which Syngman Rhee is held by the Korean people," Atcheson made the following push

for conferring official U.S. support on Rhee:

I believe the time has come when positive American action, in the political field in Korea, should be taken. I realize that to give open official approval or support to any one leader, group or combination, is contrary to past American thinking. But situation in Korea fully warrants such a step and there is reason to believe that unless positive action is taken to give the Koreans a start in governmental participation and organization, our difficulties will increase rather than diminish, and the Communistic group set up and encouraged by the Soviets in northern Korea will manage to extend its influence into southern Korea with results which can readily be envisaged. If there should develop widespread economic distress in our zone in Korea, the Russians will have a fertile field in to work in. General Hodge asked to see me on October 13 and after talking with him I do not think he would be opposed to this point of view.<sup>36</sup>

Considering this recommendation by Acheson for backing Rhee and also taking into account Locke's memorandum describing MacArthur's views at the time, it seems fairly certain that MacArthur gave Rhee his unqualified support during these meetings in Tokyo. Chŏng (2001), a recent scholarly work which comments on these Tokyo meetings, argues that MacArthur went so far as to concur with Rhee and Hodge in their common opposition to the U.S. State Department's policy of cooperating with the USSR on a Korean trusteeship and that MacArthur gave his backing for the creation of an embryonic South Korean government with Rhee as its head, a course of unilateral action designed to thwart a successful agreement on the proposed trusteeship.<sup>37</sup> As for Hodge's attitude toward communism and the USSR, it can be readily surmised from the American general's own numerous reports to Washington made during his tenure in Korea that he was nothing less than a carbon copy of MacArthur, his immediate superior.

Aside from his concern with the communist threat in Korea, MacArthur showed an equally strong concern with regard to leftist tendencies in Japan proper, as is indicated by Locke's memorandum quoted above. Although the so-called reverse course in SCAP policies did not take place officially until 1947 as the SCAP during the initial stage of its rule was more concerned with eradicating the threat of a revival of Japanese fascism than with suppressing leftist movements, MacArthur was very much worried about the threat of a communist revolution in Japan from the beginning of his tenure in Tokyo. MacArthur's virulent anticommunism was highly on display in the fall of 1945, as can be seen in an observation made by Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, the Eighth Army commander in Japan, in his diary entry for October 20 describing his visit with MacArthur the

previous night. When the subject turned to troubles in MacArthur's relationship with Truman and the State Department and the advisability of his resigning from the SCAP, MacArthur, who harbored ambitions for the U.S. Presidency, quipped: "Don't think for a minute that I will quit now. At one time I might have done so but the President [i.e., Truman], the State Department, and Marshall [i.e., the Army Chief of Staff] have all been attacking me. They might have won out but the Reds came out against me and the communists booed me and that raised me to a pinnacle without which they might have licked me. Thanks to the Soviets I am on top. I would like to pin a medal on their a——."<sup>38</sup>

MacArthur's animosity toward the Soviet Union, apart from his innate imperial disposition that brooked no interference from anyone in his administration of the SCAP, was demonstrated most vividly in how he related to the Soviet mission in Tokyo, headed by Lieutenant General Kuzma N. Derevyanko, in the fall of 1945. James (1985) gives the following description of how MacArthur and his staff did not treat Derevyanko with the respect the Soviet general felt he deserved:

On several occasions Derevyanko appeared for scheduled appointments with MacArthur only to be told by a staff officer that he was mistaken about the date—a ploy that MacArthur may not have known about but would have enjoyed. Arrested by American military policemen for "reckless driving," the Soviet general, on his release after he had proved his identity, rushed to MacArthur and demanded an apology, but received instead a stern rebuke for violating the law. Derevyanko often complained that the American traffic controllers at Haneda Airport kept his plane circling unnecessarily long before granting landing clearance. According to MacArthur, when he refused Derevyanko's request to station Soviet troops on Hokkaido, "he went so far as to say Russian forces would move in whether I approved or not. I told him that if a single Soviet soldier entered Japan without my authority, I would at once throw the entire Russian Mission, including himself, into jail" . . . . In October the Soviet government dropped its plan for a Soviet occupying force in Japan, rather than allow it to serve under MacArthur, and it recalled Derevyanko "to receive further instructions." When he returned to Tokyo, MacArthur reportedly "clapped him warmly on the back and exclaimed, 'Well, well, I never thought I'd see you again! I was sure that once Stalin got you back to Moscow he'd chop your head off.'" <sup>39</sup>

After considering these incidents of maltreatment meted out to Derevyanko by MacArthur, James apparently agrees with the validity of Stalin's complaint to Averell Harriman on October 25, in which the Soviet dictator charged that the American general treated Derevyanko like "a mere piece of furniture."<sup>40</sup>

This almost total exclusion of the USSR from the Allied occupation of Japan, an official policy line pursued by Truman and made more unbearable for Stalin by MacArthur's imperious treatment of Derevyanko, could not but negatively impact U.S.-Soviet cooperation in Korea, a country just liberated from the Japanese Empire, and elsewhere. It is very plausible that Stalin, incensed over having no voice in Japan and deeply disapproving of MacArthur's policies there, which were seen by him as leading to the resurrection of a reactionary Japan firmly allied with the United States against the USSR, wanted to "retaliate" against this Soviet setback in Japan by making sure at least Korea would not be in the hands of forces antagonistic to the USSR. Indeed, just such a reading of Stalin's reaction to his exclusion from Japan was given by Sir George Samson, the British representative on the Far Eastern Advisory Commission (the advisory organ to the SCAP) and a pioneer of modern Western scholarship on Japan. In a memorandum of a conversation with the eminent British Japanologist on October 24, 1945, John Carter Vincent, the director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the U.S. State Department, wrote the following:

Sir George next expressed the British Government's concern lest Russia not become a member of the [Far Eastern Advisory] Commission. He indicated that every effort should be made to induce the Russians to participate in the Commission, but he added that the British would participate whether or not the Russians agreed to. He said that the British Government feared that a most unsatisfactory situation might develop, however, if the Russians do not participate. He mentioned Korea and Manchuria as places where the Russians might proceed to consolidate and extend their position as a compensation for not having a voice in the control of Japan. I told Sir George that every reasonable effort was being made to induce the Russians to have a representative on the Far Eastern Advisory Commission.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, it seems that Stalin did have a legitimate claim to receiving a better treatment in Japan than what he had to put up with under MacArthur. Although there were major fallacies, from the American point of view, with the Soviet position linking its role in Japan with the Anglo-American role in the occupation of Romania and Bulgaria or of Germany, at least a few U.S. officials expressed the view the USSR was not given a fair role in Japan and that the United States needed to do more in order to give Stalin at least a face-saving concession in this matter.<sup>42</sup> There is strong evidence that the American refusal to grant Stalin a larger role in Japan was in turn partly motivated by the American desire to "get even" with the Soviets for the latter's arbitrary and unilateral actions in Eastern Europe.<sup>43</sup> In general, however, that the American treatment of the Soviets in Japan raised some alarm even at the highest reaches of the Truman

administration is shown, for example, in the following memorandum to Truman dated September 29, 1945, by Joseph E. Davies, the president's personal assistant:

Russia is doubtless concerned as to the administration of Japan and Korea. In view of their explicit engagement to fight Japan, and definitely made to the President in Potsdam, they doubtless feel that they are entitled to consideration in connection with the administration of Japan. In the back of their heads, they doubtless think of Japan as a possible bulwark against attack from the east.<sup>44</sup>

### **U.S.-Soviet Disagreements in the Fall of 1945 and Their Impact on Korea**

The earlier described conflict between MacArthur and Derevyanko in Tokyo in the fall of 1945 as well as the overall U.S.-Soviet tension in East Asia at the time was only a part of the general deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations since World War II. At the London Conference of Foreign Ministers in September–October 1945, the sharp disagreements between the United States and Britain on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other came out into the open with a full-blown force.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in both the tone and the substance of negotiations at this first conference of the Allied foreign ministers since Potsdam, the conflicts that surfaced were so severe that Oleg Troianovskii, a Soviet participant in the negotiations, later recalled that, of all the negotiations with the Americans and the British in which he had participated during his entire diplomatic career, the London Conference was marked by the greatest hostility between the two sides. This recollection means a lot in terms of what it implies, as Troianovskii had a long and distinguished career as a Soviet diplomat spanning practically the entire stretch of postwar Soviet history, including years of service as ambassador to the United Nations, Japan, and China.<sup>46</sup> The principal area of conflict at this conference was the procedural issue of China and France taking part in all negotiations, including those relating to peace settlements with Italy and the ex-satellites of Nazi Germany in the defeat of which these two states had taken no part. However, the issue of Soviet role in trusteeships for ex-Italian colonies, the Allied occupation of Japan, and other issues also played their part in bringing the negotiations into a deadlock, which forced the conference to end without even a joint communiqué.<sup>47</sup> Probably the sharpest conflict at the conference took place when Ernest Bevin, the stodgy British foreign minister, accused Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, of engaging in Hitlerite methods to extract concessions. An enraged Molotov got up from his chair and began walking toward the door, at which point Bevin offered to take back his words: this brief “crisis” ended only when Molotov accepted the apology.<sup>48</sup>

In general, what made the London Conference such a failure was the change in relations between the Soviet Union and its Western allies since the death of Franklin Roosevelt and the end of World War II. It was well-known to Stalin and the Soviet leaders that Harry Truman, Roosevelt's successor, had been a declared foe of the Soviet Union long before he assumed the mantle of presidential leadership. Truman publicly spoke his mind on the USSR when asked, right after the German attack on the latter in 1941, his opinion on this historical turn of events. His answer: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances."<sup>49</sup> The change from Roosevelt to Truman became evident to Soviet leaders already within the first weeks of Truman's presidency. When Truman met Molotov in late April during the latter's attendance at the San Francisco UN conference, he berated the Soviet chief diplomat for Soviet failures to carry out the Yalta agreements regarding Eastern Europe, in particular Poland. An offended Molotov protested at the sharp tone of Truman's rebuke: "I have never been talked to like that in my life." "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that," snapped Truman.<sup>50</sup> Khrushchev had the following to say regarding this change in U.S.-Soviet relations after Roosevelt's death:

If Roosevelt had still been around, things might have gone differently and turned out better for us. Roosevelt was a clever president, and he had a high regard for the Soviet Union. Stalin could do business with him. Stalin said he had good personal relations with Roosevelt, and that was probably so. Certainly Stalin's relations with Roosevelt were much better than with the other allies, such as Churchill of Great Britain. But Roosevelt was gone. Now the war was being waged by Truman. He was not a clever man. He had become president by chance. He carried out an unstinting, unbridled reactionary policy toward the Soviet Union, which was intolerable.<sup>51</sup>

In another context, Khrushchev noted that Stalin "had no respect at all for Truman" and concluded: "He [i.e., Stalin] considered Truman worthless. Rightly so. Truman didn't deserve respect. This is a fact."<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, apart from the change in U.S. presidential leadership, which certainly contributed to the worsening relations with the USSR after Roosevelt's death, the collapse of negotiations at the conference was in some ways an inevitable outcome of the war's ending, given the nature of Stalin's regime in the USSR and the history of hostile relations between

the USSR and the West from the very inception of the Soviet state in 1917. Soviet relations with the West were marked by confrontation from the very founding of the Soviet regime in 1917: the West, led by “bourgeois” leaders such as Winston Churchill, sought to squash the young Soviet regime before it could stand on its feet, when it, along with Japan, undertook armed interventions against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War of 1918–1921. Apart from the British and French dissatisfaction with the Bolshevik opposition to World War I, which took Russia out of the War, the Allied interventions against the Soviet regime were prompted by the potent threat that the Bolshevik revolution and the world communist movement posed to the survival of the capitalist democracies. Recent findings from the Soviet archives show that the young Soviet state, though impoverished and struggling to establish its finances on a sound footing, spared no expenses in fomenting revolutionary movements overseas.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, recent works such as *Le livre noir du Communisme: Crimes, terreur, répression* (1997) document the totalitarian character of the regime founded by Lenin and his followers, who firmly believed in the incompatibility of peaceful coexistence between communism and capitalism and who justified any method, no matter how repressive and genocidal, in the name of revolutionary victory.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, considering this fundamental incompatibility between Soviet communism and capitalist democracy and the long history of mutual animosity between the two systems up to the moment when the Nazi juggernaut forced Stalin and the West to come together, the few years of alliance between the USSR and the West during World War II must be seen as an aberration from the main course of Soviet relations with the West since 1917 and the return to hostile relations at the London Conference as a return to “normalcy.”

This “return to normalcy” thesis regarding the breakdown of Soviet relations with the West immediately after World War II is in conformity with a recent trend in Cold War historiography, which pushes the date of the beginning of the Cold War earlier in time, in fact as early as this 1945 London Conference, as Radzinky (1996) does. According to Radzinsky, Stalin *wanted* the London Conference to fail, as he no longer desired cooperation with his wartime allies. Radzinsky gives the following reasons for Stalin’s decision to return to the pre-1941 status quo in his relations with the West: a desire to brook no Allied interference in Eastern Europe in an effort to create there a powerful, integrated socialist camp opposed to the West; the compelling need for external enemies in his campaign to crack down on liberalizing tendencies at home let loose by the wartime exigencies of alliance with, and the resulting “ideological contamination” by, the West; and his deep resentment at the American refusal to give him a proper

role in the occupation of Japan. In fact, Radzinsky seemingly goes so far as to argue that the Cold War may have started as early as at the Potsdam Conference when Stalin rebuffed all efforts by Truman to extract concessions on Eastern Europe.<sup>55</sup>

Radzinsky's arguments find support in other recent works on this early period of Cold War history. Pechatnov (1999), for example, also pictures Stalin as an uncompromising hardliner against his wartime Western allies at the London Conference and argues Stalin was determined to drag his war-devastated country into a new confrontation with the West, given his need for external enemies as a pretext for maintaining his grip on power at home.<sup>56</sup> However, although Pechatnov agrees that Stalin was already unleashing the Cold War in the fall of 1945 well before Churchill's Iron Curtain speech at Fulton the following spring, he notes that Stalin was still looking for a compromise with his wartime allies, albeit on his own terms. As evidence, he cites the reaction in the Soviet press after the London Conference, which evaluated the conference's failure as a temporary setback and still held out hope for improved relations with the capitalist powers. Another evidence, for Pechatnov, is that Stalin did regard the outcome of the subsequent Moscow Conference of December 1945 as a victory for Soviet diplomacy, which seems to indicate that Stalin at the time still believed in reaching agreements with the West, rather than stonewalling agreements of any kind. Pechatnov's view is supported by that of Thomas Brimelow, an official in the British Foreign Office, as laid out in his influential memorandum written after the London Conference, in which he argued: "The Russians are being slow and cautious in all questions of international collaboration, but they have not decided to be uniformly obstructive. They show no signs of departing from old animosities or their established habits, and they place their short-term selfish interests above the less certain long-term advantages of collaboration. But they are quite willing to collaborate when it pays."<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, as Pechatnov concludes in the end, Stalin's satisfaction with this diplomatic "victory" was an illusion, as Truman did not authorize the outcome of the conference: instead, Byrnes, the secretary of state who conducted the negotiations in Moscow without keeping Truman informed, only received a sharp dressing-down from the U.S. President upon his return home from Russia.<sup>58</sup> In this respect, Pechatnov ultimately upholds Radzinsky's argument to the effect that the Cold War had started in the fall of 1945, as the failure at the London Conference was not reversed at the subsequent Moscow Conference, thus signifying the failure at London as the effective beginning of the Cold War.

### **The Decision on Korea at the Moscow Conference: Background on the U.S. Position**

As a statement of the first formal international agreement on the future of Korea reached since Korea's liberation on August 15, 1945, the decision on Korea made at the Moscow Conference of foreign ministers (December 16–December 26, 1945) is an important milestone in the modern history of Korea. In order to assess the full significance of this agreement, according to which Korea was to be placed under a UN trusteeship administered by the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Britain for a period of up to five years, it is important to trace the developments both within and outside Korea up to the time of this conference. This makes possible a comprehensive understanding of the motives and calculations behind the decision which the United States and the USSR (as well as Britain) took on Korea in Moscow. It also enables one to more accurately assess the impact of this decision on the subsequent course of events in Korea and to answer the fundamental question of whether this decision, after all, mattered at all in resolving the enormous problems which the arbitrary division of Korea at the 38th parallel had created.

On the American side, the USAFIK, which ruled southern Korea since September 1945, found out soon after its arrival that all Koreans they met, including communists and other leftists, were deeply upset over the fact that immediate independence was not granted to them and fiercely opposed any plans to place Korea under a trusteeship. Compounding this widespread and deeply felt resentment was the USAFIK's failure to decisively deal with the task of eliminating the heavy legacy of the Japanese colonial rule, as reflected in the extensive properties owned by the Japanese as well as the retention of the Japanese personnel in the initial stage of the American military government. In his first report to the secretary of state after assuming the duties of the political advisor to Hodge in Korea, H. Merrell Benninghoff wrote the following on September 15, 1945:

Southern Korea can best be described as a powder keg ready to explode at the application of a spark. It was recently discovered that from the beginning the Korean translation of the term "in due course" in the Cairo Declaration has been the equivalent of "in a few days" or "very soon," and well-educated Koreans expressed surprise when the difference was pointed out to them. Hence the Koreans did not understand why they were not given complete independence soon after the arrival of American troops. There is great disappointment that immediate independence and sweeping out of the Japanese did not eventuate . . . There are an unknown number of political parties and groups in Korea, many of which have mushroomed since the Japanese surrender was announced . . . All groups seem to have the common

ideas of seizing Japanese property, ejecting the Japanese from Korea, and achieving immediate independence. Beyond this they have few ideas . . . USAFIK is operating under two great difficulties, neither of which can be corrected at this end. The first is that this headquarters has no information in regard to the future policy of the United States or its allies as to the future of Korea. What is going to happen to the nation and what will be the solution of the now almost complete division of the country into two parts? What will be our general policies beyond immediate military necessity? The second difficulty is that USAFIK is in small strength, and has too few competent military government and other officers that it can operate only in a limited area and with little overall effect . . . It is essential that the entire force designated for the occupation of Korea be sent here as soon as possible.<sup>59</sup>

Benninghoff's report well conveys the sense of frustration and even bewilderment at the situation he found himself faced with in Korea. Benninghoff's feelings are echoed in a report made by Hodge about a week later (September 24) to MacArthur, parts of which are quoted here:

. . . there is a growing deep seated distrust of Allied intentions concerning, and real dissatisfaction with the division of Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> line into two occupation zones occupied by forces with such widely divergent policies. Many intelligent Koreans have already reached the conclusion that the Allied Powers have no intention of building up a Korean nation. Older Koreans recall a tentative agreement between Russia and Japan before the Russo-Jap War for division of Korea along the same boundary, and believe Russia is again making a bid for its old demand. Based upon policies to date there is little to encourage them in the belief that the Allied promise of Korean independence is sincere . . . I consider the current division of Korea into two occupational zones under widely divergent policies to pose an insurmountable obstacle to uniting Korea into a nation. In my opinion the Allied Powers, by this division, have created a situation impossible of peaceful correction with credit to the United States unless immediate action on an international level is forthcoming to establish an overall provisional government which will be fully supported by the occupation forces under common policy. It appears doubtful if any of the Powers with the exception of Russia has given serious thought to the problems involved. Korea is not and without full Japanese control was never a part of the Japanese Empire, and cannot be so treated without the everlasting enmity of Koreans toward those nations who so treat them. The country is ripe for anything that releases them from the Japanese, but because of past history are now most favorable toward some type of democratic government and particularly toward the United States . . . Continuation of separation of the country into two parts under opposed ideologies will be fatal. Furthermore, neither of the two sections is in any degree self-supporting without full reciprocity between them.

At present there is no reciprocity except that refugees from north of 38<sup>th</sup> line are coming south in considerable numbers and the reverse is not true. Continuing but so far almost unfruitful effort is being made to establish some sort of workable agreement with the Soviets on a military level.<sup>60</sup>

What is most interesting about these two reports (by Benninghoff and Hodge) is not only the Koreans' deep resentment at the withholding of immediate independence, which both Benninghoff and Hodge encountered upon arrival in Korea, but also the palpable sense that the arbitrary division created by the 38th parallel was already becoming a permanent reality, as conveyed by Hodge's assessment that the widely divergent occupation policies carried out by the U.S. and Soviet commands were proving to be fatally detrimental to any attempts to build up a unified Korean nation. What is more, Hodge himself voices his own skepticism about the sincerity of Allied intentions to build up a unified Korean nation when he describes those Koreans who have reached the same conclusion about Allied intentions as "intelligent Koreans." What Hodge is really doing in this report to MacArthur, thus, is blaming the authorities in Washington and Moscow for having carved out what in effect amounted to their own mutually irreconcilable "spheres of influence" in Korea. This was perfectly understandable since it was Hodge himself, who, as the chief representative of the United States in Korea, had to shoulder this deep resentment on the part of the Koreans. Moreover, Hodge already sounds in this report very pessimistic about prospects for working with the Soviet Union to reunify the country when he reports on the lack of reciprocity between the two occupational zones and on the failure to establish workable agreements with the Soviet command. This concern about widely divergent occupational policies of the United States and the Soviet Union is relayed also in the dispatch by Benninghoff two days later (September 26) to the secretary of state, in which the political advisor reports on the deleterious effects of the arbitrary division on the economic and social well-being of the Korean people and stresses, in particular, the urgent problems of securing coal and other essential commodities and supplies from northern Korea for the economy of southern Korea, without which the latter could not function. However, Benninghoff notes that "nothing of substance resulted" from the efforts by Hodge to establish contact with the Soviet command in order to resolve these problems, such as when Hodge dispatched a group of officers to the north. Though these officers were "received with the usual Russian cordiality and entertainment," no discussion took place when they outlined to the Soviets the problems they had come to discuss.<sup>61</sup>

At this point, it is worth explaining the assumptions behind these efforts by Hodge and Benninghoff to secure Soviet cooperation in resolving the

problems caused by the arbitrary division to the Korean economy, which had been built up by the Japanese to function as an integrated whole, with northern Korea being the primary heavy-industrial center and southern Korea the base for light industry and agriculture. From examining the documents relating to Korea at the Yalta Conference and other wartime deliberations, it very much seems that the assumption behind the American and the British conception of military occupation was that of a military government “organized on the principle of centralized administration with all of Korea administered as a single unit and not as separate zones.”<sup>62</sup> The United States and Britain, thus, subscribed to the idea of Korea being placed under a unified military government composed of representatives from the Soviet Union and the United States as well as Britain and China if the participation of the latter two would prove practicable. The efforts by Hodge and Benninghoff to contact the Soviet command were based, therefore, on this assumption that the separate occupational zones established by the United States and the Soviet Union were to be merged into a single unified administration after the surrender of Japanese troops in Korea was completed.<sup>63</sup> However, because they knew that the question of the political unification of the two zones was intricately tied with the question of the trusteeship and was to be resolved at the highest political level in a forthcoming conference between Washington and Moscow, Hodge and Benninghoff proceeded to deal with the questions of economic and social unification first, focusing on such problems as coal delivery and refugees. However, partly because their efforts in these economic and social arenas were proving highly unsuccessful, the USAFIK leaders were becoming deeply pessimistic, by the beginning of the Moscow Conference in mid-December 1945, regarding the chances for a successful settlement on Korea at the conference. Compounding this pessimism was Hodge’s growing conviction that any agreement reached at the conference on trusteeship was bound to fail given the Koreans’ fierce resistance to it and that the policies pursued by the two occupational regimes were already permanently sealing the division of the country, not just economically and socially but politically as well. Contributing to this conviction was Hodge’s personal anticommunism, made stronger by mounting evidence of Soviet backing for communist subversion in his zone of occupation, and his pessimism regarding prospects for overcoming the division between a sovietized northern Korea and a southern Korea under American sponsorship.<sup>64</sup> Given this conviction and pessimism, Hodge was arguing by the eve of the Moscow Conference that the trusteeship plan be scrapped and that the problem of Korean reunification be discussed instead at a bilateral level between the United States and the Soviet Union in a separate context.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, due to his deep pessimism regarding any chances of reaching

an agreement with the Soviets, Hodge and William R. Langdon, his new political advisor, were already advocating the formation of what, in effect, constituted the nucleus of a separate southern Korean state as an alternative in case the Moscow Conference or any other negotiation with the Soviets was to fail.<sup>66</sup>

### **The Moscow Conference: Background on the Soviet Position**

Since any discussion of the decision on Korea reached at the Moscow Conference of December 1945 requires a background understanding of both the U.S. and Soviet policies toward Korea up to that time, it is necessary now to examine the Soviet side of the equation, essential not only for understanding the motives and calculations behind the Soviet actions taken at the conference but also for a knowledge of how the Soviet side perceived the actions and reactions of the United States in Korea up to that time. Although the majority of documents dating from World War II concerning Soviet wartime planning for Korea are still inaccessible, there is ample evidence of Soviet planning to prepare Kim Il Sung and his group of Korean partisans for leadership roles in Soviet occupation of Korea.<sup>67</sup> In addition, documents dating from shortly after the Japanese surrender deposited at Moscow archives demonstrate retrospectively what Soviet wartime planning for Korea entailed. Before discussing these archival materials, it might be worth starting with a look at an op-ed piece on Korea published in a Soviet journal of current affairs on the day of Japanese surrender (August 15, 1945) that affords glimpses into the basic directions of Soviet policies toward Korea around that time. The piece, entitled “Korea, her past and present,” by B. Iarovoi in *Novoe Vremia* is actually a review of a book on Korea by an American author, namely, *Korea: Forgotten Nation*, by Robert Oliver (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1944). As the title of the book indicates, Oliver, who was a close associate of the right-wing Korean nationalist Syngman Rhee and in fact the latter’s American spokesman, does more than providing an introduction to Korea’s history or present predicament for American readers, most of whom knew nothing about the East Asian nation’s long history of independence prior to the Japanese colonial rule. Oliver’s work was essentially a polemical piece, laying out the case for Korea’s postwar reconstruction by means of implementing the political programs of, needless to say, Rhee and his supporters. In commenting upon this book, Iarovoi, while favorably noting that it offers abundant materials and data illustrating the past and present of this ancient country, nevertheless lays bare his sharp criticism of Oliver’s advocacy of Syngman Rhee and Rhee’s political programs. Iarovoi’s analysis,

predicated on the typical Marxist-Leninist interpretations of capitalist exploitation of a colonial economy, notes that Oliver comes down on the side of rich Korean landlords, ignoring their exploitation of the Korean peasantry. Moreover, Oliver, Iarovoi argues, supports the continued prosperity of these landlords even after liberation from Japanese rule by failing to propose the correct solution to the Korean agrarian problem, namely a land reform entailing redistribution of these landlords' land to landless peasants. Certainly, Iarovoi's criticism leaves no doubt as to the Soviet attitude at the time toward "reactionary circles in the United States" and their allies, namely the right-wing Korean nationalists such as Rhee and his supporters: not only was Rhee the leader of the reactionary Korean émigré forces who issued anti-Soviet statements during World War II and now against the Soviet participation in the war against Japan, Rhee's rise to power in Korea would lead to continued exploitation of Korea and her people by foreign capital after the war. Although Iarovoi does not name the identity of the principal foreign capitalist power that would attempt to take over the Korean economy after the Japanese surrender, the implications are clear enough when he argues Korea is a continental state with its fate tied to that of continental powers and that she will achieve her independence and prosperity with the help of continental powers. Considering that, with Japan defeated, the only other noncontinental power to take over Korea was the United States, and given that, with China embroiled in a civil war, the only other continental power in a position to "help Korea achieve her independence and prosperity" was the USSR, whose troops were busy occupying northern Korea at the time Iarovoi's piece was published, it does not take much to conclude that Iarovi was predicting a coming confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in Korea.<sup>68</sup>

Now turning to the archival materials, the first known Soviet wartime policy document on Korea from the period immediately preceding the Japanese defeat is a reference paper written in June 1945 by officials of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Second Far Eastern Department. The content of this paper, as described in Weathersby (1993), may be summarized as follows.<sup>69</sup> After a lengthy summary of the history of great power rivalry over Korea dating from the mid-nineteenth century, it notes that the Russian resistance against Japan in Korea until the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) was a "historically justified act," given Japan's use of Korea as a springboard for expansion onto the Asian mainland and aggression against the Russian Far East. Although Russia was defeated in that war, the paper concludes, "Japan must be forever excluded from Korea, since a Korea under Japanese rule would be a constant threat to the Far East of the USSR." In order to prevent Korea from turning into hostile hands in the future, not only those of Japan but of any other hostile power, the paper

proposes the establishment of an independent Korea that has friendly and close relations with the USSR. Regarding the Cairo Declaration and its promise of Korean independence in due course, the paper notes the international understanding on a trusteeship for Korea under a joint administration of the USSR, the United States, China, and Britain and argues that, if a trusteeship is to be established, the USSR “must, of course, participate in it prominently.” The main policy direction that can be inferred from this paper, thus, boils down to the following: because Korea’s postwar status is an important security concern of the USSR, the USSR must do everything it can to establish in Korea a regime friendly to the USSR, and such a regime may be established after the proposed UN trusteeship, in which the USSR must play a large role. What is interesting about this policy direction is that it considers the security interest of the USSR in Korea as synonymous with a guarantee of Korean independence; in other words, it advocates that the best means to ensure the security of the USSR in Korea lies not in outright annexation of Korea but rather in the establishment of an independent Korea friendly to the USSR. As will become clear in the discussions of subsequent Soviet policy documents, this depiction of the USSR as a guarantor of Korea’s independence later turns into that of the USSR as the only true friend of Korea and the sole guarantor of her independence against sinister designs of hostile capitalist powers.

Before proceeding to examine the post–August 15 Soviet policy documents on Korea, a brief note on the extent of Soviet expertise regarding Korea at the time might be in order. As discussed earlier, the USSR had already accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge and expertise in Korean affairs by 1945. Although Stalin’s purges in the 1930s had dealt a heavy blow to Soviet human resources in the area of Oriental studies, the Soviet Union still possessed a considerable expertise in Korean affairs as the Red Army advanced into Korea in 1945. A major asset to Soviet Korean studies was the presence in Seoul of a Soviet consulate general dating from 1925 when the USSR established diplomatic relations with Japan. The archive of the present Russian Foreign Ministry contains a substantial amount of materials relating to Korea under the Japanese colonial rule, a significant portion of which are reports from the Soviet consulate general in Seoul. This consulate general had, by August 1945, accumulated a very detailed and comprehensive knowledge of conditions in Korea, some of which may be glimpsed in reports on Korea produced by members of its staff. The consulate’s Korea experts in 1945 included the general consul, A.S. Polianskii, the vice general consul, A.I. Shabshin, and the latter’s wife, F.I. Shabshina, who later went on to receive a doctorate in Korean studies and became one of the founders of post–1945 Soviet Korean studies. Shabshin’s reports dating from before August 1945 include ones entitled as

follows: Korean economy and the most important policies of the Japanese government in Korea, 1941–1942; survey of Korean trade; Korean finance; development of Korean industry; short essay on electric energy in Korea; role of Korea in the military-economic potential of Japan; Korean agriculture; and Japanese military and heavy industry in Korea. These reports, which are packed with statistics, quantitative data, maps, and other indicators, number hundreds of densely typewritten pages.<sup>70</sup>

To ascertain the impact of these reports on Soviet policies toward Korea, a look at a section of one of them might be helpful. This section, on Japanese military and heavy industry in Korea, was later reproduced in a policy paper by Suzdalev of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Second Far Eastern Department dated December 1945.<sup>71</sup> After citing this detailed report, Suzdalev's policy recommendation was as follows: the Japanese heavy and war industries in Korea served the needs of the Japanese aggressors, so these should be seized from Japan and given to the USSR, which suffered heavy losses in the victory over Japan, as legitimate war booty; in addition, these should be handed over to the USSR in consideration of the huge damage to the USSR inflicted by Japan before World War II, including during the Siberian intervention by the latter in 1918–1923. This policy recommendation shows how the USSR's detailed knowledge of colonial Korea was put in the service of Soviet policies after August 1945. As the Red Army rolled into northern Korea, the Soviet policymakers knew exactly what they were going to do about the Japanese heavy and war industries located there, in much the same way that they had little doubt in their mind about their general political aim in Korea: namely, preventing the creation of a Korean regime unfriendly to the USSR. In this respect, Hodge was right when he observed on September 24, 1945 that the Soviets were the only ones who seemed to know what they were doing in Korea, while the USAFIK occupied southern Korea ill-prepared for its tasks ahead and not knowing what to do, given the absence of any policy guidelines from Washington.<sup>72</sup>

The sources discussed in this section, that is, the Iarovi article of August 15, 1945, the Foreign Ministry policy paper from June 1945 and the paper by Suzdalev just mentioned, give one an idea of the basic thrust of Soviet policy toward Korea in the fall of 1945: namely, preventing the creation of an unfriendly regime, which would entail suppression of reactionary forces in Korea and promotion of "progressive and democratic" forces. An important element in making sure that Korea would never be used as a springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union was the dismantling and seizure of Japanese heavy and war industries and other industrial assets in northern Korea. This basic policy thrust was to be developed into concrete policy recommendations by the time of the Moscow Conference in

mid-December 1945. In the meantime, between August and December, the Soviet occupation army was busy dismantling the legacy of the Japanese colonial rule in northern Korea and creating there a new societal order based on Soviet-style politico-economic and social institutions. On the details of this social engineering effort in northern Korea, much more will be said in the later chapters. For the purpose of outlining the basic Soviet position at the Moscow Conference, it is sufficient to note here that this position was predicated on the view that the policies pursued by the Soviet command in northern Korea until then were "democratic and progressive" while those pursued by the U.S. command in southern Korea were "reactionary and undemocratic" and that this created serious problems for any attempts to reunify the two occupation zones.

As for the Soviet position at the conference itself, this can be ascertained from looking at archival and other primary materials. Among the archival materials, the Foreign Ministry policy papers prepared for the conference provide a clear picture of the considerations behind the Soviet negotiating position. As briefly mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, the main obstacle to a successful resolution of the Korean question, as seen by the Foreign Ministry officials, was the mutually contradictory occupation policies pursued by the Soviet and U.S. commands in their zones of responsibility since the Japanese surrender. In a paper entitled "Soviet-American occupation of Korea and the question of economic and political contact between northern and southern Korea," V.I. Petukhov, advisor in the Second Far Eastern Department, notes the harm done to the Korean national life and economy by the arbitrary division of the country along the 38th parallel and the resulting necessity for increased efforts to reestablish economic and political union of the country.<sup>73</sup> However, observing that the major hindrance for these efforts was the difference in occupational policies of the United States and the USSR, Petukhov writes the following:

Whereas Soviet policy [i.e., in Korea] is oriented toward eliminating the military power of the Japanese aggressor, toward eliminating the Japanese influence in Korea, and toward encouraging the democratic movement of the Korean people and preparing the Korean people for the establishment of Korean independence, American policy, judging by the actions of the Americans in Korea, possesses completely contradictory goals. The Americans not only preserved in Korea the old administrative apparatus but also preserved in leading positions many Japanese and local Korean collaborators. The Japanese enjoy in the American zone wide political rights and economic opportunities. The American policy elicits indignation of the Korean people and by no means facilitates the establishment of unity in Korea and the creation of an independent, democratic Korea. On the contrary, the actions of the Americas . . . incite the Koreans toward division.

From all this, it follows that the main prerequisite for the reestablishment of Korean unity is the formulation and the implementation of identical occupational policies.<sup>74</sup>

In line with this assessment by Petukhov of the “reactionary” nature of the American occupational regime, other policy papers go into more details about the precise nature of this “reactionary” regime before proceeding to concrete policy recommendations. What is highly significant about these papers is their tone of cynicism and pessimism regarding prospects for working with the Americans in effecting Korean reunification. If Petukhov merely notes the mutually contradictory nature of the Soviet and American occupational policies, Zabrodin, deputy director of the Second Far Eastern Department, voices outright his skepticism toward working with the Americans in a four-power international trusteeship and argues instead for creating a unified Korean government by means of a direct national referendum by the Korean masses.<sup>75</sup> In a paper entitled “Question of single provisional government for Korea,” Zabrodin arrives at his proposal after a detailed analysis of the American occupational policy in southern Korea, including the USAFIK’s nonrecognition of the leftist Korean People’s Republic and its clear preference for working with “reactionary” right-wing Korean politicians such as Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku. Another paper, entitled “On the question of single government for Korea,” describes the USAFIK’s hostile relations with the Korean People’s Republic and its efforts to restrict political activities of the Korean Communist Party (KCP), noting that the USAFIK’s suppression of the KCP is such that the KCP has even considered renaming itself as the Party of Workers–Peasants.<sup>76</sup> Voicing its concern that the Americans, in collusion with Chiang Kai-shek, the British, and reactionary Korean elements including the émigré politicians returning from the United States and China, will prevent the inclusion of communists and other “genuinely democratic” elements in the makeup of any future unified Korean government, the paper proposes the following for the Soviet position:

1. Confirm and again declare the independence and self-sufficiency of Korea.
2. Support the creation of a provisional government of Korea. This government is to be elected with the participation of all Korean societal and political organizations.
3. These same organizations are to elect a provisional preparatory committee for the convening of a representative people’s [i.e., founding] assembly of Korea.
4. The convening of the assembly must be preceded by meetings of widely based democratic assemblies—in the localities on a nationwide scale—of workers, peasants, the intelligentsia, teachers, businessmen and other groups

in the population for wide-ranging discussions and nominations of candidacies for elections as delegates to the people's assembly and as officials of the unified government of Korea.

5. In order to carry out preparatory work and to supervise and assist the provisional government as well as the preparatory committee for the convening of the all-Korean founding assembly, form a special Allied commission made of representatives of the USSR and USA (it is possible that representatives of China and Britain will have to be included in this commission). The commission must present its recommendations to the governments of the USSR and the USA (and China and Britain).
6. To resolve all current problems arising from the presence on Korean territory of Soviet and American troops, create a Mixed Soviet-American Commission made up of representatives of the Soviet and American commands.<sup>77</sup>

It bears noting that this six-point proposal, though not adopted in its entirety, contained the basic Soviet position at the Moscow Conference for the proposed UN trusteeship on Korea.

## CHAPTER 3

### U.S. AND SOVIET POLICIES, DECEMBER 1945–AUGUST 1948

#### **Moscow Conference: Dynamics, Outcome, and Relevance**

The substance of the agreements reached at the Moscow Conference of foreign ministers, held in December 1945, was in many ways a victory for the Soviet Union and, more specifically, a personal victory for Stalin who considered it as such. As Pechatnov (1999) shows, the fact that Byrnes, the U.S. secretary of state, proposed to the Soviets the convening of the Conference without the participation of France and China and that he did so without prior consultation with the British was itself a significant victory for Stalin,<sup>1</sup> who thereby obtained two of the main goals for which he had fought at the prior London Conference: namely, the exclusion of France and China from participation in discussions on peace settlements with the ex-Nazi satellites in Europe and incitement of discord between the United States and Britain.<sup>2</sup> Byrnes' concession, which seemed to prove in Stalin's mind the correctness of his position at the London Conference, was itself motivated in part by the American politician's need for a personal victory after the failure at London. The Moscow Conference achieved agreements on a number of thorny issues, such as Allied recognition of recently elected pro-Soviet governments in Romania and Bulgaria, a larger role for the USSR in a Control Commission for Japan, and international control of atomic energy. Also achieved at the conference was an agreement for a four-power trusteeship on Korea for a period of up to five years. That all these agreements were viewed as successes for Soviet diplomacy is shown in the reaction to the outcome of the conference published immediately afterward in *Novoe Vremia*, the Soviet Foreign Ministry mouthpiece. Here, an article, entitled "Towards a summary of the Moscow Conference of the

Three Ministers," claimed that the results of the conference were welcomed by peace-loving forces in all the world, as they showed Big Three cooperation for building a peaceful world order was still possible in the postwar era despite attempts by reactionary forces in the world to foment an Anglo-American alliance against the Soviet Union and thereby poison Big Three cooperation.<sup>3</sup> The article welcomed, in particular, the agreements reached on Bulgaria and Romania as a triumph for the "forces of democracy" and as a failure for Anglo-American attempts to impose "western democracy" in these two countries. It opined further that the Anglo-American recognition of the pro-Soviet regimes in these two countries would contribute to lessening of Anglo-American conflict with the USSR in the Balkans.

As for the agreement on Korea, it is significant that the article welcomed this agreement not only as an important step toward reestablishment of Korea's independence but also as a positive contribution to the future success of four-power cooperation in general. When considering that this article also hailed the success of the Conference in reaching an agreement on a Control Commission for Japan made up of the same four powers (the United States, USSR, Britain, and China), it becomes evident that the USSR approached the problem of Korea's future, including the Korean trusteeship, within the context of postwar four-power cooperation in East Asia and elsewhere. As for the Soviet position on four-power trusteeships and UN trusteeships in general, this stemmed from the calculation, as discussed previously, that the USSR could use the trusteeship mechanism as an instrument for expanding Soviet influence worldwide after World War II, including even in areas where the Soviet Union or its imperial Russian predecessor had historically never played a role. The evidence that Stalin was eager to obtain trusteeships is strong, particularly when it comes to the Soviet dictator's desire to obtain trusteeships over the ex-Italian colonies in the Mediterranean and North Africa such as Tripolitania.

Apparently motivated in part by a desire to obtain a naval foothold in the Mediterranean and free passage through the Black Sea straits, Stalin's desire to obtain trusteeships over these ex-Italian colonies was bound to collide with the British, who traditionally regarded the Mediterranean as their sphere of influence. For example, as early as July 17, 1945, at the beginning of the Potsdam Conference, Stalin proposed to Truman that the USSR should be given a trusteeship over an ex-Italian colony.<sup>4</sup> At that time, Stalin evidently also desired a trusteeship over Korea: though he did not voice this desire at the Potsdam Conference, it is evident that he approached the Korean trusteeship in the same breath that he approached the trusteeships over the ex-Italian colonies. Indeed, expecting the Soviets

to press for a Soviet trusteeship over an ex-Italian colony but worried that the United States would not join Britain in resisting this Soviet pressure at Potsdam, the British Foreign & Colonial Offices even considered informing the U.S. government that Britain would not be able to support the U.S. in resisting Soviet claims for trusteeships over Korea and elsewhere if the U.S. did not support Britain in fending off the Soviet trusteeship claim for the ex-Italian colonies.<sup>5</sup> However, once Stalin made the proposal at Potsdam to Truman for a Soviet trusteeship over an ex-Italian colony, Byrnes, the U.S. secretary of state, apparently decided to allay this British worry and help avoid an Anglo-Soviet clash in the Mediterranean. Consequently, the U.S. secretary of state supported Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, in thwarting Molotov's attempt to pursue a discussion at Potsdam on the ex-Italian colonies, and, accordingly, this discussion was deferred to the subsequent London Conference.<sup>6</sup>

To Stalin's chagrin, however, the London Conference, as discussed earlier, failed to produce any agreements, including on the ex-Italian colonies. When Molotov brought up his government's desire for the trusteeship over an ex-Italian colony, citing a prior "approval" by the U.S. government for this idea supposedly given at the San Francisco UN conference in April 1945, he only met with a flat rejection by the British and the Americans. As Byrnes recounted later, the American "approval" Molotov cited was a misconstruction of the meaning of the letter from the then U.S. secretary of state Stettinius, who had merely stated that the USSR would be "eligible" for such a trusteeship.<sup>7</sup> At this London Conference, the reaction from Bevin, the pugnacious British foreign secretary, to the Soviet desire for the trusteeship was particularly severe: expressing his unmitigated outrage, the Briton cried in response, "This is a shock, shock and shock! You [i.e., the Russians] have never been there [in the Mediterranean] in the past!"<sup>8</sup>

Although the issue of the Korean trusteeship was not discussed at this London conference, the British, expecting that the Soviets would also want to discuss the Korean trusteeship along with the trusteeships for the ex-Italian colonies at this conference, had even prepared a policy memo in anticipation of the Korean trusteeship being placed on the Conference agenda.<sup>9</sup> Exactly why the Korean trusteeship was not discussed at this Conference is not clear but can be readily guessed. Perhaps, this was due to the fact that this London Conference began on September 11, 1945, at a time when the military occupation of Korea had just begun: since any trusteeship over Korea could be carried out only after the initial stage of accepting the Japanese surrender and successfully establishing the military occupation, both the Soviets and the Americans may have thought it was then too early to discuss the Korean trusteeship at London, as it was not

even clear then whether the military occupation itself was going to be a success. Therefore, it only made sense that both the United States and the USSR desired to put off discussing the Korean trusteeship until a bit later, until at least the military occupation by their troops would have been successfully established. Alternatively, that the Soviets did push for discussing their role in the Allied occupation of Japan at the London Conference suggests that this issue was of a higher priority for them than the Korean trusteeship and that they wanted to discuss this issue first at the conference and the Korean question at a later conference. Or, Stalin may have thought it made sense to discuss first the trusteeships for the ex-Italian colonies at London and then the Korean trusteeship later at a follow-up conference, given that the London Conference was, after all, mainly about discussing peace treaties with and reparations from defeated ex-enemy states such as Italy, whose ex-colonies in the Mediterranean Stalin desired as a form of reparation. Most likely, it was a combination of these possible reasons that led to the Korean trusteeship not being discussed at London.

Turning back to the Soviet claim for trusteeships over the ex-Italian colonies, the Soviets were unsuccessful with this claim at the London Conference owing to the determined opposition by Bevin and Byrnes, as was just explained. However, Stalin was equally determined not to give up this claim and indeed pressed it again at the Paris Conference of foreign ministers in April 1946, where he even tried to solicit support from Italian and French communists on this matter. Molotov's secretariat at the time dictated the following to the chief editor of *Pravda* as the guideline for an article to be published in the Soviet party organ: "We must obtain at least one Italian colony under our trusteeship, whether on an individual or a collective basis."<sup>10</sup>

Stalin's rationale for using the UN trusteeship mechanism as a means to expand Soviet global presence after World War II was made clear at a subsequent international forum, namely a session of the UN General Assembly, which took place at the time of the New York session of the Conference of foreign ministers held in November–December 1946. When Molotov informed Stalin about happenings at the UN General Assembly session, which discussed, among other things, creation of the proposed UN Trusteeship Council, he suggested that the USSR not take an immediate interest in international settlements regarding former mandates of the League of Nations, which were the former possessions of Turkey and Germany in Africa, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific that had been given over to Britain, France, and Japan for mandate administration after World War I. Stalin, upon receiving Molotov's *dépêche* containing this suggestion, was irritated and ordered his foreign minister to take a

position of active interest in this question, writing the following:

Gone are the times when the USSR could consider herself an insignificant state in matters relating to all types of mandate territories . . . Only such a position [i.e., taking an active interest in the question of the mandates] gives us the possibility of playing an active role in trusteeship questions and, where necessary, of giving our partners concessions in return for corresponding concessions on their part. The question of mandate territories gives us a whole range of possibilities and means of pressuring our partners, which we must not ignore while bargaining with out partners.<sup>11</sup>

Stalin then added that what he had just written was especially the case all the more since this (i.e., the question of mandates and national self-determination of non-Western peoples) was a “weak” point in Anglo-American foreign policy but a strong, “democratic” one for Soviet foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

In the light of the discussion just presented, the trusteeship agreement on Korea at the Moscow Conference, thus, must be seen in this context of the Soviet global strategy regarding UN trusteeships and the non-Western world in general. It is very possible that Stalin, having failed in his attempt at the London Conference to obtain a Soviet trusteeship of an ex-Italian colony, wanted to obtain a trusteeship agreement on Korea at the Moscow Conference in an effort to score a success for both the UN trusteeship mechanism and for specific Soviet policy goals in Korea. The Korean trusteeship agreement at Moscow must be analyzed also in the context of Stalin’s desire to use the mechanism of the four-power cooperation in order to expand Soviet influence on the occupation regime in Japan. As we have seen before, that the issue of the Soviet role in the occupation of Japan was a very important one in the mind of Stalin and a top priority in Soviet relations with the United States in the fall of 1945 is demonstrated in numerous documents and by Stalin’s actions themselves. Having been flatly refused by Truman a role in accepting the Japanese surrender on the island of Hokkaido, an indignant Stalin continued to press the United States for a larger role in the occupation of Japan beyond the merely symbolic one accorded by the Americans. Irritating Stalin even more was the earlier mentioned rough treatment of his representative at MacArthur’s headquarters in Tokyo, Lieutenant General Derevyanko, by MacArthur and his staff. In anger, Stalin instructed Molotov at the London Conference to bring up the subject of a Control Commission for Japan in which the Soviet Union could play a weighty role. “We consider that it is necessary to end the unlimited powers of MacArthur and the institution of the SCAP, which does whatever comes into its mind without even informing us of its decision,” wrote Stalin to Molotov.<sup>13</sup> When Byrnes refused to

place the issue on the conference agenda, saying he was not authorized to discuss the matter, Stalin exploded in anger to his foreign minister:

I consider it to be the height of impudence that the Anglo-Americans, who consider themselves our allies, do not want to listen to us as they should on the question of a Control Commission for Japan. One of the Allies, the Soviet Union, declares that it is unhappy with its position in Japan, but these people, who call themselves our allies, refuse to discuss our declaration. This indicates that they lack an elementary sense of respect for their ally. Should we not then hint to Byrnes and Bevin that, under such circumstances, we will be forced to recall our people from Japan, given that we cannot bear any responsibility for the policies of the United States and Britain regarding Japan?<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, Stalin was so anxious to obtain a larger role for the USSR in the occupation of Japan that he tried a number of negotiating ploys to achieve this goal, such as tying this issue with a proposed peace settlement with Italy as well as a proposed anti-German pact and even asserting that the USSR had information the United States had seized one to two billion dollars worth of gold reserves in Japan and that the real reason the United States did not want a Soviet role in Japan was that it wanted to deny the USSR access to this gold. Byrnes and Bevin, however, rejected all these advances made by the Soviets and, as for the “hint” regarding the Japanese gold, denied any knowledge of it, adding that they were not interested in the gold anyway. Going nowhere with his advance, a frustrated Stalin ended the conference in a deadlock and afterward recalled Derevyanko from Tokyo in protest.

Why, then, did Stalin worry about the Control Commission for Japan, and what was driving his bid to increase the Soviet role in the defeated country? A picture of the official Soviet position in the fall of 1945 on postwar Japan can be obtained by examining articles published at the time in official Soviet publications. An example is an article in the October 1, 1945, issue of *Novoe Vremia*, written by D. Petrov. Entitled “Liquidation of centers of aggression or their preservation?” this article, which is a review of a book on postwar economies of Germany and Japan authored by an American economist and his French colleague, voiced a deep concern over the thrust of the book’s arguments, which it constructed to be characteristic of those in the United States who advocated no fundamental reforms in the economy or society of Germany and Japan after the war and who wanted to use a resurrected Germany and Japan as allies of the United States in its confrontation with the USSR.<sup>15</sup> Another article in the same journal published on November 15, 1945, entitled “Maneuvers of Japanese

reactionary forces,” written by E. Zhukov, is a sharply critical commentary on the course of events taking place in Japan under MacArthur.<sup>16</sup> Starting out by noting that the Soviet Union was participating in the occupation of Germany on an equal basis with the United States, Britain, and France, Zhukov strongly protested the American monopoly on the occupation of Japan, arguing that the USSR, which had made a significant contribution to the defeat of Japan, deserved a bigger role in the occupation. A larger role for the USSR in Japan, Zhukov argued, was necessary in light of the reactionary policies being pursued by MacArthur, who was not carrying out the democratization of Japan called for in the Potsdam Declaration and whose actions had resulted in elementary conditions of Japan’s democratization left unfulfilled. Zhukov voiced great alarm at the new Shidehara cabinet put into power in October, commenting that both Shidehara and a majority of its members had extensive ties to Japan’s war industries and colonial interests and that the cabinet was pursuing reactionary policies designed to thwart Japan’s demilitarization and democratization. Noting that the strongholds of Japanese fascism—namely, the institution of emperor, the *zaibatsu* (i.e., the industrial-financial conglomerates) and the semi-feudal landlords—remained intact under MacArthur, who had done very little to dismantle their power, and that these “reactionary” forces were stirring up certain SCAP officials to step up their suppression of democratic forces in Japan, the Soviet commentator concluded by calling for an end to the American monopoly in Japan in the interest of preventing the preservation of Japanese militarism and a rebirth of Japan’s imperialistic aggression.

These Soviet commentaries on the American occupation of Japan in the fall of 1945 require some interpretation, and U.S. Ambassador Harriman in Moscow, in his telegram to the secretary of state dated October 30, 1945, provided the following trenchant analysis:

Dissatisfaction of Soviet Government with American dispensation in Japan has by now been made evident through medium of Soviet press. Accusation in sum is that widespread roots of Jap imperialism and aggression are not being eradicated. As in case of Soviet recriminations re Anglo-American administration in Germany, accusations require interpretation. It is difficult to believe that Soviet General Staff and Politburo are lying awake nights worrying about recrudescence of Jap imperialism and aggression. What may cause them uneasy moments, however, is thought that Japan like Germany might some day be utilized by Western Powers as springboard for attack on USSR. Japan as much as Eastern Europe is in Soviet zone of vital strategic interest. Long range strategic implications of American occupation and control of Japan are therefore one reason for Soviet dissatisfaction with situation in Japan. With USA dominant in Japan, only possible program for

introducing and expanding Soviet influence, aside from establishment of Allied Control mechanism with its limited utility to USSR, is exploitation through Jap Communists and Leftists of post-war disorder and economic unrest. We appear, however, to be housecleaning and encouraging liberal tendencies in Japan. This has effect of stealing Communist thunder and thus irritates USSR because fundamentally USSR prefers crusading against reaction to competing with liberalism. Our apparently intelligent internal policy in Japan is therefore a second cause for Soviet dissatisfaction with American dispensation in Japan.

Possible third cause of Soviet dissatisfaction—of which no evidence has yet been seen in press but which appears inferentially in stray conversations with Russians—would be feeling that USSR as one of the two greatest powers and as Pacific power has not been accorded due “face” in disposition of Japan. Being new rich with a lingering inferiority complex and feeling of gauche uncertainty in international society, USSR is inordinately sensitive re appearance as well as substance of prestige. This third cause of Soviet disgruntlement could probably be eliminated to considerable degree by concessions to Soviet dignity. But it should not be assumed that such concessions would compensate in Soviet eyes for continuing American single control of Japan and a constructive liberal internal policy there. So long as these fundamental conditions exist Soviet press and Government may be expected to take jaundiced view of Jap affairs.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from his perceptive comments on the Soviet national pride and sensitivities as the new Great Power after World War II and the need for U.S. policy to assuage these Soviet feelings, Harriman, as quoted above, correctly identified Stalin’s fear of a resurrected Japan allied with the United States in a future attack on the Soviet Union as a main reason for the Soviet dictator’s deep dissatisfaction with the situation in Japan in the fall of 1945. That Stalin was concerned about a resurrected Japan and Germany in alliance with the Western Powers is shown in his remarks made during the war. In these remarks, Stalin foresaw, correctly as it turned out, that both Germany and Japan would recover soon after their defeats and once again become forces to be reckoned with.<sup>18</sup> It was, therefore, in consideration of this future threat from a resurrected Japan and Germany that Stalin protested personally to Harriman in the fall of 1945 regarding the exclusion of the USSR from any significant role in the occupation of Japan. For example, during a conversation with the American ambassador on October 25 in the wake of the unsuccessful London Conference and his decision to recall Derevyanko from Tokyo, Stalin stated: “The Soviet Government felt that it could not bear responsibility for MacArthur’s actions in Japan since it had never been informed or consulted on Japanese matters. It had decided to recall its representative, General Derevyanko, because he was

not receiving any information on policies or developments in Japan. The Soviet Government [has] its self-respect as a sovereign state. No decisions made by MacArthur were being transmitted to it. In point of fact, the Soviet Union had become an American satellite in the Pacific. This was a role it could not accept. It was not being treated as an Ally. The Soviet Union would not be a satellite of the United States in the Far East or elsewhere. These were the reasons Mr. Molotov had raised the question of control machinery [for Japan] in London.”<sup>19</sup> Complaining further, Stalin said: “Soviet views on Japan [are] completely disregarded . . . Is this the way to treat an ally? If this regime were to continue, the Soviet Union would leave Japan for it could not be responsible for actions it only learned of through the press. [Does] MacArthur represent the Soviet Union? No. It would be more honest if the Soviet Union were to quit Japan than to remain there as a ‘piece of furniture.’ ”

It must be with due consideration of this resentment against the American treatment of the USSR in Japan as well as Stalin’s fear regarding the possible future threat from Japan that one needs to approach the Soviet dictator’s handling of the Korean question at the Moscow Conference, given that Korea was historically used by Japan as a first step in her aggressions on Asian mainland and against the Russian Far East. It is very possible that, having been spurned in Japan, Stalin proceeded to make sure that at least Korea would not be anti-Soviet in the future.

The discussion on Korea at the Moscow Conference started in earnest during the first formal session of the conference on December 16 when Byrnes brought up the issues raised by Ambassador Harriman in Moscow in his letter to Molotov dated November 8.<sup>20</sup> In the letter, Harriman, mentioning the serious economic and administrative problems caused by the arbitrary division of Korea such as coal and energy delivery from northern Korea into southern Korea and resumption of railroad and other traffic between the two zones, pointed out that the Soviet commander in Korea did not seem to have the authority to enter into negotiations with Hodge, the American commander, in order to resolve these problems and asked Molotov whether the Soviet government was going to authorize the Soviet commander to enter into negotiations with Hodge or whether it preferred to deal with these matters directly with the American government.<sup>21</sup> Noting that solving these urgent problems was the first step toward dealing with the larger problems of establishing a trusteeship over Korea, Byrnes proposed to Molotov that an agreement on trusteeship be prefaced by an agreement on solving these immediate problems. In response, Molotov noted that Harriman’s letter did not touch upon the larger issue of a Korean government or the establishment of a trusteeship and also that the question placed by Byrnes on the Moscow conference agenda was this

larger issue and not the one of specific economic or administrative problems. The Soviet foreign minister then said he had only just been apprised of the fact that Byrnes linked these specific problems with the broader question of a Korean government and claimed he did not understand how the two were related and would like to have the connection explained. To this, Byrnes' explanation was that the specific measures mentioned in Harriman's letter were the logical steps to establishing a unified military administration in Korea and that such a unified administration would facilitate the establishment of a trusteeship. In return, Molotov claimed that Byrnes was raising an issue entirely different from that of a single Korean government or trusteeship but nevertheless pledged to further study the problems mentioned by Harriman. The Soviet foreign minister then asserted his goal at the conference was to address the broad issue of a single Korean government and the trusteeship and proposed that addressing this larger issue would also entail solving the specific problems brought up by Byrnes, since there was a connection between the two. This put Byrnes somewhat on the defensive, and the American secretary of state insisted that he did not seek to confine discussions at the conference only to solving the specific problems and that he in fact desired to discuss the larger issue as well. He then proposed to Molotov and Bevin that the American delegation would come up with a paper on this larger question for distribution at the next meeting. After this proposal, the discussion on Korea ended at the initiative of Molotov, who suggested that it be deferred pending presentation of the proposed American paper.

What this discussion on Korea during the first formal session shows is that there was a substantial divergence between the American and the Soviet approaches, at least in the ways they were formulated. Whereas the Americans regarded solving the immediate economic and administrative problems to be of foremost importance and considered this as a prerequisite for resolving the larger issues of establishing a unified Korean government and the trusteeship, the Soviets placed their emphasis on tackling the larger issues and claimed they were not even aware how the economic and administrative issues were connected with the larger issue. In taking such an approach, the Soviets were avoiding the issue of how their occupation policies had effectively sealed off their zone from the American occupied southern zone, resulting in the urgent economic and administrative problems addressed by Hodge, Harriman, and Byrnes that negatively impacted on Korea's national economy and unity. However, as will become clear later, this Soviet stance was based on the Soviets' own dissatisfaction with American occupation policies in the southern zone as well as on other factors, such as the desperate Soviet need for economic rehabilitation after the war and the fear of the Soviet command to enter into

negotiations with its American counterpart in the absence of policy directives from Moscow. Nevertheless, another important reason for the American insistence on solving the economic and administrative problems was the earlier discussed American pessimism regarding the proposed trusteeship, voiced by Hodge and apparently shared by Byrnes himself, and regarding any possibility of working with the Soviets in Korea. Given this pessimism, the Americans apparently believed they were hard put to reach an agreement with the Soviets even on the more narrow problems in the economic and administrative spheres, let alone on the more complex and larger issue of a single Korean government and the trusteeship. Given this belief, Byrnes evidently proposed to work first on these apparently more manageable problems rather than on the more complex larger issue. Byrnes, therefore, must have been placed on the defensive when Molotov in effect accused him of focusing on the economic and administrative problems at the expense of tackling the more important larger issue. That Byrnes then responded to this charge by promising to come up with a proposal on the larger issue indicates that the American delegation at the time most likely did not even have a proposal prepared on the larger issue. Reflecting this lack of preparedness, the American proposal, when it did appear at the next formal session on the following day, showed the haste and tentativeness with which it was prepared: indeed, it was very much of a rough draft, rather than a polished product, suddenly prepared in response to the Soviet insistence on solving the larger issue.

The American proposal on Korea, circulated at the second formal session of the conference on December 17, was, as just stated, very much a hastily prepared and tentative document that took the form of a memorandum rather than a finished draft.<sup>22</sup> Starting by noting the Cairo Declaration and the agreement to place Korea under a trusteeship, it goes on to note the difficulties created by the arbitrary division at the 38th parallel and the lack of liaison or coordination between the two occupation commands. It then argues that the creation of a unified military administration to resolve urgent problems in the economic and administrative spheres is “a transitory but essential step toward a broadly based non-military administration of Korea looking toward the establishment of an independent Korean Government.” Regarding the trusteeship, it proposes a four-power trusteeship on behalf of the United Nations and the people of Korea in accordance with Article 76 of the UN Charter would be “the most feasible machinery for bringing into being an independent Korea.” Thus, in sum, the American proposal addressed both the immediate economic and administrative problems as well as the broader issue of the trusteeship and, as such, attempted to meet the Soviet objections to focusing on the economic and administrative problems at the expense of the larger issue.

However, what comes as a surprise in this document is the length of the proposed trusteeship, which is stated to be a period of up to five years, "which might be extended if necessary by agreement among the four states represented on the administering authority for a further period not to exceed five years." Why did the American delegation propose such an extended trusteeship (up to 10 years), when both the USAFIK and the State Department were fully aware of the strong Korean resistance to any trusteeship, and when news of such an American proposal, if made known to the Koreans, was bound to make the latter even more furious and thereby put the USAFIK in an even more untenable situation? It also bears noting that the proposal for such a prolonged trusteeship was sure to be seized by the Soviet propaganda machine as evidence of a sinister American design to establish a colonial protectorate over Korea.<sup>23</sup> This rather seemingly hard-to-understand proposal requires some explanation.

As pointed out before, the American delegation approached the Korean question with a pessimistic outlook on the prospects for working with the Soviets and, in particular, for any deal with the Soviets on a trusteeship actually being successfully implemented, both reasons why Byrnes proposed dealing with the economic and administrative problems first before tackling the more complex problems of the broader political settlement.<sup>24</sup> The American view of working with the Soviets in Korea was so pessimistic that Hodge and State Department officials such as Langdon in Korea and Acheson in Japan had already been advocating, on the eve of the conference, preparations for a separate southern Korean government as an alternative to the trusteeship arrangement. It was, therefore, precisely this pessimism that may have led the American delegation to propose such an extended trusteeship. In other words, the Americans may have proposed it not as a serious plan but as a deliberate effort to sabotage any agreement on the trusteeship, assuming that Molotov's apparently sincere insistence on reaching a trusteeship agreement was but a bluff and that the Soviet side would reject such an extended trusteeship. Another possible explanation is that this 10-year trusteeship proposal again illustrates the sheer ignorance and indifference regarding Korea on the part of Byrnes and his subordinates at the conference, who may have actually believed that the Koreans needed such a long time of preparation for their self-government, despite the reports they had been getting from the USAFIK about the Koreans' fierce opposition to any trusteeship. Finally, a third possible explanation, related to the first, is that Byrnes and his aides at the conference may have been so pessimistic about working with the Soviets in Korea that they simply did not care whether they reached an agreement on the trusteeship and thus randomly chose 10 years as the proposed duration.<sup>25</sup> Byrnes and his aides thus may not have believed that a trusteeship agreement, even if

successfully concluded at the conference, would be successfully implemented, and thus it was a moot question whether the proposal, which was doomed to fail anyway, stipulated 10 years or less.

Given this pessimistic attitude, Byrnes and his aides must have been somewhat surprised when their rather haphazard and unrealistic initial proposal was met with a surprisingly realistic and even pragmatic Soviet counter-proposal, presented at the fifth formal session on December 20, calling for a trusteeship of up to five years.<sup>26</sup> Molotov, when presented with the original American proposal, told Byrnes it would require some time to study it before making any comment on it. That the Soviet delegation subsequently took some time (more than two full days, in contrast to the just one day it took the Americans to prepare their initial proposal) to come up with their counter-proposal indicates that the Soviet counter-proposal was made after a more careful preparation and that the Soviets were indeed more serious than the Americans about the trusteeship.<sup>27</sup> A polished draft agreement well crafted in its phrasing, the Soviet counter-proposal put the main emphasis on establishing the four-power trusteeship while meeting the American concerns regarding the immediate economic and administrative problems by calling for a meeting between the American and Soviet commands in Korea within two weeks after the conference in order to address these problems. Most importantly, however, it called for a trusteeship of up to five years in contrast to the up to 10 years proposed by the Americans. A later Soviet commentary on this Soviet proposal states the following:

The point of view of the Soviet delegation was based on the Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy of respecting and protecting the national interests and rights of peoples and boiled down to rendering assistance, through joint efforts of democratic powers, to the Korean people for the goal of turning Korea in a short time period from an ex-Japanese colony into an independent democratic Korean state . . .

Regarding the length of the four-power trusteeship on Korea, the American proposal called for 5 years, with the right to extend this period after a review by the four powers represented in the administrative organ for still another 5 years, i.e., for a total of 10 years, under which the creation of a national Korean government was not provided for during this 10-year period. The establishment of independent Korea was put off until an undetermined future. In this manner, the American proposal expressed a poorly masked aspiration to turn Korea into a colony . . .

In stark contrast to the American proposal was the way the Soviet proposal put forward the question of the 4-power trusteeship for Korea. The Soviet delegation proposed establishing in Korea not a colonial trusteeship, as the Americans proposed, but such a trusteeship as would render help and

assistance to the political, economic and social progress of the Korean people, as well as to the development of democratic self-government and the establishment of Korea's state sovereignty. For the latter goal, the conditions of the trusteeship for Korea were to be worked out under the participation of a Korean democratic government and Korean democratic organizations.

The Soviet delegation considered that 3–5 years would be more than enough in order to implement a trusteeship of such a character for Korea, in which will be accomplished the following: the liquidation of the deleterious consequences of the long Japanese colonial rule; the rebirth of the economy and the national culture of Korea; the development of self-government; the preparation of Korea's own national cadres in the areas of economics, sciences and politics; and the establishment of a fully independent democratic state.<sup>28</sup>

Reflecting the self-professed goals of the Soviet proposal as described in the above quote, the aim of the proposed trusteeship as stated in this Soviet proposal was squarely in line with the main thrust of Soviet policy toward Korea at the time, which proclaimed its chief mission as that of eradicating the vestiges of Japanese fascism and crushing the forces of reaction in Korea. This can be gleaned in the opening lines of the proposal itself, which asserted its chief goal as “the speediest possible liquidation of the consequences of prolonged Japanese domination over Korea.”

The American reaction to this counter-proposal was to accept it with only minor modifications. This should be interpreted as an indication that the Americans, who must have been somewhat surprised to learn that the Soviets actually seemed to be serious about working with them in Korea and more willing than they about drafting a realistic trusteeship agreement, decided at this point to let the Soviets take the initiative on the Korean trusteeship. In doing so, Byrnes may have said to himself: “let them run with the ball and let's see if they stick to the rules.”<sup>29</sup> The quick American acceptance of the Soviet counter-proposal can also be explained by a desire to use this acceptance as a bargaining chip to extract Soviet concessions in other areas. That Byrnes, citing the concessions he had just made on Korea, asked Molotov to give ground on the more difficult issues regarding Romania and Bulgaria supports this explanation.<sup>30</sup> At any rate, the resulting final draft of the Moscow agreement on Korea is unmistakably the work of the Soviet delegation, not only in its provision calling for a five-year trusteeship but also in its overall content and phrasing: for example, the opening article's emphasis on “developing [Korea] on democratic principles and the earliest possible liquidation of the disastrous results of the protracted Japanese domination” was absent in the original American proposal but was a mere rephrasing of the almost identical line in the opening

paragraph of the original Soviet counter-proposal.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the entire final agreement on Korea was almost a carbon copy reproduction of the Soviet counter-proposal, with only a few minor changes in phrasing and just one minor content change, namely that of a more explicitly enunciated role for China and Britain in the trusteeship than was stipulated in the Soviet counter-proposal.<sup>32</sup>

Given that the Americans most likely approached the Korean question at the conference with a very pessimistic attitude and viewed the Soviets as not interested in working with them in Korea, how can one explain this rather seemingly successful agreement on Korea reached at the conference? One answer is that the Soviet counter-proposal did indeed go a long way toward meeting Byrnes' concerns about the urgent economic and administrative problems by calling for a meeting of the two occupation commands within two weeks to address these and that its provisions for a four-power trusteeship may have been on the whole satisfactory from the American standpoint. In other words, given the rather satisfactory ways in which the Soviet counter-proposal met his concerns, Byrnes may indeed have decided to give the Soviets the benefit of doubt. A crucial element in this calculation must have been the overriding policy concern held by both the USSR and the United States, which was that neither side wanted to be seen as responsible for causing a permanent division of Korea and that both sides wanted to avoid blame in case such a permanent division indeed took place. Considering this fundamental policy objective, it was perhaps no wonder Byrnes accepted the Soviet counter-proposal; after all, rejecting such a proposal, which, in all objective appearance, contained a realistic and satisfactory approach to solving the Korean question, would have given the United States bad publicity in the eyes of the world and at the same time ammunition for Soviet propaganda that could use this to portray the United States as the enemy of Korean reunification.

On this last point, the Soviet interpretation of this quick American acceptance of the Soviet counter-proposal indeed said just as much, as, for example, in the same RGASPI source earlier quoted:

The American delegation decided against openly rejecting such a proposal by the Soviet delegation, since such a rejection would have exposed before the whole world the imperialistic and colonial claims of the United States in regard to Korea. Therefore, the American delegation was forced to remove from consideration [at the conference] its own proposal on Korea and came out for accepting the Soviet proposal without significant changes. With this also agreed the British delegation. As a result of this, the Soviet proposal formed the basis of the decision on Korea [taken at the Moscow Conference].<sup>33</sup>

Another explanation for the American acceptance of the Soviet proposal is a more general one of the successful agreement on Korea as a part of the success of the conference as a whole, which reached agreements on a number of other areas and was therefore a marked departure from the previous failure at the London Conference. That Byrnes personally needed a diplomatic triumph after the failure at London and that the Soviets themselves were still looking for a compromise with their Western allies, albeit on their own terms, after the disaster in London also helped to make a deal on Korea more likely.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Byrnes was in fact playing his own political games at the Moscow conference without consulting Truman on the policies to follow: this made it more likely that Byrnes saw an agreement on Korea as contributing to the general success of the conference, which he desired, and also made it more likely that the American politician saw such an agreement as a bargaining chip in the give-and-take of negotiations with Molotov in other policy areas.<sup>35</sup>

As for the Soviet acceptance of the agreement on Korea at the conference, this is a more complex matter, as it apparently entailed a number of considerations. The first was, as mentioned in the above paragraph, the desire to avoid blame for causing a permanent division of Korea and the resulting need to reach at least a semblance of an agreement on Korean reunification, which was what the Moscow agreement on Korea was really about. The second consideration was similar to Byrnes' need to find a *modus vivendi* with the ex-wartime ally in the postwar world after the disastrous London conference. As Byrnes, prompted by his own political needs, turned out to be forthcoming in making concessions on a number of issues and the conference was in general progressing successfully, Molotov and Stalin may have felt they did not want to spoil the overall atmosphere of success by failing to reach an agreement on Korea. The third consideration, however, is the most intricate, which is Stalin's policy of favoring the UN trusteeship mechanism as a way to expand Soviet global presence, including in Korea. That the Soviet press immediately after the conference hailed the Korean trusteeship agreement as a success for postwar four-power cooperation, as discussed previously, shows that Stalin regarded it as such. Considering that the USSR had been a strong champion of the UN trusteeship mechanism from the first time Roosevelt had proposed it as a way to dismantle European colonial empires and that Stalin had already pushed at the London conference for a Soviet trusteeship over former Italian colonies, it would have been almost awkward for Stalin not to agree on a trusteeship for Korea, itself an ex-colony of an ex-enemy state. As was earlier mentioned, the Soviets and the British had treated the Korean trusteeship issue at Potsdam in the same breath that they had treated the trusteeships for the ex-Italian

colonies, and Stalin may very well have regarded the success with the Korean trusteeship agreement at Moscow as a triumph of Soviet foreign policy after his earlier failure at London to obtain a Soviet trusteeship over the ex-Italian colonies.

The more tricky questions, however, are the extent to which Stalin was optimistic about the Korean trusteeship actually being successfully implemented and the degree to which his inherent opportunism still allowed room for an alternative arrangement for Korea's future other than the path of following through with the trusteeship plan. Both of these had an impact on whether Stalin agreed on the Korean trusteeship merely for its usefulness as good propaganda or a bargaining chip. These questions also depended on whether Stalin was still undecided on a definite policy for Korea and was willing to let this policy be shaped in conjunction with his responses to developments in other parts of the world, such as Japan and Eastern Europe. However, one fixed variable in these considerations was that Stalin continued to view the UN trusteeship as a useful instrument for Soviet global policy well into 1946, as demonstrated previously in discussing his instructions to Molotov regarding mandate and trusteeship territories at the UN General Assembly session of November–December 1946.

No matter how much the general success of the Moscow Conference may have pleased Stalin, the aftermath of the conference, namely, Truman's displeasure with Byrnes' conduct at the conference and with the conference's outcome itself, soon dashed any optimism Stalin may have come to have about working with his Western allies as a result of the "triumph" of Soviet diplomacy at the conference. This aftermath substantially affected not only the subsequent course of events in Korea but also the general character of U.S.–Soviet relations in 1946 and beyond. Outraged at what he considered as the unauthorized concessions to the Soviets made by Byrnes in Moscow on such issues as the continued Soviet military occupation of northern Iran, the recognition of pro-Soviet governments in Romania and Bulgaria and an increased Soviet role in a Control Commission in Japan, Truman declared to Byrnes on January 5 that he was "tired of babying the Soviets" and went on to noticeably toughen his policies toward the USSR, beginning with reneging on the Moscow agreement on the Control Commission for Japan and refusing to confer recognition on the pro-Soviet governments in Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>36</sup> As for Iran, recent research shows that the USSR's refusal to remove its troops, despite pressure from Truman and the British, from this northern Middle Eastern country in early 1946 directly contributed to a strengthened Anglo–American alliance against perceived Soviet global military expansion and to Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech on

March 5, in which the ex-British prime minister, greatly disturbed by the Soviet action in Iran, called for an Anglo-American military alliance to contain Soviet expansionism. The crisis was alleviated only on March 24, when the Soviets announced their troops' withdrawal after twisting Iran's arms and thereby obtaining an oil concession in the form of a Soviet-Iranian joint-stock oil society.<sup>37</sup>

### **The U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission of 1946: Relevance and Outcome**

It must be, therefore, against this background of intensifying conflict between the USSR and the Anglo-American powers in early 1946 that one needs to approach the work of the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission in Korea, convened as a result of the Moscow agreement on Korea in order to carry out the trusteeship plan. Since the trusteeship agreement was part of the Moscow agreements negotiated by Byrnes with which Truman was unhappy, it is likely that Truman was pessimistic about the prospects of working successfully with the Soviets on this Joint Commission. Nevertheless, owing to the official U.S. policy of supporting Korean reunification and independence, which were the proclaimed goals of the commission, Truman authorized the convening of the commission. As a preliminary step designed to address the urgent economic and administrative problems caused by the division at the 38th parallel, as stipulated in Paragraph 4 of the Moscow trusteeship agreement, a conference of the U.S. and Soviet commands in Korea was to convene within two weeks after the conference, and such a preliminary conference took place in Seoul between January 16 and February 5. That this conference and the subsequent U.S.-USSR Joint Commission sessions of 1946 produced no substantial agreement and ended in failure bespeaks the fact that the Cold War was already brewing in Korea by early 1946. The main problem at the preliminary conference in January-February, as the American delegation saw it, was the Soviets' refusal to open up northern Korea in an effort to coordinate their occupation policies there with those of the Americans in southern Korea in economic and administrative spheres.<sup>38</sup> No agreement was reached on supply of electric power from northern Korea to southern Korea, nor on exchange of commodities or mutual payment of goods between the two zones. Only minor agreements were reached on issues such as establishment of joint control posts, allocation of radio frequencies, and rail, motor and water-borne transportation on a limited basis, some of which were not ratified or carried out afterward. H. Merrell Benninghoff, the political advisor to the USAFIK, in his report on the conference's outcome to the secretary of state, put his finger on the crux of the problem

in the following way:

Early in the discussion in regard to the agenda, it became apparent that the US and Soviet delegations approached the solution of economic and administrative problems from widely different angles. The United States delegation based all its discussions and arguments on the desirability of removing the barrier of the 38th parallel and considering the country as an economic and administrative unit. The Russians, on the other hand, came to the conference with the idea of discussing economic and administrative matters from a very narrow viewpoint. We wished to do everything possible to open up the country and to unite such important facilities as transportation and public utilities into single administrations, whereas the Soviets, from the outset, viewed the problem as one of exchange and coordination between two adjoining but separate zones of military responsibility. We talked in terms of opening up the country for the benefit of the nation as a whole, while the Russians talked in terms of negotiations between the two commands.<sup>39</sup>

According to Benninghoff's report, the Soviet delegation refused to discuss some important matters on the grounds that they were outside the scope of the conference, and these included issues such as the Soviet removal of capital goods from northern Korea and repatriation of Japanese civilians from northern Korea. However, what really caused the failure of the conference, according to this American view, was the Soviet demand for rice from the south in exchange for raw materials and other commodities from the north. The Soviet intransigence on this matter was such that the Americans came to the conclusion that the Soviet delegation was "sent to the conference with instructions to get as much rice as possible and to refuse to agree to any exchange of other commodities unless rice was forthcoming."<sup>40</sup> Even though the Americans explained that southern Korea was not in a position to supply rice and that, on a per capita basis, northern Korea should be almost as self-sufficient in supply of food stuffs as southern Korea, the Soviets, according to Benninghoff's account, caused much fruitless discussion on the issue, after which they submitted what "virtually amounted to an ultimatum" in which it was stated that they "would not be able to continue the discussion of the exchange of commodities, including electric power, until the American command was able to guarantee the delivery to the Soviet command of a substantial quantity of rice." When the Americans continued their attempts to prove that they lacked sufficient rice in southern Korea to supply northern Korea, the Soviets refused to consider other American proposals and the conference broke up.

In contrast to this American assessment of the conference's outcome, the Soviet view of the conference was altogether different. The chief problem at the conference, according to the "official" Soviet interpretation

enunciated in the writings of conference participants such as V.I. Petukhov, the Foreign Ministry official sent to Korea to take part in the Joint Commission's work, was the Americans' insistence on achieving an economic and administrative union between the two zones on their own terms and under their control, with the capital of such union located in Seoul in their zone.<sup>41</sup> The Soviet analysis drew attention to the fact that Paragraph 4 of the Moscow agreement did not actually entrust the preliminary conference with effecting an administrative-economic unification of the two zones, though it called for the convening of the preliminary conference in order to address urgent problems affecting the two occupation zones and coordination in administrative-economic matters. The Soviet position then accused the Americans of trying to effect the country's reunification on their own terms even before the matter of reunification could be addressed in earnest at the subsequent U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission, which was the proper forum to discuss the matter according to the Moscow agreement. Moreover, Petukhov accused the Americans of turning the 38th parallel into a closed border when they refused to deal with the Soviets on an equal basis by exchanging urgently needed commodities on a barter basis. The Soviets demanded rice on the grounds that there was a dire shortage of the staple crop in northern Korea, with "catastrophic" situations in three provinces, and that such delivery of rice was justified on humanitarian grounds.<sup>42</sup> Thus, as can be seen in these Soviet accounts, the Soviet view of the preliminary conference was that of a forum to work out arrangements for ad hoc exchanges of important commodities (primarily rice from the south for electricity and coal from the north) on an equal basis and not that of a forum to discuss efforts to unify the two zones, which was to be the proper domain of the upcoming Joint Commission. An important element in the Soviet refusal to discuss the American proposal for economic-administrative unification was the view that the government apparatus serving such a unified administration with its headquarters in Seoul was bound to be dominated by pro-American Koreans and Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese. The following is Petukhov's summation of the chief problems at the conference as he saw them: after arguing that the many problems caused by the arbitrary division at the 38th parallel were best to be solved by the proposed provisional Korean democratic government in the interests of the Korean people and that solving these problems was not the responsibility of the delegates to this preliminary conference, Petukhov wrote:

The perspectives of creating a Korean government were still to be determined in the course of further negotiations with the American side [i.e., not at the present preliminary conference but at the forthcoming

US-Soviet Joint Commission itself]. Therefore, the Soviet command displayed readiness [i.e., at the preliminary conference] to provide equivalent exchange of goods between the two zones, which was necessary for the sake of the Korean economic life, and to resolve other urgent questions of administrative-economic character by means of concluding temporary agreements that would take into account current needs of the Korean population and that at the same time would not violate the principle of equality between the Soviet and the American sides, which lay at the foundation of the Moscow decision on Korea. [However,] the American command, pursuing only selfish goals, wanted to achieve at the negotiations, above all, economic union of the two zones, by which they meant, in part, unification of transportation, communication, finance and opening of free trade between the zones. As the course of the discussions at the conference showed, under the slogan of economic union of the two zones, the American delegation wanted to achieve establishment in Seoul, located in the American zone, of central organs of economic administration of the country and, through these organs, control of northern Korea by the American command. In this, the authorities in the USA planned to appoint in these organs Koreans [now] in the service of the American military government, a majority of whom had collaborated in the past with the Japanese colonial authorities.

. . . The Soviet delegation rebuffed the attempts by the American command to impose on the conference considerations of the question regarding economic union of the two zones. As made clear by T.F. Shtykov, the head of the Soviet delegation, this question was not part of the conference's tasks, which were clearly delineated by the Moscow decision. He declared that, in so far as the conference was supposed to deal only with solving urgent problems in the administrative-economic sphere, it was necessary, above all, to reach agreements on organizing exchanges of goods between the two zones. . . . The Soviet delegation approached the negotiations not from commercial or any other considerations but exclusively in the interest of meeting the urgent needs of the populations of both zones, and with aspirations of creating favorable conditions for the economic development [of Korea] and the well-being of Koreans of both southern and northern Korea. . . . As a summation of the conference, it became fully clear that the American side did not wish to establish coordination between the zones in the administrative-economic sphere on an equal footing with the Soviet command and in the interest of re-establishing the economy of both zones. The firm position of the Soviet delegation deprived the American side of possibility of carrying out its program, namely that of placing Korea in dependence on American capital and holding back the re-establishment of her independence.<sup>43</sup>

Comparing this Soviet viewpoint on the preliminary conference with the American account, one is struck by the extent to which the positions of the two sides on Korea had by then become almost irreconcilable. In Benninghoff's report on the conference to the secretary of state quoted

earlier, the USAFIK political advisor concluded in the following way about Soviet intentions in Korea:

Although any discussion of political matters was carefully avoided during the meetings of the conference, it was apparent from the tone and attitude of the Soviet delegation, and from several indiscreet remarks made by various of its members, that the USSR contemplates a lengthy occupation of at least the northern half of Korea. It was also apparent that the USSR will probably resist all efforts by the United States to open up the country and to treat it as an economic and political unit until such time as the USSR is satisfied that it has gained political ascendancy in the country, or is forced to change its attitude because of political necessity.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, as can be seen above, while the United States in February 1946 viewed the Soviet opposition to the American efforts at Korean reunification as motivated by the Soviets' desire to "sovietize" northern Korea, the Soviet Union at the same time considered such opposition as justified in the interest of preventing the United States from "Americanizing" all of Korea, which was held to be synonymous with turning Korea into a "colonial dependency" of American capitalists. As will be shown in part II, the Soviet Union had, indeed, by February 1946, made significant progress in "sovietizing" northern Korea, and the basic elements of sovietization were, for all intents and purposes, completed by the end of 1946 with the successful implementation of land reform and other programs. At the same time, in southern Korea, the USAFIK was by March 1946 stepping up its suppression of communists and other leftist elements and busy in its efforts to form the nucleus of what was to become a separate southern Korean government in anticipation of failure at the upcoming U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission sessions. Given these developments in the two zones, the dismal failure at the preliminary conference in January-February 1946 was only the prelude and a natural reflection of the widely divergent occupation policies pursued by the Americans and the Soviets in their respective zones.

Aside from the outcome of the preliminary conference, an important aspect of the differences in the ways the United States and the USSR approached the conference was that the Soviet side evidently regarded it as much more important than did the Americans. This was shown in the make-up of the Soviet delegation. Headed by T.F. Shtykov, Stalin's de facto "viceroy" in northern Korea and son-in-law of A.A. Zhdanov, a member of Stalin's inner circle and one of the most powerful men in the USSR at the time, the Soviet delegation also included S.K. Tsarapkin as the chief representative of the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Tsarapkin, who had

participated in the Moscow conference of December 1945, was then the director of the Foreign Ministry's U.S. department and at the same time held the rank of Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Korea. In contrast, the American delegation was headed by Major General Arnold, a high-ranking officer within the USAFIK, and included Benninghoff, the USAFIK political advisor, as the chief representative of the State Department. In both rank and experience, neither Arnold nor Benninghoff could be compared to Shtykov or Tsarapkin, their Soviet counterparts. In contrast to Shtykov, a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee since 1939 and a significant figure in Soviet politics at the time, and to Tsarapkin, a weighty figure within the Soviet Foreign Ministry, neither Arnold nor Benninghoff was such a significant figure within the corresponding American hierarchies. As a member of the Military Council of the Maritime Military District in the Soviet Far East, Shtykov stood a level above Colonel General I.M. Chistiakov, the commander of the 25th Army which occupied northern Korea, and was in fact the highest-ranking Soviet official in northern Korea. What this contrast in rank and experience demonstrates is, once again, the much greater importance the Soviet Union attached to the Korean trusteeship agreement compared with the United States. This difference in rank and experience of the key figures on the American and Soviet delegations to the preliminary conference remained unchanged at the subsequent sessions of the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission (March 20–May 8, 1946, and May 21–October 18, 1947), at which Shtykov still presided as the head of the Soviet delegation.

Given the abject failure of the preliminary conference, it was no surprise that the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission sessions that began on March 20 also adjourned on May 8 without achieving anything. Both internal Korean developments as well as international factors contributed to the collapse of the sessions, which hinged on the question of which Korean political parties and social organizations were to be consulted in forming a provisional Korean government in accordance with the Moscow trusteeship decision. Domestically, the key development in northern Korea was the consolidation of political hegemony of Kim Il Sung and his group in January–February 1946, when Cho Mansik, the leader of the rightist elements in northern Korea, was placed under house arrest by the Soviet command for his opposition to the Moscow trusteeship decision. With Kim proclaimed on February 8 as the head of the newly organized Provisional People's Committee of North Korea, the executive/legislative organ of a *de facto* embryonic North Korean state, northern Korea was well on its way, by March 20, to becoming a separate state headed by Kim. It might be said that, with Cho's removal from office and Kim's consolidation of power, the period of "National Front" or "broad coalition" of

communist and noncommunist parties in government, the initial stage in the process of communist take-over which was observed all over Eastern Europe in 1945–1948, was effectively over in northern Korea by February 1946.<sup>45</sup> As will be discussed more fully in part II, Stalin's policy for northern Korea in the initial stage of Soviet military occupation, in the fall of 1945, had been that of supporting a "broad coalition" of all antifascist political forces including the right-wing forces under Cho Mansik. In his policy directive to the Soviet occupation command, dated September 20, 1945, Stalin instructed:

With regard to the occupation of northern Korea by troops of the Red Army, the Headquarters of the Supreme Command of the Red Army issues the following guidelines:

1. On the territory of northern Korea, soviets and other organs of Soviet power are not to be created and Soviet-style political institutions are not to be introduced.
2. To aid in the establishment, in northern Korea, of a bourgeois-democratic government on the basis of a broad coalition [*shirokogo bloka*] of all anti-Japanese democratic parties and organizations.
3. Not to hinder the formation of anti-Japanese democratic organizations and parties in the areas of Korea occupied by the Red Army but rather to assist them in their work.
4. Explain to the local population that the Red Army entered northern Korea with the goal of destroying the Japanese plunderers and that it is not pursuing the goals of introducing a Soviet political order in Korea or of acquiring Korean territory . . .<sup>46</sup>

This initial occupation policy of supporting a broad coalition of political forces in a bourgeois-democratic government, as will be discussed more fully in part II, was most likely based in part on the weakness of the communist organization in Korea at the time and the assessment that conditions in Korea, in terms of both the readiness of the populace and the level of the ex-Japanese colony's politico-economic development, were then unsuited for immediate establishment of a socialist regime. Another probable aspect was the consideration that outright sovietization of northern Korea from the beginning of the Soviet occupation was bound to encounter stiff resistance by both the Koreans and the United States. Furthermore, Stalin most likely also thought that such a policy of broad coalition was well suited to implementing the proposed UN trusteeship plan, under which communists and other leftists would need to work with rightists in forming a provisional Korean government. Given these considerations, Stalin apparently decided, in September 1945, to take a gradual approach to socialist regime-building in northern Korea and supported a broad coalition that included

right-wing elements such as Cho Mansik. Stalin's policy was to use Cho, then the most well-known and popular leader in northern Korea, as the leader of the coalition regime in an effort to make the Soviet occupation more acceptable to the Koreans. Therefore, when the Soviets put Cho under house arrest in January 1946, this must be seen as an indication that this period of "National Front" in northern Korea was then effectively over, which was officially confirmed by the subsequent establishment of the Provisional People's Committee headed by Kim Il Sung in February 1946.

Stalin's "National Front" strategy in fall 1945 was also pursued in southern Korea, where the Soviet authorities in northern Korea apparently supported similar policies and probably instructed Pak Hŏnyŏng, the leader of the Korean Communist Party, to join noncommunists in a broad coalition.<sup>47</sup> However, because the American military government turned out to be increasingly hostile to the leftist elements there and also because efforts for a broad coalition such as the Korean People's Republic soon met defeat, Stalin was beginning to change his policy in southern Korea as well by early 1946, when the news of the Moscow trusteeship decision gave rise to a fundamental split between the pro-trusteeship left and the anti-trusteeship right throughout Korea.<sup>48</sup> As a result of this split, therefore, the key political development in southern Korea in early 1946 was the consolidation of right-wing forces into the Representative Democratic Council (abbreviated as Democratic Council) led by Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku and the consolidation of leftist forces into the Democratic National Front (DNF), which included Pak Hŏnyŏng, the leader of the communists. The Democratic Council, formed in February 1946, was established as an advisory organ of the American military government but its real purpose was to serve as the nucleus of an embryonic southern Korean state. As for the DNF, this newly formed umbrella organization soon encountered intensifying suppression by the USAFIK. It is important to note here that the right-wing Democratic Council was fiercely opposed to the Moscow trusteeship decision whereas the left-wing DNF was in full support of this decision. As will be explained later, this polarization of the political landscape in southern Korea in early 1946 was as much a product of Stalin's policy of ending the period of "broad coalition" throughout Korea as it was in response to the increasing suppression of leftist forces by the American military government. Since all right-wing forces in both southern and northern Korea fiercely opposed the trusteeship decision and adamantly refused to cooperate any longer with the leftists who supported the trusteeship, Stalin evidently decided that the "National Front" strategy could no longer work and consequently launched in earnest his drive for socialist regime building in northern Korea. As will be discussed soon, the

Soviet dictator, who regarded the trusteeship mechanism as an useful instrument of postwar Soviet foreign policy, then himself contributed to ending this period of "broad coalition" in both halves of Korea when he insisted that only those Korean political parties and social organizations that supported the trusteeship decision, which excluded practically all right-wing forces throughout Korea, were eligible for consultation in forming the proposed provisional government for a reunified Korea.

On top of these domestic developments, the international scene was hardly encouraging for achieving any success at the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission sessions. After the illusory success at the Moscow Conference had given way to Truman's hardliner stance toward the USSR and the decision to renege on the conference's key agreements, the American President became increasingly drawn into an Anglo-American alliance against the USSR. On March 5, Winston Churchill, as if to leave the world in no doubt about this new Anglo-American alliance, proclaimed in his "Iron Curtain" speech what was interpreted in the Soviet Union as an open call for an Anglo-American war against the USSR.<sup>49</sup> In an interview with a *Pravda* correspondent published in the Soviet party organ on March 14, Stalin called Churchill a warmonger and described Churchill's call for an alliance of English-speaking peoples as based on a theory of racial superiority similar to the Nazi theory of racial superiority.<sup>50</sup> Churchill's call, Stalin declared, was nothing less than an ultimatum to all nations of the world that were not English-speaking. "Acknowledge willingly our [i.e., Anglo-American] hegemony and then all will be fine, but, if not, war will be inevitable," Stalin said in describing this "ultimatum."<sup>51</sup> The following day, on March 15, *Novoe Vremia*, the Soviet Foreign Ministry mouthpiece, commented in detail on Churchill's speech in its lead article.<sup>52</sup> According to this article, Churchill was now the leader of the world's reactionary forces, but this was nothing surprising considering that he was only repeating now what he had done after World War I when he led the Allied intervention against Soviet Russia. Like Stalin, the article compared Churchill with Hitler, saying that the Briton was following in the latter's footsteps, using the latter's methods and a racist theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority and destiny to rule the world. Asserting that the "Iron Curtain" did not fall in Europe but in India, Indonesia, Greece and other places where British imperialism still held sway, it then described the new Anglo-American anti-Soviet pact as a continuation of the Berlin-Tokyo-Rome Axis. The only way to defeat this Anglo-American plot for world domination was for the peace-loving peoples of the world to unite firmly in resisting the Anglo-American tactics of divide and conquer, the article concluded.

When considering this icy Soviet reaction to the new Anglo-American alliance against the USSR and given the developments within the two

occupation zones in Korea that increasingly made prospects for Korea reunification more remote, it was perhaps no surprise the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission sessions that began on March 20 were marked from the beginning by acrimonious mutual accusations between the two delegations and adjourned on May 8 with no agreements. To begin with, Hodge and the USAFIK were deeply pessimistic about the commission achieving any agreement even as it commenced its first sessions. In a letter to Secretary of War Patterson dated April 1, 1946, Byrnes, the secretary of state, wrote the following:

I wish to invite your attention to certain statements by General Hodge in the reference memorandum which cause me some concern. General Hodge states that his “best guess now is that north and south will never be really united until the Russians are sure that the whole will be soundly communistic”, and he goes on to say that “based on current trends, I question our ability to stem the propaganda and control political maneuvering of the Soviets.” In view of the fact that the American group on the Joint Commission had, under the direction of General Hodge, just commenced its discussions with the Soviet group, I confess myself somewhat perturbed by the attitude taken by General Hodge. I fully realize that he has a difficult task ahead of him. He will receive full support of this Department in performing that task. But I should feel less concern as to the outcome if General Hodge were not so convinced of failure at the very outset of the discussions.<sup>53</sup>

As for the attitude of Byrnes himself and the United States government toward the Joint Commission, it was based on a pessimistic view of the proposed trusteeship and a willingness to dispense with the trusteeship altogether in favor of an alternative arrangement for Korean reunification and independence. In contrast to this American position, the Soviet position, in accordance with Stalin’s view of the UN trusteeship mechanism as a useful instrument for expanding Soviet global presence, was rock solid in advocating trusteeship as the only sound solution to Korean reunification and independence. In a report to Byrnes immediately after the adjournment of the Joint Commission sessions on May 8, 1946, Langdon, the USAFIK political advisor, noted this basic difference in the positions of the two delegations at the commission:

Unlike the American authorities in south Korea, who have played the trusteeship theme *pianissimo* and placed much stock in Mr. Byrnes’ remark in his radio address of December 30, 1945, that the Joint Commission, working with the Provisional Government, may “find it possible to dispense with a trusteeship,” the Soviet authorities in north Korea have made it plain to the Koreans that trusteeship is the meat of the Moscow Communiqué, that there is no alternative to it and that opposition to it is subversive.<sup>54</sup>

In the eyes of the American delegation, the Joint Commission failed because of unreasonable demands by the Soviet delegation that insisted on excluding from the consultation in forming a provisional Korean government all Korean political forces who were opposed to the Moscow trusteeship agreement. Given that practically all right-wing forces in southern as well as northern Korea were vehemently opposed to the trusteeship, meeting this Soviet demand would have meant the proposed Korean provisional government would be controlled exclusively by communists and other leftists. Such an outcome was clearly unacceptable to the American delegation. In his report to Byrnes after the adjournment of the commission on May 9, Hodge summed up the commission's outcome in the following way:

When the Joint Commission commenced discussions on the formation of a provisional government, the Soviet delegation proposed that all Korean elements which "had voiced opposition to the Moscow decision" be excluded from participation in the formation of the provisional government. The American delegation opposed any such exclusion rule on the ground that it denied the Koreans the fundamental democratic right of freedom of expression. When the Moscow decision on Korea was made public, all parties and party leaders in southern Korea practically without exception expressed opposition to that provision of the decision which saw the establishment of trusteeship in Korea. The vast majority of southern Korea objected to this clause because they believed that it might unduly postpone their independence. Subsequently a minority of southern parties dominated by an inspired group [i.e., the communist party] abruptly reversed their position on this. [However,] exceptional dislike of trusteeship prevails to this day throughout the south. After prolonged negotiations, the Soviet delegation offered as a compromise to consult with parties and organizations declaring their future support of the Moscow decision and publicly "denouncing the leadership which has misled them." Further, such leaders were to be excluded from any participation in the future provisional government of Korea. The American delegation rejected this suggestion on the ground that it amounted to a dictated purge of parties and was not in accord with the American conception of democratic political activity. As a result of 4 weeks of negotiation, the Joint Commission agreed to require a reasonable degree of cooperation on the part of democratic parties and social organizations which were to be consulted. This agreement . . . did not require support of trusteeship but merely that parties and organizations to be consulted should "cooperate with the Commission in the working out of proposals concerning measures" regarding the trusteeship.<sup>55</sup>

Having reached this agreement, however, the Soviet delegation, according to Hodge, then went back on their word and presented yet another

demand for excluding from consultation the representatives of democratic parties and social organizations that “actively opposed the Moscow decision.” While the discussion was still on considering this Soviet demand, the Soviet delegation then informed the Americans that it regarded all parties and organizations affiliated with the right-wing Representative Democratic Council of South Korea as ineligible for consultation and that it would consult with these parties and organizations only if they renounced all intentions of opposing the trusteeship in the future. Presented with this additional demand, the American delegation, according to Hodge, in consideration of the fact that negotiations over the new Soviet position “will inevitably involve considerable delay in forming a provisional government in addition to the 6 weeks already devoted to the question,” went on to suggest that “pending clarification of the point, the Commission undertake to remove the 38<sup>th</sup> degree parallel boundary as an obstacle to the reunification of Korea.” However, Hodge concludes, “the Soviet delegation refused to consider this proposal. Since there was no other task that the Commission could take up at this stage, the American delegation was left with no alternative but to ask for an adjournment of the Commission. This was agreed to and the Commission adjourned on May 6, *sine die*.”<sup>56</sup>

Keeping in mind this American view of the commission’s outcome, an examination of the Soviet position at the commission affords a more complete picture of the Soviet intentions. The Soviet delegation at the commission’s sessions in March–May was guided by policy directives issued by Stalin on March 16. While copies of these March 16 directives are not yet accessible to the researcher, Stalin’s directives issued on July 26, 1946, containing guidelines to follow in resuming the work of the commission are available and provide comprehensive information on both the March 16 directives and Stalin’s policies after the commission’s adjournment.<sup>57</sup> Filed under Protocol no. 52 (Politburo decisions May 8–August 4, 1946), this document, issued under Stalin’s name and entitled “On the directive to the Soviet delegation to the Soviet-U.S. Joint Commission on Korea,” begins by approving the positions taken by the Soviet delegation at the commission and instructs that, in resuming the work of the commission, the Soviet delegation was to be guided by the March 16 directives as well as by the following instructions, which may be quoted in summation as follows:

1. In resuming the work of the commission, the Soviet delegation is to hold to the earlier position concerning conditions of consultations with political parties, social organizations and their representatives: that is to say, to insist so that the Commission must consult only with those democratic parties and organizations that fully and without any qualifications support the Moscow decision and so that the parties and organizations do not put

forward for consultation with the Commission representatives who have compromised themselves by an active stance against the Moscow decision. On the basis of this, the Soviet delegation must obtain the result that no reactionary Korean leaders are allowed into the makeup of the provisional Korean government.

2. The [provisional] government is to be formulated out of representatives of genuinely democratic parties and social organizations of southern and northern Korea in the following proportion: 40 percent for representatives of parties and social organizations of northern Korea, 30 percent for those of democratic parties and organizations (the Democratic National Front) of southern Korea, and 30 percent for right-wing parties of southern Korea.

3. Parties that want to participate in the government and their leaders must sign the following platform, on the basis of which the government is to be formulated:

- (a) Korea must become an independent democratic republic.
- (b) In all of Korea, local power must be handed over to People's Committees as organs of people's power.
- (c) The provisional Korean democratic government confiscates land belonging to Japanese and Korean landlords, and the confiscated land is to be handed over, without payment, to landless peasants and peasants with little land.
- (d) The government carries out nationalization of industries, mines, railway and water transportation, means of communication, trade, and cultural institutions that earlier belonged to the Japanese state, Japanese physical and judicial persons, and also to traitors of Korean people.
- (e) The government provides people with political freedoms: freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and activities of democratic parties, trade unions and other democratic organizations.
- (f) The government issues laws on 8-hour working day, public insurance of workers and also other social-cultural measures.
- (g) No person who has actively collaborated with the Japanese is to be allowed into the government and also into governmental bodies.

4. In the provisional Korean democratic government, the distribution of leading posts, between the parties and organizations of northern Korea and southern Korea and also between leftist and rightist parties of southern Korea, must be carried out in the following manner: to the parties and organizations of northern Korea and to leftist organizations of southern Korea must be given the following ministerial portfolios:

- (a) Prime Minister
- (b) Vice Prime Minister [Vice-Premier]

- (c) Minister of Interior [Minister of Public Security]
- (d) Minister of National Defense
- (e) Minister of Industry
- (f) Minister of Foreign Affairs
- (g) Minister of Internal and External Trade
- (h) Minister of Labor
- (i) Minister of Education and Propaganda
- (j) Minister of Post and Telegraph

To the right-wing parties, the following posts are to be granted:

- (a) Vice-Premier
- (b) Minister of Land Management
- (c) Minister of Transportation and Communication
- (d) Minister of Finance
- (e) Minister of Public Health
- (f) Minister of Justice<sup>58</sup>

As for the question of dismantling the 38th parallel, Stalin's directive reads as follows:

Concerning the agitations by the Korean reactionary forces for the liquidation of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the demands by the American delegation for discussions of this question at the Commission sessions, the Soviet delegation must declare the following:

The task of the Soviet-US Joint Commission is to prepare resolution of main questions regarding Korea, the most important aspect of which is the question of creating the provisional Korean democratic government. The creation of the Korean democratic government is the fundamental condition for the re-birth of the Korean state. After formation of the government, the economy of Korea will be reunited as a single entity, and consequently, the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel will be abolished. When the provisional Korean democratic government begins to work and administers in its own hands the economic and political life of all Korea, then the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel will remain as a boundary only for the Soviet and American troops stationed in Korea.

The Soviet delegation considers that accepting the American delegation's proposal that the Joint Commission now deal with the question of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel may result in delaying the creation of the provisional Korean democratic government and, at the same time, also in delaying the resolution of other important and urgent questions regarding Korea. The Soviet delegation proposes to finish in the course of 1947 the formulation of the Korean democratic government, after which at the end of 1947 or in the beginning of 1948, but not later than this time frame, all foreign troops, both Soviet and American, will be removed from Korea, by means of which the 38th parallel itself, the demarcation line between Soviet and American troops, will be destroyed.<sup>59</sup>

What is clear from reading this July 26 directive is that Stalin's tenacity in insisting on the exclusion of right-wing forces from consultation in forming a provisional Korean government, as dutifully carried out by the Soviet delegation at the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission sessions in March-May, had become by July 26 a plan for the provisional government that was almost guaranteed to be rejected by the American side. Not only did Stalin want only "genuinely democratic" elements in both northern and southern Korea to enter into the government (i.e., "reactionary" elements of southern Korea represented by the Democratic Council or right-wing elements in northern Korea such as Cho Mansik were to be excluded), he insisted on leftist forces gaining 70 percent of the cabinet seats, with the remaining 30 percent going to moderate right-wing elements of southern Korea that were not part of the Democratic Council. What is more, Stalin wanted the leftists to control both the prime minister's office and most of the "power" ministries such as the public security organs (Interior Ministry), defense and foreign affairs. In addition, those "rightists" who could occupy the remaining Cabinet posts, according to Stalin, had to sign onto a policy platform that would create a socialist or leftist-controlled united Korea (by such means as radical land reform and the handover of all local power to People's Committees). It goes without saying that no rightist in southern Korea (or northern Korea for that matter) could easily agree to serve on such a cabinet under such conditions. Although Stalin's original March 18 directives may not have included these additional demands, even the sheer insistence of the Soviet delegation at the Joint Commission sessions in March-May on excluding all Korean elements opposed to the trusteeship was, by itself, designed to ensure a provisional government controlled by leftists.

These policy directives by Stalin and the conduct of the Soviet delegation at the Joint Commission sessions in March-May demonstrate that Stalin, by early 1946, had effectively ended his earlier policy of supporting a broad coalition of political forces and had begun his drive for creating a monolithic socialist regime in Korea. The earlier policy of supporting a broad coalition, as mentioned earlier and will be discussed more fully in part II, was in part based on the calculation that such policy was well suited to a Korea under the trusteeship plan, in which the USSR would be obliged to cooperate with its Western allies in implementing the four-power trusteeship. That Stalin seemed to have largely given up this "National Front" policy by March 1946 indicates that he had by then become much more pessimistic about working with his Western allies in a Korean trusteeship. The reasons behind this turn to pessimism, as indicated earlier, were both the domestic Korean and international developments that had pushed the two occupation regimes in Korea further apart from

each other and also greatly damaged the overall relationship between the USSR and its Western allies in early 1946. However, given Stalin's opportunism in exploiting favorable turns of events in the international arena for policy gains, as well as his desire to avoid blame for causing a permanent division of Korea, and given his view that the trusteeship mechanism was still a useful instrument for expanding Soviet global presence, the Soviet dictator had not entirely given up on the Joint Commission and was willing to give it another try. The result was the Joint Commission sessions in May–October 1947. Nevertheless, as seen in this July 26 directive, Stalin was willing to give the Joint Commission another try only under the premise that the future provisional Korean government would be set up on his own terms and thus would not be antagonistic to the USSR in its foreign policy orientation. If the creation of such a government in all of Korea on his terms were not to become feasible, Stalin would still have, at a minimum, a socialist northern Korea set up by the time the Joint Commission was to resume its work.<sup>60</sup>

As for any specific Korean candidates, Stalin may have had in mind for key posts in the future provisional Korean government, no document is available yet which shows Stalin's own thoughts on this matter, but, given that Stalin's own choices must have taken into consideration the recommendations from Shtykov and other Soviet officials in Korea, the following documents containing these recommendations give the reader a good idea of the make-up of the Korean government Stalin may have had in mind. The first, dated March 7, 1946, less than two weeks before the beginning of the Joint Commission sessions on March 20, is Shtykov's own recommendation, which must have been read by Stalin and was circulated within the Soviet Foreign Ministry as well as the Central Committee apparatus of the CPSU.<sup>61</sup> In this proposition, the following recommendations were made: Yŏ Unhyŏng, the leftist leader of the moribund Korean People's Republic, for Prime Minister; Pak Hŏnyŏng, the communist leader, and Kim Kyusik, a moderate rightist leader in southern Korea, as the two vice-premiers; Hŏ Hŏn, the chairman of the leftist Democratic National Front, as foreign minister; Kim Il Sung as interior minister (Minister of Public Security); Kim Tubong, the leader of the so-called Yanan group and the leader of the leftist New People's Party in northern Korea, as minister of education; Kim Mujŏng (known as Mu Chŏng), another leader of the Yanan group, as minister of industry; and O Kisŏp, a member of the Central Committee of the Korean Communist Party, as minister of propaganda. What is noteworthy about Shtykov's proposal is that 9 out of the 16 ministerial portfolios, including the key posts of prime minister, foreign minister, and interior minister, were reserved for leftists including communists and that, as for the posts to be occupied by

candidates put forward by the Americans, the Soviets were to obtain some control even over these ministries by advancing their own candidates for the vice-minister positions. In fact, Shtykov's proposal, which was made after taking into consideration suggestions by Kim Il Sung and Pak Hŏnyŏng (which shows that Pak was by this time already collaborating with Shtykov and the Soviet occupation command in northern Korea), is very similar to another proposal. Possibly based on Shtykov's own proposal, this other proposal was included in a report sent to A.S. Paniushkin, the deputy head of the Department of International Information (which was, for all intents and purposes, the successor to the Comintern) in the CPSU Central Committee apparatus.<sup>62</sup> Sent by M. Burtsev, the head of the 7th (political) Department of the Red Army, on March 15, just a week after Shtykov's proposal, this report gives brief biographical sketches of the candidates for ministerial positions in the provisional Korean government. The only major difference between this report and Shtykov's is that it lists Ch'oe Yonggŏn, a comrade-in-arms of Kim Il Sung from their Manchurian partisan days, as the interior minister and Kim Il Sung himself as the minister of defense, a post not mentioned in Shtykov's proposal.

What these two proposals for the makeup of the provisional Korean government show is that the Soviets were determined to set up a government dominated by communists and "fellow travelers" and that right-wing leaders from both halves of Korea such as Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, Kim Sŏngsu, and Cho Mansik who actively opposed the trusteeship were excluded altogether from the proposed government.<sup>63</sup> Since Rhee, Cho, Kim Ku, and Kim Sŏngsu were the most important right-wing leaders in Korean politics then, these Soviet proposals could not be acceptable to the American side. The recommendation of Yŏ Unhyŏng for prime minister made some sense, as Yŏ was a pro-Soviet leader who was widely popular in southern Korea and, as such, enjoyed a certain standing even with the American military government. Thus, the Soviet proposals advocated a leftist but not a bona fide communist such as Yŏ as the ideal figurehead for the supposedly representative Korean government, while at the same time placing Kim Il Sung and his comrades-in-arms in the key ministries of interior and defense, thereby creating in effect a cabinet controlled by Kim Il Sung and his allies but led nominally by Yŏ and Kim Kyusik, another proposed figurehead.<sup>64</sup>

The unacceptability of these Soviet proposals for the American delegation aside, the Soviet delegation at the commission sessions in March–May 1946 partly based its uncompromising stance on the charges that repressive policies of the American military government toward both leftist elements in southern Korea and the Soviet Consulate-General in Seoul were unacceptable and that these policies were designed to strengthen reactionary

Korean elements in the Democratic Council at the expense of the leftist Democratic National Front. The reactionary forces in the Democratic Council, in the Soviet eyes, were in fact not only inciting and abetting the American military government in the latter's repression of the DNF but were at the same time carrying out violent acts, including terrorist activities, to sabotage the work of the Joint Commission in their vehement opposition to the trusteeship. Working with such violent and reactionary elements in formulating a provisional Korean government, in the Soviet viewpoint, was clearly out of the question. In a letter to the Joint Commission in March 1946, for example, Pak Hōnyōng, the communist leader in southern Korea and a key leader of the DNF, protested bitterly against stepped-up suppression of the DNF by the USAFIK as reflected in such measures as Order no. 55, which required registration of political parties in the American zone of Korea.<sup>65</sup> The Order, Pak wrote, required political parties to furnish the USAFIK with lists containing the names, positions and home addresses of all their members and also to report all their activities. Furthermore, the Order, according to Pak, subjected the parties' finances under the control of the USAFIK. The order for the registration of the parties, Pak argued, amounted to a measure to restrict democratic activities, and the attempt to interfere in the parties' finances was totally unacceptable, as the Order forbade the parties from accepting financial support from persons who sympathized with a given party but who were not members of it, which meant in effect that the military government permitted political activities only for those parties that had rich capitalists as their members. Turning to the heads of the U.S. and Soviet delegations with a request to abolish this Order, Pak then characterized the American military government as a police state and concluded that no development of freedom or democracy would be possible under such a regime which supported reactionary leaders like Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku (the leaders of the Democratic Council).

As for the Soviet charges concerning the repressive measures of the USAFIK toward the Soviet Consulate-General in Seoul, the following exchanges of letters between U.S. Ambassador Smith in Moscow and S.A. Lozovskii, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, in May–June 1946 provide the necessary information. Receiving reports from the USAFIK suggesting the Soviet Consulate-General was playing a role in either coordinating or supporting leftist political activities in southern Korea and concluding that the continued existence of the Consulate-General was neither desirable nor necessary in light of Korea's changed legal status after Liberation from the Japanese rule, the U.S. State Department proceeded to act in such a way that either the Soviet Consulate-General stopped its "subversive activities" or the United States, "in retaliation," obtained Soviet consent to open its

own consulate in Pyongyang. Accordingly, in a letter dated May 14, 1946, Smith informed Lozovskii of the State Department's wish to open a U.S. consulate in Pyongyang in order to conduct "ordinary consulate functions in Pyongyang, where US citizens possess significant property belonging to companies, properties related to missionary and cultural activities, and residences."<sup>66</sup> In conveying this wish, Smith pointed out that the USSR had been maintaining the consular apparatus in Seoul continuously since Liberation but that it had not tried to clarify or register the consulate's new status with either the U.S. Government or the USAFIK. In the light of this situation, Smith wrote the U.S. Government was "now considering the question of allowing the Soviet Consulate-General to continue functioning" and informed Lozovskii the U.S. Government was expecting to hear, within 10 days, the Soviet government's position regarding the opening of a U.S. consulate in Pyongyang.

In response to Smith's letter, Lozovskii wrote on May 21 that the matter of opening the U.S. consulate in Pyongyang needed to be settled between the U.S. Government and (the soon-to-be-established) Korean government, as no foreign consulate existed yet in Pyongyang.<sup>67</sup> The Soviet diplomat then stated there was no basis for linking the opening of the U.S. consulate in Pyongyang with continued functioning of the Soviet consulate-general in Seoul, given that the latter had existed continuously since 1925 based on the Korean-Russian treaty of 1885. Dissatisfied by this answer, Smith then wrote to Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, on May 29, repeating the same request. What followed a few days later was Lozovskii's response, dated June 4, in which he informed Smith, according to Molotov's instructions, that the USSR now decided to close down its consulate general because "the US military in southern Korea lately had taken arbitrary measures to make impossible normal functioning of the Soviet consulate general in Seoul."<sup>68</sup> Four days later, Smith wrote back to Lozovskii, confirming receipt of the latter's letter but protesting as baseless the charge that USAFIK's "arbitrary" measures against the Soviet consulate general had made continued functioning of the latter impossible.<sup>69</sup> The only action taken by the U.S. military government in relation to the Soviet consulate general, the American diplomat stated, was the request that the Soviet government register the status of its consulate general via agreement either with the U.S. government or with the USAFIK and that the consulate general put on hold its activities until achievement of such status. Pointing out that, only on May 10, the personnel of the Soviet consulate general were provided with food, gas and the privilege to purchase goods in the U.S. military shops in Seoul and that their diplomatic immunities and other special privileges had always been fully guaranteed, Smith again asserted there had been no action taken by the USAFIK which forced the

Soviet consulate general to stop its functions. He then ended by again asking for the Soviet government's response to his request for permission to open a U.S. consulate in Pyongyang, basing this request this time on the principle recently alluded to, allegedly, by Vyshinskii, the Soviet vice-foreign minister, that consulates should be established on the basis of necessity and not necessarily on the basis of mutuality. Notwithstanding this, as the subsequent course of events showed, the United States was, in effect, denied the requested permission and a U.S. consulate was never established in Pyongyang.

These exchanges of letters in May–June 1946 and the subsequent closure of the Soviet consulate general in Seoul show that the diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union regarding Korea had by that time deteriorated to the point where the United States in effect kicked the Soviet consulate general out of its zone of occupation in Korea. To be sure, the status of the Soviet consulate general after Korea had ceased to be a colony of Japan was questionable, and the American argument that the Soviets needed to register its status with the State Department or the USAFIK had merits in the absence of a Korean government to which the Soviet consulate general could now be accredited. However, the abrupt closure of the Soviet consulate general could only exacerbate the already deteriorating U.S.–Soviet relations in Korea. This sudden closure of the Soviet consulate general in mid-1946 again demonstrates the general atmosphere of distrust and tension at the Joint Commission sessions in March–May, which was fueled by mutual accusations between the two delegations regarding political repression in the two zones of occupation. Whereas the U.S. delegation was demanding that the Soviet occupation regime stop suppressing Cho Mansik and other right-wing elements in northern Korea and that these elements be included among the parties and organizations that were to be consulted in forming the provisional Korean government, the Soviet delegation, as we have seen earlier, called attention to the U.S. military government's suppression of leftist forces in southern Korea and also to the violent attacks on left-wing elements there by reactionary right-wing forces. As will be shown in part II, Kim Ku, Syngman Rhee, and their followers in southern Korea indeed boycotted the trusteeship plan and the Joint Commission. Moreover, some of the anti-trusteeship right-wing youth groups did use violent tactics to intimidate pro-trusteeship leftist groups. In fact, some of Kim Ku's supporters were at this time engaged in violence not only against the left in southern Korea but also against the leftists as well as the Soviets in northern Korea, as demonstrated by the acts of terror they committed in northern Korea in the spring of 1946, such as the attempted assassination of Kim Il Sung at a public ceremony in Pyongyang and the bomb explosion at the residence of

General Chistiakov, the commander of the Soviet occupation army.<sup>70</sup> It goes without saying that these acts of right-wing terror and violence contributed greatly to the intensifying conflict between Left and Right in southern Korea, between northern Korea and southern Korea, and between the United States and the USSR in Korea. These violent acts thereby also contributed significantly to the failure of the Joint Commission itself, as the Soviet delegation regarded these right-wing groups' anti-trusteeship stance and violent actions as instigated by an American military government that did not want the commission to succeed and that had no earnest desire to work with its Soviet counterpart in Korea. In a sense, therefore, it was only to be expected that the USSR demanded the exclusion from the proposed future Korean government of Kim Ku and others, who attempted to undermine the Soviet occupation regime itself by acts of terror: for the Soviets, working with these violent "reactionaries" was clearly out of the question. The Soviet delegation's charges at the commission against the "reactionary forces" in southern Korea must be, thus, considered bearing these important facts in mind.

**The Failure of the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission  
in 1947 and the Transfer of the Korean Question  
to the United Nations**

Despite the failure of the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission in 1946, Stalin, as we have seen in his directives to the Soviet delegation dated July 26, 1946, was still willing to give the commission another try. Thus, in the same July 26 directives, he approved the letter of response from Colonel General Chistiakov, the commander of the Soviet army in Korea, to Hodge, in which the Soviet commander accepted Hodge's suggestion for resuming the work of the commission. However, until May 21, 1947, when the commission did resume its work, developments in both Korea and the international arena militated against the success of the commission. In the international arena, the Soviet Union entered a course of harsh domestic political repression in August 1946 when Stalin launched the so-called *Zhdanovshchina*, named after A.A. Zhdanov, Stalin's lieutenant in charge of culture and ideology at the time, in order to crack down on any liberalizing tendencies at home and set the USSR firmly on a path of cultural nationalism and xenophobia in its new confrontation with the West. In fact, recent archival evidence suggests that the aging Soviet dictator, paranoid about losing his grip on power and about those, especially in the Red Army, who were suspected of having been "contaminated" by exposure to the "bourgeois" West during the War, was planning to launch another round of domestic bloodbath similar to the Great Terror of the 1930s.<sup>71</sup>

Soviet relations with the West also deteriorated further in late 1946, a sign of which was the failure to reach accords on Germany and Austria at the conference of foreign ministers in New York, held in November–December. Although peace treaties between the victors of World War II and Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, and Finland were signed in February 1947, Soviet relations with the West continued to deteriorate when Molotov, at the conference of foreign ministers in Moscow in March–April 1947, rejected the Western proposals for a federal Germany. Probably the *coup-de-grâce* to any hope, at least for the time being, of significant improvements in Soviet relations with the West came when Truman announced on March 12 the so-called Truman Doctrine, in which he pledged American help for countries anywhere in the world threatened by communism. Despite the announcement of the Truman Doctrine, conventionally regarded by historians as the “official” starting point of the Cold War, Stalin was still willing to engage in diplomacy to extract concessions from his ex-Western allies, a sign of which was his brief flirtation with accepting the Marshall Plan for the USSR and the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. However, this flirtation quickly ended by the time of the conference of foreign ministers in Paris (June 27–July 1, 1947), when Molotov officially rejected the supra-national organization necessary to implement the Plan. What followed shortly afterward were the establishment of the Cominform in late September and the council of foreign ministers in London (November 25–December 16, 1947), at which, again, no progress was made on German and Austrian peace treaties, and at which the United States, Britain and France began considering the establishment of a separate west German state.

In terms of developments within Korea since the end of the Joint Commission sessions in May 1946, these will be discussed in part II, but suffice it to summarize here that both northern Korea and southern Korea moved farther away from each other and from the likelihood of Korean reunification reached either by means of the proposed trusteeship or by any other means. In northern Korea, the consolidation of power around Kim Il Sung that had begun in early 1946 continued to gather momentum throughout 1946, most significantly via a series of radical reforms successfully completed that year, ranging from the popular land reform in March to the nationalization of industries, banks, transportation and other sectors in August. In addition, the merger of the North Korean Communist Party and the New People’s Party into the Worker’s Party of North Korea, achieved in August, effectively created a one-party dictatorship in northern Korea with Kim Il Sung as the leader.<sup>72</sup> This was followed, in September, by the creation of what amounted to the nucleus of a separate North Korean military. After Pak Hŏnyŏng, Yi Kangguk and other leaders of the

Korean Communist Party in southern Korea crossed over into northern Korea in October 1946 to escape arrests by the USAFIK, which signified the de facto disintegration of the KCP leadership in southern Korea, Kim Il Sung and his North Korean Worker's Party began to exercise a tighter control on leftist activities in southern Korea as well. When the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea was reorganized and renamed the People's Committee of North Korea in late February 1947, with Kim Il Sung as the chairman, this meant the birth of the executive and legislative organ of a de facto North Korean state. Therefore, by May 1947, when the Joint Commission resumed its work, northern Korea had already turned into a de facto communist state, with a one-party dictatorship, a functioning government/legislature and a military force.

As for developments in southern Korea since the Joint Commission sessions of 1946, these were also moving farther and farther in the direction of creating a separate southern Korean state. The trend accelerated after an effort made by Hodge in the summer of 1946 to find—under pressure from the State Department which still wished to salvage the commission from a complete collapse—a centrist alternative for the proposed Korean government that would be more acceptable to the Soviets had met with failure.<sup>73</sup> However, even before this attempt by Hodge met its failure, a segment of the right-wing elements led by Syngman Rhee had begun a drive for the creation of a separate southern Korean state when Rhee, in June 1946, publicly declared his support for such an idea. After the failure of Hodge's attempt for the centrist alternative, Rhee's movement for a separate southern state began to gather momentum, with the result that the creation of such a southern state became, by early 1948, the de facto U.S. policy toward Korea despite Hodge's dislike of the old Korean nationalist. Moreover, this movement for a separate southern Korea in the latter half of 1946 was unfurling in a general social atmosphere of high tension in the U.S.-occupied zone, as the leftists there, in defying what they perceived to be stepped-up suppression by the USAFIK of their activities, declared in July their nonrecognition of the latter as the legitimate governing authority and switched to a strategy of open struggle against it. This new strategy soon found expression in waves of strikes in September fueled by workers' discontent over food shortage and inflation, which in turn led to mass demonstrations in October in Taegu area that resulted in tens of thousands injured and over 300 killed in the ensuing violence. The forceful suppression of these demonstrations by the USAFIK in concert with the rightists dominating the police and the constabulary no doubt further exacerbated the already intense conflict between the American authorities and the southern Korean left as well as between the left and the right in southern Korea. Thus, by the time the Joint Commission met again in May 1947,

conditions in southern Korea had become such that prospects for Left-Right cooperation in forming a provisional Korean government in accordance with the Moscow trusteeship decision were well-nigh hopeless.

Considering these internal Korean as well as international developments since May 1946, it was therefore hardly surprising the Joint Commission that met between May 21 and October 18, 1947, ended in complete failure and that a frustrated U.S. State Department decided in September 1947, even before the commission formally ended, to refer the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly, where the United States and her allies controlled a majority. In southern Korea, the right-wing forces in the Democratic Council, led by Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, renewed their anti-trusteeship campaign when it became known that efforts were being made by the American military government to resume the work of the commission. Hodge, who was himself highly pessimistic about the commission but nevertheless had to carry out the State Department's instructions for resuming its work, was placed in an almost impossible situation when he had to restrain Rhee and Kim from actively sabotaging the commission's work. Rhee, who feared the commission's work, if successful, would result eventually in a Communist-controlled regime in Korea, was by May 21, the beginning of the commission's sessions, denouncing Hodge as "Communist and pro-Communist," charging that the American general intended "to sell Korea into communism through the operation of the Joint Commission."<sup>74</sup> Hodge's position was especially untenable because he himself was convinced that the commission's work, if successful, would result in the communization of all Korea. In a report to MacArthur, which was in turn relayed to the secretary of state, dated July 2, 1947, when the commission had been meeting for over a month, Hodge wrote the following:

The situation becomes more explosive each day. If the Joint Commission fails, I expect to see terrorism by both factions begin on a scale that may approach an oriental style civil war and an early attempt by the Communists to carry out their much talked of "spontaneous uprising of the masses." The Soviets have already laid the groundwork for extensive physical activity by their fifth-column and may be expected to reinforce it heavily. The Communist controlled groups have full confidence that the Joint Commission will result in a full-fledged Communist government for Korea. The rightist groups have no confidence in anything except the belief that they are going to have to fight for democratic independence either now or later. "Trusteeship" is still the most dangerous word in all the Korean language.

The work of the Joint Commission has not developed far enough to estimate chances of its full success, but it can safely be said that the Russians have

not changed their goal which is to hold Korea as a Communist satellite loyal to the Soviet [Union] and to insure Soviet use of Wonsan and Chinnampo [as] Soviet ports. Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, with die-hard memories of the extreme right, are reportedly planning widespread disturbance in hope that they can cause break-up of the Joint Commission and get me removed from Korea, particularly the latter. The Communists will welcome such activity in hope that United States will get disgusted and remove all troops from Korea.<sup>75</sup>

Hodge's conviction that the commission's work was hopeless and that its success would lead only to communization of all Korea was reinforced by what the American delegation to the commission saw when the sessions were held in Pyongyang. In a report to the secretary of state dated July 7, 1947, Joseph E. Jacobs, the new Political Advisor to the USAFIK, wrote the following:

In light of experience with Soviet technique in Albania, [the] conclusion, after 4-day visit to Pyongyang, capital of North Korea, is that Soviets have established there Korean Communist state with all its trappings (although not yet as well organized as Balkan satellites), viz.: Korean stooges installed and maintained by Soviet advisors chiefly military and Soviet trained Korean army and security police; fear rampant; liquidation of opposition; photos of Stalin and Korean stooge Kim Il Sung everywhere; Soviet and Korean flags everywhere; book stores full of Communist literature in Korean language; purging of non-Communists from government agencies; youths sent away for training and indoctrination (some say to Moscow and others say to special school for Koreans at Voroshilov near Vladivostok); preponderance of youth in all walks of official life (among 50,000 who paraded for Commission, at least one half were under 20 and two-thirds under 25); distribution of land under conditions which peasants did not expect; nationalization of large industries and businesses; suppression of all except National Front groups; favoritism towards army and officials in rationing; and so on . . .

Even if Joint Commission ultimately succeeds in implementing Moscow agreement, foregoing situation will present difficult problem in the integration of North and South Korea. Organized Communists in the north linking up with fellow travelers in the south and backed up by Soviet trained Korean army and security police will endeavor to carry out their program which is of definite nature. They are certain to clash with rightists in the south who are divided into dissident groups with no fixed plans and little force to support them. Large numbers of these rightists are not supporting Joint Commission's efforts to solve the problem and many of them are publicly expressing hope that Joint Commission will fail so that United States (so they think) will remain to protect them from Korean Communists and from Soviet encroachment.<sup>76</sup>

The failure of the Joint Commission sessions of 1947 hinged, as did the commission sessions of the previous year, on the Soviet insistence that the commission was to consult only with those Korean groups who unequivocally supported the Moscow trusteeship decision. Reporting to the secretary of state on July 10, Hodge wrote that this Soviet demand was “clearly a leftist ruse to drive the rightist parties completely away from consultation,” and that, if successful, this ruse would lead to an outcome whereby “the Joint Commission would thus be left with only leftists with which to consult,” a situation which “would undoubtedly be what the Soviets desire.” To prevent this Soviet ploy from succeeding, Hodge concluded, it was necessary for the American delegation “to stand firm on this issue even to the extent of risking a break in the discussions.”<sup>77</sup> Ten days later, Jacobs, writing to the secretary of state, confirmed the failure of the commission to reach an agreement on this pivotal issue when he predicted that the “Joint Commission will soon be deadlocked a second time, which will require reorientation of United States policy with respect to Korea.” As for what this reorientation of U.S. policy was to be, Jacobs argued that the United States would soon be “compelled for reasons of expediency (opposition to the Soviets) to support extreme rightist leaders such as Rhee and Kim Ku.”<sup>78</sup> Although Jacobs did not at this time make explicit his admission that the United States would soon need to support the creation of a separate South Korean state, his arguments for dispensing with the commission and proceeding to support the right-wing Korean leaders in a separate southern regime were incorporated into the changes in the U.S. policy taking place at this time.

The new U.S. policy toward Korea was a two-fold strategy of referring the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly while at the same time making preparations for a separate South Korean state as a fall-back option in case the UN also failed to resolve the problem. The first documentary evidence for this policy shift is found in a report by an ad hoc committee on Korea dated August 4, 1947, which called for a public announcement, on September 10, of the U.S. intention to submit “the whole Korean problem to the next session of the General Assembly of the United Nations beginning September 16.”<sup>79</sup> The U.S. government then carried out this policy when Marshall, the secretary of state, wrote a letter to Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, on August 11, in which he in effect presented the latter with an ultimatum for making significant progress in the commission’s work by August 21 so as to determine “what further steps may usefully be taken to achieve the aims of the Moscow Agreement.”<sup>80</sup> Although the U.S. secretary of state did not spell out in this letter the concrete “further step” the U.S. government was then considering in case the commission failed to reach a breakthrough by August 11,

this soon became public knowledge on September 10, when the United States declared its intent, as proposed in the August 4 policy recommendation, to refer the Korean question to the UN General Assembly. A telegram from the acting secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow dated September 4, 1947, a few days before the declaration of the U.S. intent to refer the Korean question to the UN, shows that the U.S. government was making preparations for establishing a separate South Korean state at the same time it was referring the Korean question to the UN. In this telegram, Robert A. Lovett, the acting secretary of state, informed the U.S. Embassy of the following:

Should USSR refuse to consider proposals of US, US will inform UK, China and USSR that it is submitting [the] Korean problem to the next session of [UN] General Assembly and that in the meantime it will carry out positive program in [the] US zone such as holding elections with presence of UN observers. In view [of the] possibility [of] failure [of the] UN solution, US is studying [the] possible necessity [of] granting independence to south Korea and [the] implications [of] such action.<sup>81</sup>

After this discussion of the American policy responses to the commission's failure, it is now time to take a look at the Soviet approach to the commission and how the USSR viewed the U.S. decision to transfer the Korean question to the UN. The policy directives followed by the Soviet delegation to the commission were issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved by Stalin on May 20, 1947, in a Politburo decision taken on that day. A copy of the directives is attached to this decision (decision no. 78), which is found under Protocol no. 58 (Politburo decisions April 29–June 25, 1947) and a copy of which was sent to Molotov.<sup>82</sup> In the first section, which starts out by instructing the Soviet delegation to adhere to the prior position taken at the commission sessions of 1946 on excluding from consultation all Korean political parties and social organizations that opposed the trusteeship plan, the directive emphasized that all parties and organizations, as well as their leaders, who displayed any reservation about, or put forward any conditions for, supporting the trusteeship were to be excluded altogether from consultation. Also to be excluded were any parties or organizations or their leaders who, after having signed their promise to support the trusteeship, continued to voice their opposition. This policy directive, no doubt designed to exclude all right-wing forces of southern Korea led by Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, became the stumbling bloc on which the commission failed, as we have seen earlier.

The second part of the directives starts by instructing that the Soviet delegation was to reject American attempts to place on the agenda economic

unification of the two occupation zones on the ground that this question had “no immediate relation” to the task of creating a Korean government, which was the first and primary task with which the commission was entrusted.<sup>83</sup> On the question of economic unification, the Soviet delegation was to explain to the American side that exchange of goods between the two zones may continue on the basis of agreements reached between the two occupation commands. Then, in a departure from the prior directives of 1946, the directive instructed that the parties and organizations to be consulted were to be shared equally between those from northern Korea and those from southern Korea (i.e., 50 percent from northern Korea and 50 percent from southern Korea) and that half of the southern parties and organizations to be consulted were to be leftist.<sup>84</sup> Since the 1946 directives had instructed that leftist parties and organizations comprised a total of 70 percent of the parties and organizations to be consulted (i.e., 40 percent from northern Korea and 30 percent from leftist groups in southern Korea), these instructions made it even harder for the American delegation to accept the Soviet demands by insisting on a 75 percent representation for leftist groups (i.e., 50 percent from northern Korea and 25 percent from southern Korea). The directive then explained the rationale for insisting on northern Korea and southern Korea having an equal share of the parties and organizations to be consulted by arguing that the difference in size of territory and population between the two zones was too insignificant to warrant unequal treatment in determining the percentages of the parties and organizations to be consulted from the two zones. In arguing for such equal treatment of the two zones, the directive continued, the Soviet delegation was to refer to the northern zone’s higher level of industrial development, which lifted “its economic significance in the overall economy of Korea.”<sup>85</sup> As for compiling the list of parties and organizations of southern Korea to be consulted, the Soviet delegation was to draw attention to the fact that the Worker’s Party of South Korea was formed in a merger between the Korean Communist Party, the People’s Party and the New People’s Party, which the commission in 1946 had considered as separate entities. The delegation was also instructed to assert that the Worker’s Party of South Korea currently exceeded, to a significant extent, the rightist parties of southern Korea in terms of both membership and political influence.

In accordance with this new policy for achieving equal treatment of northern Korea and southern Korea in determining the percentages of the parties and organizations to be consulted, the directive instructed that 75 percent of the ministerial posts in the provisional Korean government were to be occupied by leftist candidates put forward by the leftist parties and organizations of northern Korea (50 percent) and by the leftist

groups of southern Korea (25 percent). As for the specific ministerial portfolios to be occupied by the leftist candidates, the Soviet delegation was to follow the earlier directives issued on July 26, 1946. Finally, the directives, in the third section, concluded by instructing that the Soviet delegation was to follow the earlier directives issued in 1946 on all other questions, including that of what to do if the commission were to end in failure. In such a case, the Soviet delegation was to propose, as ordered in the earlier directives, simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, thereby leaving the question of forming a Korean government to the Koreans themselves.

What these directives, issued on the eve of the resumption of the commission's work on May 21, 1947, show is that Stalin not only made no concessions in his negotiating positions as compared with his earlier directives issued in 1946 but also that he actually toughened his negotiating stance, thus making it even harder for the Americans to accept his demands. Such a demand was his new insistence that northern Korea be treated on an equal basis with southern Korea in view of "insignificant differences" in the size of territory and population between the two zones. As southern Korea at the time clearly exceeded northern Korea to a significant extent in terms of population, this demand was based on an outright distortion of facts and, as such, was guaranteed to be rejected by the American side. Another such demand was his insistence that the Worker's Party of South Korea be treated on an equal basis with all the rightist parties of southern Korea combined on the ground that it greatly exceeded the latter in terms of both membership and political influence. Based on an exaggeration of the Worker's Party's membership and that of leftist parties and organizations of southern Korea in general, this demand was also guaranteed to be rejected out of hand by the American delegation. Thus, judging by his directives to the Soviet delegation, the following conclusion seems unavoidable: that Stalin still desired, in mid-1947, the trusteeship mechanism as the only legitimate instrument for solving the Korean question but that he did so only on his own terms, which were designed to ensure leftist control of the future Korean government. As we have seen earlier, the American officials had grasped this well before they began their participation in the commission's sessions and were determined to resist what they regarded as the Soviets' unreasonable demands.

What, then, was the Soviet response when the American government announced its intent to refer the Korean question to the UN? The answer to this question as well as the Soviet reactions to subsequent U.S. actions in Korea can be grasped in the following account by V.I. Petukhov, the Soviet diplomat who took part in the commission as a member of the

## Soviet delegation:

The government of the USA, making use of the then-existing pro-American majority in the UN, achieved the inclusion of the Korean question in the agenda of the second session of the UN General Assembly. This was an illegal act, in so far as the Korean question, which was part of the overall question of post-war world settlement, did not enter into the competency of the UN, especially given the presence of a special international agreement that provided a solution to this question by the interested states themselves. However, all arguments on this account, brought forward by the Soviet and other representatives, were cast aside, and, under American pressure, the General Assembly in the course of many years undertook discussions of the Korean question, which by no means facilitated its resolution . . .

The Anglo-American majority in the General Assembly also rejected the proposal by the USSR for simultaneous withdrawal of American and Soviet troops from Korea. By the resolution made on November 14, 1947, the proposal of the USA regarding creation of a “temporary UN commission on Korea” was approved, which invested the new entity with wide-ranging powers: it was to observe implementation of elections in both zones of Korea, creation of Korean government, formulation of national armed forces, and other tasks. As for the character of this commission, the selection of its members spoke volumes. The Soviet Union declared that creation of such a commission would contradict the principle of national self-determination of the Korean people and that, for this reason, it would not be able to take part in the commission’s work.

American propaganda tried to convince the Koreans that the UN commission will aid in their country’s reunification. However, it soon became clear to the Koreans that the commission’s activities would lead not to reunification but, on the contrary, to strengthening the country’s division into two parts. For this reason, a majority of even the right-wing nationalist figures of southern Korea, who had until then been currying favor with the Americans, came out against implementation of separate elections in southern Korea and started to look for the possibility of reaching an agreement with democratic parties and organizations of northern Korea on unity of actions for the sake of the country’s unification. There arose divergences in views also in the “UN commission” itself: some of its members spoke out against separate elections.

However, the government of the USA finally got its way in carrying out such “elections” for a “national assembly” officially under observation of the “temporary UN commission,” even though the “observation” was in effect undertaken by officials of the American military government. The “elections,” which took place on May 10, 1948, were carried out under conditions of harsh political terror and interference by the [American] occupation troops. Even according to the official reports . . . just between February 7 and May 14, 1948, during the course of preparations and implementation of

the “elections,” 416 were killed and 758 were injured; during the three days of May 7–May 10, the authorities arrested 5,424 persons.

A majority of the political parties in southern Korea boycotted these “elections.” To the international community, it was evident that the “elections” were organized by the Americans, observed by the Americans and also that their results were counted by the Americans. It was not surprising that a “national assembly” elected in such a manner formed a “government” with those figures put forward by the American military government, who were ready to fulfill all of the latter’s instructions. At the third session of the UN General Assembly, the Anglo–American bloc pushed through a resolution, in which it was recognized that, as a result of the elections implemented under observation by the “temporary UN commission,” a “legitimate government” was established in southern Korea and that the latter constituted “the only such government in Korea.” Also provided for [at the session] was the creation of a new, permanent UN commission on Korea, which was given the task of continuing the activities of its predecessor and of reporting annually to the General Assembly on the situation obtaining in that country.<sup>86</sup>

What is striking in reading this Soviet account of the course of events between the end of the commission in 1947 and the establishment of a separate South Korean state in August 1948 is its overriding concern with blaming the United States for the failure to reunify Korea. According to the Soviet view, not only did the United States cause the commission to break up in failure but it also continued to bloc Korean reunification by transferring the Korean question illegally to the UN, where it used its numerical hegemony to reject legitimate Soviet proposals on Korea. Deliberately sabotaging the work of the commission and thereby killing the trusteeship plan, the United States, in the Soviet view, evidently had no intention to reunify Korea through the trusteeship mechanism, which was the only legitimate way to solve the Korean question. For Petukhov, the subsequent U.S. attempt to carry out UN–observed elections in Korea was also illegal and nothing but a political show, as the temporary UN commission on Korea was dominated by pro–U.S. delegates, and the commission itself, in any event, was but a political smokescreen, since the United States intended to carry out the elections under its own supervision with use of its troops and political terror. Clearly, according to this Soviet account, the USSR could not allow such elections, which were designed to install pro–American reactionaries in power over all Korea, and it could not approve the results of such elections actually carried out in southern Korea in May 1948. The appropriate measures for the USSR to take, therefore, were to refuse the entry of the UN commission into northern Korea and refuse to recognize the South Korean regime set up by the

United States. Having blamed the United States for killing Korean reunification and setting up its own satellite state in southern Korea, the USSR then proceeded to approve the establishment of a separate North Korean state only after the South Korean state had been founded on August 15, 1948. Accordingly, elections were held in northern Korea on August 25, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was proclaimed on September 9, with its capital in Pyongyang.

Having considered this Soviet account of the developments in 1947–1948, it is now time to turn to the American account of the same developments. But before doing so, it is worth pointing out that, as the Soviet account charged, the UN General Assembly, in 1948, was indeed a forum dominated by the Anglo-American bloc. This was because, at the time, many parts of the world were still colonies of the European colonial powers and the UN General Assembly thus had only 50 member states, out of which 21 were countries of Latin America under Washington's influence. The rest of the 50 member states, other than the USSR, the Ukrainian SSR, the Belorussian SSR, and a few other states, were either within the Anglo-American bloc or susceptible to the latter's diplomatic pressure. Indeed, this numerical inferiority of the communist bloc within the UN, and the predominance of the European colonial powers over much of the world in the immediate years after World War II, was a main reason why Stalin had desired, even before the War's end, the UN, trusteeship mechanism as a means to break up the European colonial empires and expand Soviet influence in areas of the world later known as the "developing world" or "Third World." One needs to keep in mind this struggle for hegemony between the communist bloc and the Anglo-American bloc within the UN in the immediate postwar years when discussing the process whereby the Korean question was transferred out of trusteeship framework into the UN General Assembly. Consequently, as a sign of Soviet protest against this transfer, the Ukrainian SSR refused to participate as a member of the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) even though the Anglo-American bloc invited its participation, along with that of India and Syria, as a concession to the USSR. The rest of the UNTCOK members, which had already been chosen, were Canada, Australia, China (Nationalist), El Salvador, France, and the Philippines, all viewed by the USSR as pro-USA.

Turning back to the American account of these developments in 1947–1948, the American policy since the failure of the commission in 1947, as explained earlier, was based on the view that the commission's failure doomed all hopes for the trusteeship and that, in the event the UN General Assembly also failed to effect the country's reunification, the establishment of a separate South Korean state would be inevitable. Given this

operating assumption and the ensuing Soviet refusal to approve the creation of the UNTCOK, let alone to let the latter supervise elections in northern Korea, the U.S. policy, by early 1948, was definitely set on establishing a separate South Korean state. However, as the earlier-quoted Soviet account mentions, there arose some dissensions within the UNTCOK regarding the U.S. plan to carry out elections in southern Korea only. The chief opponent within the UNTCOK of this U.S. plan was the Australian delegate Jackson, who, along with Patterson, his Canadian colleague, took a critical view not only of the proposed elections but also of the record of the U.S. military government in Korea. These two, in turn, influenced Djabi, the Syrian delegate, and Menon, the Indian chairman of the commission, and the latter two drew closer to their views. A significant factor influencing Jackson and Patterson was the fact that an important segment of the right-wing bloc in southern Korea, let alone all the leftists there, was opposed to the U.S. plan for holding elections in southern Korea only. This right-wing bloc was led by Kim Ku and Kim Kyusik, two nationalists who had previously walked different political lines but who had recently joined together in opposing the U.S. plan for separate southern elections. With the two Kims' opposition to the elections, the U.S. plan for separate elections was dealt a major blow, as the U.S. plan was now susceptible to the charges that the coming elections were in effect an one-party political show designed to install Syngman Rhee, the extreme rightist, and his followers into power in a separate South Korean state. The U.S. State Department, in particular, was very concerned about the two Kims' boycott of the elections and their plans to attend a conference in Pyongyang in April for meetings with northern Korean leaders in order to prevent a permanent division of Korea following such elections. For example, in a telegram to Jacobs dated April 5, 1948, Lovett, the acting secretary of state wrote:

The Department sees cause for grave concern over possible effects [of the] proposed Pyongyang conference on forthcoming elections in south Korea. Should Kim Koo [Kim Ku] and Kimm Kiu Sic [Kim Kyusik] join forces with north Korean group, it would appear not unlikely that increasing number of their followers and sympathizers would boycott elections in south, which would then tend to assume to increased extent [the] appearance of being staged for Dr. Rhee's private benefit.<sup>87</sup>

As for the UNTCOK members' opposition to the U.S. plan for separate southern elections, it is not entirely clear what, indeed, were their motivations. However, in a report to the secretary of state on February 14, Hodge gives hints when he writes that "the British bloc and the Syrian

delegate definitely do not want to take any action that will allow US troops to withdraw from Korea until the foreseeable future.”<sup>88</sup> Hodge also quotes Jackson as saying that the Syrian delegate “will sell Korea ‘down the river’ to gain Moslem advantage on the Palestine question.”<sup>89</sup> In a later report to the secretary of state, on February 26, Hodge then has this to say about Patterson, the Canadian delegate: “Patterson is the number one outspoken apologist for Soviet Russia and for communism that I have encountered in many months . . . He is an all-out idealistic Socialist who apparently believes the world will break up unless there is some radical change in the capitalist system.”<sup>90</sup> Putting these pieces of information together and drawing on other known evidence, one can thus surmise the following: that the opposition by Jackson and Patterson may have been based, at least in part, on these men’s ideological leanings, with the Australian’s opposition also stemming partly from his unhappiness with the American treatment of his country in the occupation of Japan; that the “British bloc” was opposed to the separate elections in part because it feared this would lead to U.S. troop withdrawal from Korea soon afterward, an outcome undesirable given the British desire to keep U.S. troops stationed in Europe and elsewhere for defense against the USSR; and that the Syrian may have sought to use his opposition as a bargaining chip to gain concessions in the Middle East against the declared Anglo–American support for the creation of the new Israeli state.<sup>91</sup> Although these possible motivations may have been biased interpretations given by the American officials and do not address whether these UNTCOK members’ opposition stemmed from their genuine conviction that holding the separate elections was the wrong policy, they nevertheless give a flavor of the complicated international politics and competing national interests raging within the UNTCOK then and also illustrate how the Korean question may have been handled by the UN based on considerations that had little to do with Korea *per se*.

Given these criticisms by some UNTCOK members, which echoed the attacks made at the same time by Moscow and Pyongyang on the U.S. actions in Korea, what then was the rationale for the U.S. policy to hold the separate elections? In a report to the secretary of state, dated February 22, Hodge gives the answer when discussing the current stalemate within the UNTCOK regarding whether to go ahead with elections in southern Korea only and, in particular, the actions of Menon, the UNTCOK’s chairman:

. . . so far as the UNTCOK is concerned, Korea is to be left just where it was last September [i.e., when the Korean question was referred to the UN General Assembly], except that the Soviet Zone will soon have an openly recognized satellite type government. Menon’s reported departure from his

set piece to deprecate any significance of the rapidly moving events in the Soviet Zone is typical of the general failure of the UNTCOK to understand in any degree the "cold war" as waged in Korea since our occupation started.

Failure of UNTCOK to take any positive action or stand, its interference and fumbling in local politics, the patent lack of real interest in Korea on the part of some delegates, and the very determined effort on the part of some other delegates to aggrandize and build up the Communist elements has greatly lowered its initial prestige and broken up the confidence in and backing given to it by political leaders (except Communist) when it arrived. I have had an opportunity to study some of the hearings before subcommittee I and II, which are completely dominated by Patterson and Jackson, respectively. Questioning of witnesses is clearly intended to bring out the preconceived ideas of these two and the usual pattern is to read into the record at the end of each conference their own willful interpretation of and their own conclusions of witness statements, selecting what fits their own ideas and discarding or discrediting the remainder. In general, the Patterson-Jackson pattern of thinking is that civil liberties and freedom in South Korea are not on par with stable Canada and Australia, respectively, therefore it is impossible to hold any elections. Neither has any concept or consideration of the bitter "cold war" against communism that goes on here and neither seems to understand that there is no sovereign Korean Government to guarantee a free election. The overall picture appears to be one of general appeasement of Soviet Russia by most delegates and all the secretariat.

With the disintegration of their initial confidence and hope that UNTCOK would lead them out of the wilderness, the Koreans are now beginning politically to scatter again. The Communist slogan of "immediate mutual withdrawal of US-USSR troops" is growing in volume and popularity . . . Part of this fight against elections in South Korea is definitely Communist activity and part of it, including current opposition by many really patriotic Koreans, is due to a quirk of psychology that leads them to feel that if on their own initiative they demand election in South Korea, they are demanding a permanent split of their nation and fall in the traitor category. This patriotic, nationalist class does not face the fact that their country is already split.

. . . With this growing confusion and a soon to be announced sovereign Korean Government in North Korea, which the Communist stooges in South Korea will hold up to an ignorant people in South Korea as their "own democratic government established by the people themselves," we may as well prepare for a great resurgence of Communist influence in South Korea. In fact, I am ready to say it has already started . . . It is my opinion that any further delay in positive action in South Korea will be fatal. If the [UN] Little Assembly shows indecision, we must be prepared to take direct action to establish a Korean Government in South Korea and back it strongly, including adequate security.<sup>92</sup>

What this report by Hodge shows is that the United States was, by February 1948, engaged in a full-blown Cold War against the USSR in Korea and that it was determined, against opposition by some UNTCOK members, to set up a separate South Korean state in response to what it saw as a similar Soviet action to set up a separate North Korean state. But what is most startling about Hodge's report here is his frank and open admission in an official document, for the first time since the beginning of U.S. military occupation in September 1945, that the United States had been engaged in a "cold war" in Korea ever since September 1945. To be sure, Hodge's actions and pronouncements since his arrival in Korea in September 1945 showed beyond doubt that he was a determined anticommunist from the beginning of his tenure in Korea. However, this was the first time he openly acknowledged that his policies in Korea from the beginning had been based on a "cold war" against the Soviets; considering this admission, it is readily apparent Hodge never really believed in the possibility of working with the Soviets in Korea to effect a peaceful reunification of the country, the division of which he already saw in fall 1945 as permanent for all intents and purposes.

Hodge's belief that a separate South Korea was inevitable and essential given the Soviet move to create a separate North Korea is indicated in his report to the secretary of state two days later (February 24, 1948), in which he makes the following summary of recent events in North Korea, which, for him, "present themselves for analysis of Soviet intentions and that cannot be brushed aside":

The 8 February fiesta at Pyongyang was in celebration of the second anniversary of the establishment of the Communist government set up in North Korea under the "great leader" Kim Il Sung. There can be no question from all the mass of evidence, but that there is a separate Korean Government of North Korea which is a going concern . . . Within a few days after the UN General Assembly passed the Resolutions on Korea, the North Korean Radio (official voice) released a strong barrage against the UN Commission entering Korea and the North Korean Government openly announced that a drafting committee was being assembled to draw up a constitution for a Korean government with many side announcements by official spokesmen that the constitution would be for all of Korea united . . . On 8 February, the Korean People's Army was unveiled to the world in connection with the second anniversary celebration of the North Korean Government. The army was physically presented by review of a large representative force. Official speakers for the occasion eulogized it as the army for all Korea and called upon South Koreans to accept it as their army. South Korean Communists were ordered to carry out a general strike and sabotage program for three days 7–9 February coincidental with the 8 February

celebration. This was praised by North Korean Radio as an “uprising of the people.” On 10 February the North Korean Government broadcast to the people for study and discussion the draft of a new constitution which in its details of wording leaves no question but that it is intended as the national constitution of all Korea.<sup>93</sup>

Having described the recent events in northern Korea in this fashion, Hodge then went on to arrive at the following conclusion: “From the foregoing, there can be but one conclusion, namely, that the Soviets are moving rapidly to transform the de facto North Korean Communist Government of North Korea into a ‘national’ Korean government that can and may be recognized by at least some of the satellite states as the Government of Korea.”<sup>94</sup>

That a separate North Korean state was being formed as early as February 1946 has already been discussed previously, and Hodge’s conclusion here regarding the developments in northern Korea in early 1948 was an accurate one. Work on the “new constitution” being drafted in North Korea, to which Hodge referred, had actually begun in December 1947, but the official announcement regarding the “draft constitution” was made only on February 10, 1948, as Hodge reported, two days after the founding of the Korean People’s Army, the North Korea army. The work on the North Korean constitution was conducted under close supervision by Soviet specialists in northern Korea, and the final product was approved by the Soviet authorities only after extensive revisions dictated by officials in the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the CPSU Central Committee apparatus.<sup>95</sup> The Soviet Union had been also, as Hodge correctly concluded, making extensive preparations for conferring diplomatic recognition on the separate North Korean state well before the elections in South Korea took place on May 10, 1948; a Politburo decision on April 5, 1948, for example, approved the proposal by the People’s Committee of North Korea, the de facto North Korean government, to open a North Korean trade mission in Moscow.<sup>96</sup> This was followed two weeks later, on April 19, by another Politburo decision, which authorized the opening of a TASS (the official Soviet news agency) office in Pyongyang.<sup>97</sup>

Considering these developments within both northern and southern Korea toward establishment of the separate regimes, it can be safely established that, in early 1948, both the United States and the USSR were definitely preparing for the creation of mutually hostile regimes in Korea, the one in the north led by Kim Il Sung and the one in the south headed by Syngman Rhee, the fiercely anticommunist rightist leader. Both of these leaders, supported by their respective Soviet and American patrons, were determined to discredit each other’s regime being set up in the other half

of the peninsula. In southern Korea, the leftists under the leadership of the Worker's Party of South Korea and the Democratic National Front (DNF) launched on February 7, 1948, the so-called Save the Nation Struggle (2.7 *Kuguk t'ujaeng*) to boycott the separate southern elections. In the ensuing strikes, demonstrations, attacks on the police, and terror against the Right that lasted until February 20, a total of 8,479 were arrested.<sup>98</sup> In a report to the secretary of state on February 8, Jacobs, the USAFIK political advisor, gave the following tabulation of the disturbances as of 9 am, February 8: "Total number of incidents: 105 (these include riots large and small, removal of rails, cutting of telephone lines, damaging transformers, etc.); rail lines cut 4; trains derailed 1; locomotives damaged 50; and attacks on police boxes 21. The unconfirmed report of casualties for same period is police killed 4, police wounded 9, police captured 2, civilians killed 14, civilians injured 3, civilians arrested 150."<sup>99</sup> These disturbances in southern Korea in early 1948, many of which were led by leftist elements, and their suppression by the USAFIK definitely contributed to the view held by some UNTCOK members that southern Korea was then a "police state" and that the conditions of a "free atmosphere" needed for proceeding with the elections did not exist. While the truth regarding these disturbances and their suppression, including any police brutality or right-wing terror committed, is yet to be fully established, it is beyond doubt this general unrest in southern Korea was seized by propagandists in Pyongyang and Moscow as evidence of mass discontent with the American military government and its plan for the separate elections.

Regardless of the truth behind the charges by some UNTCOK members that southern Korea under the USAFIK was a "police state," it remains a fact that the UNTCOK, in the end, went ahead with observing the elections in southern Korea and that it did put its stamp of approval on the results of the elections held on May 10, even though it did so only after reservations expressed by some of its members. The decision to proceed with the elections was reached by the Interim Commission of the United Nations, which adopted a resolution on February 26 expressing its view that the UNTCOK should proceed with the elections "in such parts of Korea as are accessible to it."<sup>100</sup> By this decision, the elections for southern Korea were scheduled for May 10. Still, some UNTCOK members continued to voice objections to observing the elections.<sup>101</sup> However, the UNTCOK decided on April 28, by a vote of five for and three abstentions, that, "having found a 'reasonable degree of free atmosphere,' it would proceed with observation of elections on May 10."<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, after the elections, a few UNTCOK members expressed doubts about placing their stamp of approval on the results.<sup>103</sup> In the end, however, during an address on June 30 to the South Korean National Assembly, which was formed as

a result of the elections, the Chairman of the UNTCOK announced that the commission had “resolved unanimously to place on record its opinion that the results of the ballot of May 10, 1948, were a valid expression of the free will of the electorate in those parts of Korea which were accessible to the Commission and in which the inhabitants constituted approximately two-thirds of the people of whole Korea.”<sup>104</sup> It is worth noting that this unanimous decision was reached after Jackson’s departure from the UNTCOK on June 24, as Hodge reported in his telegram to the secretary of state dated June 28.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, after this rather tortuous course of events, the Republic of Korea, the South Korean state, was formally established on August 15, 1948. In response, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the North Korean state, was proclaimed on September 9, after the elections in northern Korea held on August 25. The course of events leading up to the DPRK’s establishment will be treated more fully in part II, but it might be appropriate to end this chapter here by briefly discussing the general course of Soviet foreign policy in 1948 both globally and in Korea. Stalin’s Korea policy in 1948 can be ascertained from an important policy document, namely, his “policy advice” to Kim Il Sung issued on April 12, 1948, regarding how Kim should approach the upcoming South–North Joint Conference. As mentioned earlier, this conference, attended by representatives of political parties and social organizations of southern and northern Korea, took place April 19–23 in Pyongyang with the aim of opposing the scheduled elections in southern Korea and working out an agreement for Korea’s reunification. Although a great majority of the parties and organizations in attendance were leftist, an important segment of the Right in southern Korea was also represented, most notably by Kim Ku and Kim Kyusik, the two nationalist leaders who had split with Syngman Rhee and the USAFIK over the latter’s plan for a separate South Korea. In this “policy advice,” which should more properly be regarded as policy directives, Stalin gave the following instructions:

At the conference of the representatives of North and South Korea, reach agreements:

First, on convening an enlarged conference of representatives of democratic parties and social organizations of North and South Korea that are opposed to the separate elections in South Korea, and,

Second, on the following political goals at the enlarged conference:

1.
  - a) To protest the illegal decision by the UN General Assembly and Interim Committee on Korea, taken without the participation of the Korean people, and to demand immediate withdrawal of the UN Commission from Korea;

- b) To call upon the Korean people to boycott the separate elections in South Korea as elections aimed at strengthening the existing temporary division of Korea and holding back the latter's reunification as well as the restoration of her independence;
  - c) To welcome the proposal by the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of foreign troops from both South and North Korea and to demand immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea;
  - d) To insist on carrying out elections simultaneously in all Korea after the withdrawal of foreign troops.
2. To issue, in the name of the enlarged conference:
    - a) a statement to the Korean people;
    - b) a statement to the governments of the Soviet Union and the United States (in which to insist on the speediest withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea).
  3. To agree so that, after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea until the creation of an all-Korean government on the basis of general elections, the administration of Korea will be entrusted to a provisional government formed from representatives of North and South Korea that subscribe to the platform of the enlarged conference.
  4. The main task of the provisional Korean government will be to carry out general elections in Korea for a Supreme People's Assembly of Korea (or, for a National Assembly).<sup>106</sup>

What this “policy advice” shows is that the USSR was pursuing a policy of openly boycotting the elections in southern Korea, obviously in order to picture itself as the champion of Korean reunification and blame the United States for being the first to create a separate Korean state, while at the same time making all preparations for creating its own client state in northern Korea. As the South–North Joint Conference was attended by even some of the most important leaders of the Right in southern Korea, this conference was a very useful tool for Stalin in proclaiming his alleged commitment to Korean reunification and in attacking the “illegality” of the American-sponsored elections in southern Korea. The policy of calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet troops from Korea was based on the calculation, as correctly seen by Hodge, that such withdrawal would lead to an eventual communization of all Korea, given the existence by April 1948 of what was in effect a well-organized communist dictatorship in North Korea with its own army and also the existence of a well-organized left in southern Korea ready to aid in the realization of such an outcome. This Soviet policy is understandable given the previous policy of advocating the UN trusteeship mechanism as the only legitimate instrument for effecting Korean reunification: now that the trusteeship was definitely out of question after the transfer of the Korean question to the UN General Assembly, Soviet policy on Korea was predicated on protesting the

illegality of this transfer and on demonstrating the USSR's commitment, despite the failure of the trusteeship plan, to Korean reunification. The way to Korean reunification, Stalin now argued, was to boycott the UN General Assembly's illegal interference in Korean affairs and to leave the task of achieving reunification to the Koreans themselves in accordance with the principle of national self-determination. The latter, however, would be possible only after the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, according to Stalin. This was indeed a clever move on Stalin's part, in terms of both its propaganda value and its policy substance. Although this issue of foreign troop withdrawal in 1948 will be discussed more fully in part II, it is worth mentioning here that an immediate withdrawal of both troops in mid-1948 à la Stalin would clearly have left North Korea in a position to militarily conquer South Korea, given the weakness of South Korea at the time in terms of both military strength and internal political cohesion.<sup>107</sup>

After the failure of the trusteeship plan for Korea, Stalin's policy in 1948, thus, was based on erecting a separate North Korean client state, even though Stalin still gave lip service to the idea of Korean reunification, via immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, for its clear propaganda and policy values. This policy was in line with Soviet policy elsewhere in the world in 1948, a year which witnessed its first major event of the unfolding Cold War in the communist take-over of power in Czechoslovakia. This move by Stalin to abandon all pretense of a coalition government and to go for a naked seizure of power in the Central European state started a year of communist power consolidations throughout East-Central Europe and elsewhere. This Stalinist policy of foregoing cooperation with his ex-Western allies was shown vividly in another hot spot of the emerging Cold War later in the year, when the Soviet dictator started the Berlin Blockade on June 24. After the blockade ended on May 12, 1949, in a setback for Soviet foreign policy, Stalin was to repeat in Germany what he had just done in Korea in 1948: namely, he waited until after the proclamation of the Federal Republic of Germany on September 20, 1948, to authorize the proclamation of the German Democratic Republic on October 7, 1948, in a move calculated to place the blame for the division of Germany on his ex-Western allies.

PART II

U.S. AND SOVIET OCCUPATION POLICIES  
IN KOREA AND THE KOREAN RESPONSES,  
1945–1948

## CHAPTER 4

### THE KOREANS, THE USSR, AND THE UNITED STATES

#### **The Soviet Occupation of Northern Korea: Prelude**

As extensively discussed in part I, Stalin's overriding policy objective concerning Korea after Japan's defeat in World War II was that Korea would never be used by Japan or any other power as a platform for an attack on the Soviet Union. What this meant in concrete policy terms was that any Korean regime to be set up would need to be, at a minimum, not hostile to the USSR. As we now know, Stalin's Korea policy ended up with the creation of a separate communist North Korean state in 1948 that was firmly allied to the USSR. However, this actual outcome was by no means a foregone conclusion in fall 1945 as the Soviet 25th Army rolled into northern Korea and established its headquarters in Pyongyang. Although the USSR had been preparing a group of Korean partisans led by Kim Il Sung in the area near Khabarovsk in Siberia since the early 1940s as the possible nucleus of leadership for a future independent Korea, when the Red Army arrived in August 1945, it was by no means clear Kim would be able to achieve a dominant position in the new political order to be created, whatever form this was to take. Much was still undetermined in fall 1945, both in the international political arena and in the domestic Korean political landscape, and Stalin, being the cautious opportunist he was, was still undecided about what he was going to do in Korea, let alone about which specific Korean leader to back. Much of the uncertainty on the international level was due to the question of the trusteeship for Korea, and the evidence is strong, as we have seen in part I, that Stalin took the trusteeship seriously or, at least, more seriously than did the United States. But this is getting ahead of the story, and we need to first take a brief look at the process whereby Kim and his partisan group were trained in the

Soviet Far East and the question of how and why they were brought as part of the conquering Red Army into northern Korea in fall 1945.

Significant research has already been done on Kim Il Sung and his group and how they returned to Korea in 1945 as part of the Red Army.<sup>1</sup> Although there is some disagreement over the exact date of Kim's entry into the Soviet Far East, it is clear he and his group spent at least a couple of years in a forested area near Khabarovsk undergoing training as part of the 88th Separate Rifle Brigade (*88-ia ot del'naia strelkovaia brigada*), which was created by the Soviets in 1941 to conduct intelligence and diversionary activities behind the front lines in Japanese-held territories.<sup>2</sup> While the great majority of the 1,500 or so members of the Brigade were Chinese partisans, it also included some Koreans such as Kim as well as Soviet citizens of Chinese, Korean and other ethnic origins. Subordinated to the intelligence apparatus within the Soviet Far Eastern command, the Brigade received military and political training from Red Army officers.<sup>3</sup> As the commander of the 88th Brigade was appointed Zhou Baozhong, the famous commander of the Second Army in the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, the Manchurian guerrilla army in which Kim and his partisans had fought in the 1930s–early 1940s, and Kim was appointed commander of the first battalion within this brigade. According to Soviet sources, Kim was a standout among his Korean partisan comrades, and his battalion, made entirely of Korean partisans, impressed Soviet officers with a high level of military readiness and discipline during training sessions. Kim was even noted for his success in learning Russian.<sup>4</sup>

There is also very strong evidence that Kim was already, during this time in the USSR, being given special attention by the Soviet leaders and that the idea of using Kim as leader of a Korea under Soviet influence after Japan's defeat began to form in the minds of Soviet leaders as early as this time. First, in Kim's own recollections published after his death, he reveals he formed a close working relationship with the Soviet Far Eastern command and with the top Soviet leaders in Moscow during his time in the USSR. Because the Far Eastern command was headquartered in Khabarovsk, very close to where the 88th Brigade was undergoing training, it was only natural Kim and other commanders of the Brigade got to meet with the top officers of the command, who wanted to make use of these Korean and Chinese partisans in their upcoming campaign against Japan. The relevant parts of Kim's autobiography may be translated as follows:

Originally, it was planned that the Allied International Force [i.e., the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade] was to participate in military operations of the Second Far Eastern Front, but the Korean People's Revolutionary Army [i.e., the Korean battalion within the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade] was connected mainly with the First Far

Eastern Front. After the headquarters of the Soviet Far Eastern forces was organized, I began to have many dealings with Meretskov, the commander of the First Far Eastern Front, and with Shtykov, the member of the military council. I also formed ties with Chistiakov, the commander of the 25<sup>th</sup> Army, and with Lebedev, another leader of this Army. Chistiakov and Lebedev, with their Army, were to move into Korea with the commencement of the campaign against Japan. The headquarters of the Soviet Far Eastern forces was Khabarovsk. Visiting Khabarovsk often, I got to know Vasilevskii<sup>5</sup> and also Malinovskii.<sup>6</sup> When it became the summer of 1945, the Far Eastern command often held conferences for planning the upcoming anti-Japanese campaign . . . Among the top commanders of the Soviet Far Eastern forces, the one I had the most dealings with was Meretskov<sup>7</sup> . . . It was sometime before the beginning of the [Red Army's] war against Japan that I went with commanders of the Allied Force [i.e., the 88th Brigade] to Moscow. When I arrived at a conference convened by the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces, Meretskov, Shtykov and other top officers from the headquarters of the individual army Fronts in the anti-Japanese campaign were already there. At this conference, I also met again with Vasilevskii, the commander-in-chief [of the Soviet armed forces in the Far East] . . . I also met with Zhukov. This was when he was serving as the commander of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany . . . I did not know for what reason Zhukov was there in Moscow, but this meeting produced a memorable impression on me . . . The Soviets entertained us with utmost care and hospitality. This was indeed a very special welcome that went outside the boundaries of diplomatic protocol . . . Even after the end of the conference that discussed the plans for the anti-Japanese war, the Soviet hosts kept us in Moscow, showing us around in the city, and not returning us to the Far East. A few days afterwards, they took us to Zhdanov. At that time, Zhdanov was a member of the Politburo and a secretary of the Central Committee. When I saw Zhdanov, Shtykov was already there with him . . . Telling me that he was delegating for Stalin in meeting us, the emissaries from the Orient, Zhdanov highly praised our anti-Japanese armed struggle. Saying he had heard a lot about Kim Il Sung, the Korean partisan, from Stalin and Shtykov, Zhdanov expressed his pleasure that I looked a lot younger than he had thought based on what he had heard from Stalin and Shtykov. According to Zhdanov, Stalin also had a keen interest in our partisan activities. The conversation between Zhdanov and myself began with the problems associated with the current political and military situation. During the course of this conversation, I came to realize that Zhdanov very much wanted to hear my opinions on how to conduct the business of developing a liberated Korea as an independent, democratic nation . . . Zhdanov told me he would report to Stalin the results of our meeting. Afterwards, I met with Zhdanov several times and formed a deep friendship with him. It seems Meretskov also told Stalin a lot about me . . . After the meetings with Zhdanov, I returned with Shtykov to the Far East. The friendship I formed with Shtykov in the Far East continued afterwards.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, according to this recollection, Kim Il Sung went to Moscow sometime shortly before the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, anywhere between May and early August 1945, and formed close relationships with Zhdanov, Shtykov, and other Soviet leaders then. Although this recollection does not mention Kim met with Stalin himself at this time, it does mention that Stalin was then already keenly interested in Kim. Besides, Kim may have met with Stalin in early September 1945 before he arrived in Korea on September 19.<sup>9</sup> Other evidence suggests Kim may have been known to and favored by the top Soviet leaders as early as July 1944,<sup>10</sup> which does not contradict Kim's recollections just quoted, since Kim could not have been sent to Moscow in 1945 as he says he was if he had not already been known to the Soviet leaders by then. Furthermore, other evidence is available, which purports to shed light on how the existence of Kim and his partisan group in the Soviet Far East was made known to the Soviet leaders as early as the spring of 1945.<sup>11</sup>

Turning back to the Korean and Chinese partisans who later formed the 88th Brigade, it is necessary to discuss in some detail the reasons why the Soviet Union not only allowed these partisans to cross into Soviet territory but also gave them shelter and training as part of the Red Army. One reason has already been mentioned, namely, that of using these battle-hardened veterans of the anti-Japanese partisan war for intelligence-gathering and diversionary activities against Japan. This apparently was the primary reason in the early 1940s when Kim and his partisans crossed into the USSR. At that time, the Soviets were not at war with Japan and it is most likely that they were too busy fighting off the German invasion to even think about what to do with these Korean partisans. However, as Germany's defeat became certain and the USSR was getting ready to declare war on Japan in mid-1945, the Soviet leaders began to pay attention to Korea's future, and the existence of these partisans as part of the Red Army must have become known to them by this time. As Lankov (2002) has shown, Stalin's repression in the late 1930s resulted in a purge of the Soviet Koreans serving in the Red Army, which meant that the Red Army lacked a significant Korean element in its ranks as it prepared to advance into Korea in August 1945.<sup>12</sup> Under these circumstances, the Soviet leaders must have taken an interest in Kim Il Sung's group of mostly Korean partisans and a few Soviet-Koreans, as these Koreans could assist the Red Army in its occupation of Korea as intermediaries between the occupation regime and the local population, apart from serving as leaders in a pro-Soviet Korean regime. Therefore, when the war against Japan turned out to be unexpectedly successful for the Red Army, the Red Army command issued a directive on September 3 signed by Marshall A.M. Vasilevskii, the commander-in-chief of the Soviet campaign against

Japan, which assigned the Chinese and Korean members of the 88th Brigade to military councils of the Trans-Baikal and the First Far Eastern Front and instructed them to assist military commandants of the occupying Red Army in liberated areas of Manchuria and Korea.<sup>13</sup> As a result, Kim and some members of his group were brought on a Soviet warship to the port city of Wŏnsan in northern Korea on September 19, 1945, and then assigned to various cities and provinces to work as assistants to the Soviet military commandants in their respective areas of assignment. Kim, as the group leader, was posted to the military commandant of Pyongyang, the future North Korean capital.

### **The Soviet Occupation of Northern Korea: Rhetoric Versus Reality**

In discussing the initial stage of the Soviet occupation in northern Korea, the most important policy document is, as was mentioned in part I, Stalin's directive issued on September 20, 1945 to the Soviet occupation command, in which he ordered not to create a Soviet order in Korea and that the occupation command was to cooperate in the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic regime on a broad base of all anti-Japanese democratic parties and organizations. This was solidly in line with Stalin's policy in Eastern Europe since the German invasion of the USSR in 1941, whereby Stalin instructed European communists to form National Fronts composed of all antifascist forces. Stalin also instructed the occupation command to make it clear to the local Korean population that "the Red Army entered northern Korea with the goal of destroying the Japanese plunderers and did not follow the goal of introducing a Soviet political order in Korea or of acquiring Korean territory."<sup>14</sup> Consequently, when the Red Army arrived, it did not abolish the organs of local self-government that had spontaneously sprung up all over northern Korea after August 15, even though a large number of these were organized by nationalists such as Cho Mansik, who were hostile to communism. Evidence for this is found, for example, in the following report to the CPSU Central Committee, dated July 22, 1947, by officials in the Soviet Maritime Military District. In a section entitled "Democratic Transformations in Northern Korea," the officials reported:

In the course of August and September 1945, People's Committees were created in all [administrative units] of northern Korea . . . People's Committees in the provinces were created under the leadership of the Soviet military command. In October 7-11, 1945, in Pyongyang, there took place a conference of the delegates of the People's Committees of the provinces,

in which representatives of the Soviet military command also participated. The conference discussed the question of establishing and strengthening the democratic government in northern Korea on the basis of a broad coalition of all anti-Japanese democratic parties and social organizations...<sup>15</sup>

This National Front policy was most likely based in part on the weakness of the communist organization in Korea at the time and the assessment that conditions in Korea, in terms of both the readiness of the populace and the level of the ex-Japanese colony's politico-economic development, were unsuited for immediate establishment of a socialist regime.

That the communist organization in Korea was weak in fall 1945 was admitted by the Korean communists themselves in official party publications at the time. One such publication of the Korean Communist Party is a 97-page booklet entitled "Orŭn nŏsonŭl wihaya" ("For the correct political line") published on November 7, 1945, in Seoul, which contains the party's policy platform as well as a statement concerning factionalism within its ranks. In this booklet, it is frankly admitted that the KCP was not the most popular Korean political force under the Japanese rule and that it had failed to become a powerful political force commanding widespread support. This was because of the severe repression by the Japanese, out of which only a few small cells survived, but the problem was that even these were then plagued by intense factional conflicts. It then argues the urgent task for the KCP at the time, which was two months after Liberation, was to expand its support base beyond its present support among the petite bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia to include the propertyless class and, equally important, also to improve the training of its cadres in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. However, the biggest threats to the party, it warns, were the rampant factionalism within its ranks and the opportunistic manipulations by elements on both the political left and the right that had penetrated its ranks. Lamenting the sorry state of the KCP at the time, the resolution then calls for specific measures to improve the party's organization.<sup>16</sup>

That the KCP was still weak in November 1945 is shown by the size of its membership at the time. In a report to A.S. Paniushkin of the Central Committee Foreign Policy Department, dated May 20, 1946, Tsygichko, a colonel in the political department of the Maritime Military District, stated that the KCP had 3,000 members in southern Korea as of November 1945.<sup>17</sup> As November 1945 was fully two months after Liberation, one can imagine that the KCP membership must have been far less in August 1945. Though this figure of 3,000 was for the KCP membership in southern Korea, the KCP membership in northern Korea at that time was more or less the same or even lower than this figure. Reflecting this communist

weakness in the wake of Liberation, the KCP pursued policies on the assumption that its task was to effect a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Korea. Evidence for this includes, for example, the previously quoted Soviet Foreign Ministry report, dated December 10, 1945, in which is stated the following: "The KCP characterizes the current political situation in Korea as the stage of bourgeois-democratic revolution in the wake of Korea's national liberation, which took place, however, not as a result of the Korean people's own efforts and struggles but under the help and assistance of foreign forces, i.e., the United Nations, which destroyed Japanese imperialism and liberated Korea."<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, reflecting this communist weakness and in an effort to give the appearance that they were not carrying out a sovietization of northern Korea, the Soviets did not rule the territory directly, preferring, instead, to rule indirectly by setting up a Soviet Civil Administration (*Upravlenie Sovetskoi Grazhdanskoi Administratsiei*) of North Korea, which proclaimed its mission as that of aiding the local Korean organs of self-government in "reestablishing the national economy of Korea, organizing the administration of its various sectors and providing for the cultural life of the Korean people."<sup>19</sup> When the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea was established in February 1946 as the centralized executive and legislative organ of local self-government, the Soviet officers of the Civil Administration began to serve as advisors-directors of departments within this new organ.<sup>20</sup> What is most significant about the way the Soviets presented to both the Koreans and the outside world the various policies they undertook in northern Korea in 1945-1948, including such pivotal measures as land reform and nationalization of industries, was that they never used the phrase "communist" or "socialist" in describing these policies, instead always using the phrase "democratic reform" or simply "democratic."

However, although Stalin was very careful not to create the appearance that he was sovietizing northern Korea, a concern understandable given his uncertainty about Korea's future and his desire for a Korean trusteeship, which would necessitate cooperation with his Western allies, he did all he could to ensure that the political order being created there under his troops would not be hostile to the USSR. Consequently, the Soviets ordered the existing local organs of self-government, a majority of which were dominated by nationalists such as Cho, to include more communists in their ranks if the communists were in the minority and also to change their names from "preparatory committee for national independence" (*kŏn'guk chunbi wiwŏnhoe*) to "people's committee" (*inmin wiwŏnhoe*), a more leftist-sounding term, if their original name was not "people's committee" to begin with. Encountering a local political landscape in fall 1945 largely dominated by the nationalists and a communist party that commanded little

popular support, the Soviets thus had no choice but to work with the nationalists for the time being while rendering all possible assistance to the local communists and Kim Il Sung's group whom they brought with them so that the latter would grow in organizational strength and popular support.<sup>21</sup> This Soviet strategy worked brilliantly in the end: by creating the appearance that they respected the organizations set up by Cho and his nationalist colleagues, the Soviets appropriated Cho's prestige, which allowed them to maintain law and order in northern Korea while, at the same time, they covertly worked to undermine the nationalists in the People's Committees and to turn the latter into organizations eventually controlled by the communists led by Kim Il Sung.

Furthermore, the Soviets could, with some success, establish their rule in northern Korea because some aspects of their policies did win support among a large segment of the northern Korean population. The most important of these was a thorough purge of the Japanese and those Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese from positions of responsibility. Although the services of some Japanese personnel, mostly technical experts, were retained because of the Soviets' severe lack of qualified personnel for their administration of northern Korea, the purge carried out by the Soviets was much more thorough than the purge carried out by the Americans in southern Korea. This could not fail to win the Soviets a significant measure of popular support in northern Korea. After 1945, the Soviets managed to garner more popular support as they carried out a series of major reforms in 1946 starting with a historic land reform in March. Armstrong (2003) demonstrates that these reforms—especially the land reform which met the centuries-old peasant aspiration for land ownership—were, on the whole, popular, as they took property out of the hands of the Japanese and the upper-class Koreans and either redistributed them to the poor, as in the case of land reform, or nationalized them, as in the nationalization of major industries carried out in August.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the view that some aspects of Soviet policies in northern Korea, such as the anti-Japanese purge and the land reform, managed to elicit significant popular support finds agreement even among some scholars who are, on the whole, critical of the Soviet occupation.<sup>23</sup>

However, what was just stated should not be taken to imply that the Soviet occupation encountered no resistance on the part of the local Korean population. There is strong evidence the occupation was widely resented especially during the first weeks after the arrival of the Soviet troops. This stemmed not only from the inherent hostility to communism on the part of conservative Koreans but more importantly from the widespread atrocities committed by the Soviet soldiers.<sup>24</sup> It is true that the Soviet documents are, on the whole, silent about these atrocities and, for

the most part, describe the first few weeks of the occupation as marked solely by the enthusiastic reception, on the part of the Koreans, of the Red Army as the “liberator of Korea from the Japanese oppressors.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Lankov (2002) provides some evidence, from Moscow archives and other sources, of these atrocities, and Armstrong (2003) presents evidence from North Korean sources.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, American documents from the time provide information. For example, in a report dated September 15, 1945, to the secretary of state, Benninghoff, the political advisor to Hodge in Seoul, wrote the following: “Except in a few instances the Soviets have respected the 38 degree boundary. However, they have not respected the rights of individuals, either Japanese or Korean, and constant reports of indiscriminate rape, pillage and looting are received from all areas occupied by Soviet forces.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Soviets seized some of the most important industrial and other economic assets built up under the Japanese and then stripped and shipped to the USSR a considerable portion of these, including such key assets as the petrochemical plant in Hŭngnam, the powerful Sup’ung hydroelectric plant on the Yalu River, as well as other power plants.<sup>28</sup>

As for the resistance on the part of the local population against the Soviet occupation, an important element in this was the often lawless and violent methods by which local communists, with active support or at best benign noninterference on the part of the Soviets, seized private property and expanded their power.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the local communists sometimes supported the Soviet occupation to the extent where they not only looked the other way while the Soviet soldiers were committing the earlier mentioned atrocities but even exhorted the local residents to willingly bear these atrocities in order to express the Korean people’s gratitude to the “heroic Red Army, the Liberator of the Korean people.” The popular resentment engendered by these negative aspects of the Soviet occupation eventually found a dramatic expression in uprisings against the Soviet rule by students in Sinŭiju in November and in other cities.<sup>30</sup>

The Soviet authorities responded to these uprisings with an utmost seriousness and immediately sent Kim Il Sung to Sinŭiju in order to resolve the crisis.<sup>31</sup> Although the crisis was resolved, at least outwardly, its repercussions were profound and far-reaching. First, the crisis served to turn many nationalists decisively against the communists and the Soviet occupation and dealt a heavy blow to the atmosphere of cooperation, as fragile and illusionary as this was, between the right and the left that had been maintained until then under the officially proclaimed National Front policy. Although the nationalists and the communists had been all along engaged in a power struggle behind the façade of cooperation, they had nevertheless maintained an atmosphere of cooperation until this point. After

Sinŭiju, a large number of nationalists and Christians turned unflinchingly and publicly anticommunist and anti-Soviet.

Second, the crisis, by turning many nationalists decisively against the communists and the Soviet occupation, served as the immediate stepping stone to the dramatic all-out confrontation between the right and the left in the ensuing nationwide clamor over the Moscow trusteeship decision. Already deeply resentful of the communists and the Soviet occupation even before the Sinŭiju crisis, the nationalists under Cho Mansik opted for an all-out resistance to the trusteeship decision, regarding the communists who supported the decision as national traitors and irreconcilable enemies, who sold their nation's independence to the USSR. The result of Cho's firm refusal to support the trusteeship was his arrest by the Soviets and the effective end of the National Front policy that had obtained since the beginning of the Soviet occupation. The Sinŭiju crisis, therefore, played a pivotal role in the ensuing collapse of Left-Right coalition and in the rise of a communist-controlled northern Korea, which began to take form in February 1946.

An aspect of the popular resistance against the Soviet rule that made such resistance difficult was the fact that it received very little or almost no support—either financial or in terms of personnel—from nationalists in southern Korea or from the U.S. military government. This needs to be qualified by the fact that sporadic acts of violence against the Soviet occupation and the communists in northern Korea were staged by *Paegŭisa* and other right-wing elements from southern Korea in spring 1946 and that the U.S. military intelligence and, later, the CIA sent agents into northern Korea as early as 1946.<sup>32</sup> However, these acts of right-wing terror were sporadic and did not lead to any organized opposition to the Soviet rule, especially since they prompted a massive suppression by the Soviet authorities of all opposition in northern Korea. Therefore, after the suppression of Cho Mansik and the northern nationalists in early 1946 and the subsequent suppression of all opposition to the Soviet rule in the wake of the terrorist acts in the spring of 1946, no organized opposition to the Soviets and the regime centered on Kim Il Sung could survive in northern Korea. As for the American intelligence and counter-intelligence activities in northern Korea, these seemed to have been mainly for purposes of gathering information and most likely did not give support to oppositional elements in northern Korea. Finally, it bears noting the recent evidence suggesting that the U.S. Army's CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps) and, later, the CIA infiltrated leftist organizations in southern Korea and recruited agents, such as Yi Kangguk, among leaders of these organizations, who later moved to northern Korea.<sup>33</sup> Although this recent evidence concerning Yi and other key leaders of the Worker's Party of South Korea may lead to other

revelations implicating Pak Hŏnyŏng himself, the leader of the original Korean Communist Party and the leader of the Worker's Party of South Korea, in espionage for the Americans, all of this does not vitiate the argument that the southern nationalists and the American military government in 1945–1948 gave very little or almost no support to oppositional elements in northern Korea.

In contrast, however, there is strong evidence, as will be presented in the paragraphs to follow, that the Soviets and the communists in northern Korea gave active support to leftists in southern Korea in the latter's resistance to the American military government. There is also ample evidence that the northern communists acting under Soviet supervision directed the communist movement in southern Korea starting as early as fall 1945. Moreover, what contributed to making open resistance against the Soviet occupation much more difficult than resistance against the American military government was the fact that, despite the communist propaganda starting in early 1946 labeling the American occupation regime a "colonialist police state," the Soviet occupation was itself a police state par excellence in which no freedom of speech or dissent against its policies was permitted after January 1946.

Turning back to the Soviet occupation policies in fall 1945, despite their official policy of not sovietizing northern Korea, the Soviets were busy from the start of their occupation with the task of creating Soviet-style institutions in all areas of life, ranging from Communist youth/women's organizations to trade unions to schools for political training of party cadres. Beginning with the communist party itself, the northern Korean branch of the Korean Communist Party (KCP), resurrected by Pak Hŏnyŏng in Seoul shortly after August 15, 1945, was initially headed by Hyŏn Chunhyŏk, a colleague of Pak from their days of common struggle against the Japanese in Korea. After Hyŏn's assassination on September 3, the leadership passed onto Kim Yongbŏm, who, together with his wife Pak Chŏnggae (Vera Tsoi), had been sent to Korea by the Comintern in the 1930s.<sup>34</sup> At this time, the communists in northern Korea were still unanimously following the orders of Pak who was in Seoul, and their organizational strength in northern Korea was beginning to grow with the active support of the Soviet occupation authorities. However, after Kim Il Sung's arrival in Korea on September 19, he and his partisan comrades not only managed to quickly establish themselves on the northern Korean political scene with an amazing effectiveness but also began to rapidly grow in political power. By December 18, when he was elected head of the North Korean branch of the KCP, Kim consolidated his position as the paramount leader of the communists in northern Korea. Afterward, Kim and his partisan group quickly began to control

the communist movement not only in northern Korea but in southern Korea as well.

A decisive impetus in this direction came when Pak Hŏnyŏng and the southern communists initially opposed the Moscow trusteeship decision but had to soon change their position after Pak's visit to Pyongyang between December 30, 1945, and January 2, 1946, during which the Soviet authorities and Kim Il Sung offered Pak Moscow's explanations on the trusteeship decision and persuaded Pak to reverse his stance.<sup>35</sup> That Pak and the southern communists originally opposed the trusteeship can be seen in Soviet documents such as the report to Paniushkin of the Central Committee secretariat from Korneev, dated November 20, 1945, on the current political situation in southern Korea, which states: "All parties, including also the communist party, are conducting agitation, through the press and distribution of pamphlets, among the local population for the speediest restoration of Korea as a unified unit, for the creation of an independent Korean government and for not allowing the establishment of a trusteeship over Korea by foreign states."<sup>36</sup> The statement by Pak's southern communists supporting the trusteeship decision, released after Pak's return to Seoul, is contained in a report from M. Burtsev, the director of the Red Army's 7th department, to Paniushkin, dated January 17, 1946.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting that this statement's opening paragraph on the international context of the trusteeship decision parrots almost verbatim Moscow's official line at the time as presented in the earlier-quoted January 1, 1946, *Novoe Vremia* op-ed piece on the results of the Moscow conference. It is very likely Pak drafted this statement after close consultation with the Soviet authorities, and it is even possible it was written by Soviet officers with input from Pak during Pak's visit to Pyongyang.

However, this sudden reversal of their position on the trusteeship by the southern communists after Pak's return to Seoul dealt a heavy blow to their standing and popularity in southern Korea, and it is very probable this was a personal setback for Pak himself, in terms of both his standing among the southern communists and his rivalry vis-à-vis Kim Il Sung. At any rate, Pak continued to visit Pyongyang for consultations with the Soviet authorities and Kim Il Sung after his return to Seoul, and there is very strong evidence that control of the communist movement in southern Korea was already in the hands of Kim Il Sung and the Soviet authorities in northern Korea well before Pak's permanent move to Pyongyang in October 1946 in order to avoid arrest by the American military government. For example, already by November 5, 1945, if not earlier, Pak had turned to the Soviet occupation authorities for help and instructions from the Soviet Communist Party and the Red Army command. In a report on the Korean political situation dated November 5, 1945, to G.M. Dimitrov of the CPSU Central

Committee secretariat, B. Sapozhnikov, the deputy director of the Red Army's 7th department, wrote the following:

Pak Hŏnyŏng and the Central Committee of the Korean Communist Party, up until now, still do not have a clear program of action. The Central Committee turned to the Soviet command [in northern Korea] with a request for help for the KCP from the Central Committee of the CPSU and the party apparatus of the Red Army. The CC also requests that we negotiate with the American command [in southern Korea] the question of legalizing the work of the KCP in southern Korea, and also requests instructions regarding how to conduct work so as not to cause complications between the USSR and the USA.<sup>38</sup>

In response, the Central Committee of the CPSU authorized, on December 16, 1945, the military council of the Maritime Military District to grant 15 million yen (a large sum at the time) to the Central Committee of the KCP (led by Pak) for the year 1946 for financing party organization, activities and campaigns. The Soviet occupation authorities also held periodic meetings with Pak and other southern communists, and it conducted an active espionage program in southern Korea until 1948.<sup>39</sup> These documents, therefore, establish that, by late 1945, Pak and southern communists were already in the pay of the Soviets and were receiving instructions from the latter. Furthermore, these documents demonstrate that the southern communists were also acting as intelligence agents for the Soviets throughout 1945–1948. Given the recent evidence showing that some of these southern communists, such as Yi Kangguk, were also agents for American intelligence agencies, some of these communists seemed to have been double agents.<sup>40</sup>

As for evidence that the Soviet occupation authorities and the northern communists were directing the communist movement in southern Korea in 1946, there is, for example, the memorandum to A.A. Zhdanov, the Central Committee secretary, from S. Shatilov dated August 21, 1946, in which Shatilov informed Zhdanov of a report from Lieutenant General Sorokin, the director of the political department of the Maritime military district, and then suggested that the Central Committee support Sorokin's policy proposals. In his report, Sorokin noted that the American military government was conducting a campaign to sabotage the movement by the three leftist political parties in southern Korea to merge into one (namely, the Worker's Party of South Korea) and that Yŏ Unhyŏng, the leader of one of these parties, was showing hesitations regarding the merger. Sorokin then proposed that the Democratic National Front (DNF) of northern Korea (the umbrella organization for all leftist political forces in northern

Korea) send a letter to Yŏ demanding Yŏ's support for the pending merger and that, if Yŏ were to still hesitate, then Hŏ Hŏn, another southern leftist leader, be appointed instead of Yŏ as the leader of the merged entity. Sorokin also suggested that the leftist parties of northern Korea (the Communist Party and the New People's Party) publish their decision in the local press approving the expulsion of Yŏ and other "factionalists and oppositionists opposing the union of leftist parties of southern Korea" from the ranks of the leftist parties of southern Korea. Sorokin then ended by proposing a wide-ranging propaganda campaign to "expose the actions of the reactionary forces in southern Korea" and also that Paek Namun, the leader of the New People's Party of southern Korea and another "factionalist and oppositionist," be recalled to Pyongyang for work in northern Korea.<sup>41</sup> What this policy memorandum demonstrates, therefore, is that the Soviet authorities and the leftists in northern Korea were at least deeply influencing, if not actually directing, the leftist movement in southern Korea as of mid-1946.

In the meantime, while all these changes in the communist leadership in Korea had been taking place, the communists in northern Korea had been growing in membership and organizational strength, from a membership of about 2,000 in October 1945 to 30,000 as of March 1, 1946.<sup>42</sup>

Apart from the communist party itself, the Soviet occupation authorities were busy in fall 1945 organizing Korean equivalents of the various "democratic social organizations" that reinforced the communist party organization in the USSR.<sup>43</sup> The founding and rapid growth of these organizations, all modeled after organizations by the same names in the USSR, was another indicator of the fact that the USSR, despite the official policy of not sovietizing northern Korea, was engaged in building a Soviet-style regime there. Regarding the circumstances under which these "democratic social organizations" were organized in fall 1945, a report to the CPSU Central Committee from the Red Army's political department, made on November 5, 1945, sheds some light. Commenting on the initial difficulty of organizing communist youth organizations in northern Korea given the absence of widespread support among the local population, the report says: "Communist youth organizations (*komsomol'skie organizatsii*) in North and South Korea are not large in membership and are not based on a wide stratum of democratic youth. It is proposed that, in the first days of November of this year, a conference of the youth of North Korea be held in order to create a popularly-based union of democratic youth."<sup>44</sup>

The upshot of all these Soviet-directed regime-building efforts was a sovietized northern Korea by mid-1947, if not earlier. Indeed, when the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea, the executive and legislative organ of the embryonic North Korean state founded in February

1946, was reorganized and renamed the People's Committee of North Korea in February 1947, this signified the official founding of a socialist North Korea. In the previously quoted report to the CPSU Central Committee dated July 22, 1947, officials in the Soviet Maritime Military District concluded in the following self-congratulatory way regarding the accomplishments of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea during the 18 months of its work since its founding in February 1946:

In such a manner, a new type of state power was created in North Korea—a people's democracy. The political foundation of this people's democratic state is comprised of the People's Committees, elected from below to above on the basis of general, egalitarian and direct elections under secret voting. The People's Committees, in the course of the 18 months of their existence, carried out a number of the most important democratic transformations, which liquidated the enormous legacies of feudalism in North Korea and facilitated the speedy rehabilitation and development of the economy as well as the rebirth of national culture and a significant improvement in the material well-being of North Korea's population.<sup>45</sup>

### **Interpreting the Moscow Trusteeship Decision and the Korean Leftists**

At this juncture, it might be worth examining in some detail why the leftists in both halves of Korea came to support the Moscow trusteeship decision and, in particular, how Kim Tubong, a prominent northern leftist, interpreted this decision.<sup>46</sup> First, it bears pointing out that the text of the Moscow decision as released in northern Korea did not include the term "trusteeship" (*sint'ak t'ongch'i*) but rather used the term "guardianship" (*hugyŏn*). Although the difference in meaning may seem slight, Kim Tubong declared that "trusteeship" referred to an arrangement wherein sovereignty belonged to the trustee Powers, whereas "guardianship" referred to a condition in which the sovereignty belonged to the Koreans themselves.<sup>47</sup> Alluding to the vehement anti-trusteeship campaign being waged by nationalists in southern Korea, Kim argued that the term "trusteeship" over which the southern nationalists vehemently objected was a misrepresentation or mistranslation of the term "guardianship" in the original text of the Moscow decision. It must be pointed out that this difference in interpretations of the word "trusteeship" was actually a crucial dimension of the different ways in which the Moscow decision was received by the Korean nationalists, on one hand, and by the leftists, on the other. As a matter of fact, there *is* a significant difference in meaning, at least in legal terms, between *sin'tak t'ongch'i* and *hugyŏn*: whereas the former refers to a state in which the legal title to sovereignty over Korea in this case

belonged to the trustee Powers, the latter connotes a state in which the legal title resided with the Koreans themselves.<sup>48</sup> The important point in all this is that the Russian language uses the same word (*opeka*) for both “trusteeship” (*sint'ak*) and “guardianship” (*hugyŏn*), suggesting that the Soviets were not deliberately deceiving or misleading the Korean people by mistranslating the meaning of the word “opeka” when explaining the Moscow decision to them.<sup>49</sup> Since *opeka* can be translated into either *sint'ak* or *hugyŏn*, it seems that the Soviets, knowing the significant difference between these two words, chose the latter in an effort to placate Korean national sensibilities.

The difference in translations of the term “opeka” aside, Kim Tubong vigorously affirmed that he did not oppose the trusteeship decision.<sup>50</sup> Then, regarding the general thrust of the Moscow decision, namely, the withholding of full independence for a period of up to five years, Kim argued that, though it would be ideal not to undergo this preparatory period before full independence, there was no choice but to accept the decision as advantageous to Korea considering that Japan’s defeat had not been brought about by the Koreans themselves.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, this position taken by Kim toward the trusteeship decision seems vitally important in understanding why all leftists in Korea accepted the decision. It appears that the Soviet explanations to the Koreans regarding the decision were such that these leftist Koreans came to interpret “trusteeship” in much the same way that Kim Tubong did, namely, as a term connoting a more sovereign status for Korea during the trusteeship period than was assumed to be the case by the nationalists offended by this term. That the Soviets used the term “guardianship” in explaining the Moscow decision was known to the American military government in southern Korea as well. For example, in a report to the Secretary of State dated January 23, 1946, Benninghoff, the political advisor in Korea, states the following:

In North Korea, the Soviets are reported to have organized popular demonstrations supporting trusteeship, which they call ‘guardianship’, and to have placed Cho Man Sik, leader of the Northern Wing of the Korean Democratic Party, in protective custody under Russian guard and forced his resignation from party because of his refusal publicly to support Moscow proposals.<sup>52</sup>

### **Cho Mansik and the Nationalists in Northern Korea**

The foregoing discussion of the support for the Moscow decision by Kim Tubong and the leftists naturally brings us to the question of why Cho

Mansik so adamantly opposed the trusteeship, jeopardizing not only his own political life but also that of all nationalists in northern Korea who followed his lead.<sup>53</sup> An important difference between how Kim and Cho interpreted the decision was that Cho apparently was much more principled and idealistic than Kim when it came to conceptions of Korean sovereignty. Whereas Kim took the view that the Moscow decision was less than ideal but nevertheless was the best the Koreans could hope for under the given circumstances, Cho took the stance, just as Kim Ku in southern Korea did at the same time, that anything less than immediate full independence after the long Japanese colonial oppression was an unacceptable insult to the Korean capacity for self-government and, as such, hardly differed in its character from the Japanese rule.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Cho apparently suspected, as Kim Ku did, that the Moscow decision was a ploy by the USSR and the United States to prolong their military occupation of Korea and thereby permanently solidify the arbitrary division of Korea at the 38th parallel, thus laying the groundwork for establishment of their own respective “neo-colonial” satellite regimes on the Korean peninsula.<sup>55</sup> However, in this suspicion, Cho, as Kim Ku did, apparently thought that the USSR was the principal architect of the Moscow decision and that the USSR was mainly to blame for this decision.<sup>56</sup> This suspicion only grew stronger when communists throughout Korea, who had earlier opposed the trusteeship, suddenly reversed their position on January 1 and January 2.<sup>57</sup> This assessment of the USSR’s role in the Moscow decision was, in turn, based on Cho’s view, again shared by Kim Ku and many other nationalists, that the USSR deserved no role in the occupation of Korea given its minimal contribution to Japan’s defeat and that it thus deserved no role in any settlement over Korea’s future.<sup>58</sup>

The upshot of these considerations behind Cho’s desire for the speediest possible exit of the Soviets from Korea was that Cho, who had been cooperating with the Soviet occupation despite his distaste for what the Soviets had been doing in Korea, finally threw up his hands when he heard the Moscow decision and decided to end his cooperation with the Soviets. Accordingly, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Korean Democratic Party on January 5, Cho refused to comply with the Soviet demand that he, as the party chairman, resolve the question of the party’s policy regarding the Moscow decision.<sup>59</sup> Put under house arrest immediately after resigning from Party chairmanship upon Soviet demand to do so, Cho was confined to his hotel room in Pyongyang afterward, until he was transferred to a prison. Later, Cho reportedly perished during the Korean War.

The exit of Cho and his followers from the political leadership in northern Korea meant the *de facto* unraveling of the National Front policy,

which Stalin's directive on September 20, 1945, had prescribed as the basic guideline for the Soviet occupation. Although some right-wing elements remained in northern Korea after most of Cho's followers had moved to southern Korea following Cho's arrest, Left-Right coalition in a northern Korea lacking an organized right-wing force led by a prominent figure such as Cho could not be sustained as a viable policy. Consequently, the Soviets changed their policy radically, from that of tolerating nationalists to that of branding Cho and his followers as "enemies of the people" who had cooperated with the Japanese imperialists, a stark change indeed considering their prior praise of Cho as the "Korean Gandhi" who had fought against the Japanese. This sudden shift in Soviet occupation policy was caused also in an important sense by the Soviet perception that the United States was not only not serious about implementing the trusteeship agreement but was actually sabotaging its implementation by inciting nationalists such as Cho, Kim Ku, and Syngman Rhee against the agreement. This can be seen in a telegram to the secretary of state dated January 25, 1946, from Harriman, the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, which reported:

On 23 January when I met with Stalin, he said he was of the opinion that there had not been a favorable start in our relations in Korea. He read a telegram to me which he had received from Korea which reported that the US representatives there were advocating that the decision to set up a trusteeship be abrogated; that meetings were being held in public at which demands were being expressed to this effect, and that articles had been carried by the Korean press which stated that only the USSR and not the US had insisted on a trusteeship. General Lerch, Chief of Civil Administration [i.e., of U.S.-occupied southern Korea], was named by him as being specifically implicated with the above.<sup>60</sup>

It is clear from the context this report that the anti-trusteeship meetings Stalin referred to were the ones organized by Cho Mansik, Kim Ku, and their followers. Moreover, the Seoul press at the time also reported the USSR's attacks on the American military government, such as the January 25, 1946, issue of *Donga Ilbo*, which quoted the TASS, the Soviet news agency, as criticizing the U.S. military government for inciting Korean "reactionaries" such as Kim Ku and Rhee against the Moscow decision.

In this perception that the Americans were inciting the right-wing Koreans against the trusteeship, the Soviets, as well as the Korean leftists, apparently believed the United States and the nationalists were boycotting the trusteeship because of their fear that they would lose to the leftists control of the unified Korean government called for in the trusteeship plan. Acting on this perception, the Soviets and the leftists in northern Korea

proceeded to abandon their official policy of cooperation with the nationalists and to erect the foundations of a communist North Korean state with the creation of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea in February 1946. This new hardliner stance toward the nationalists and the United States solidified even further when southern nationalists in concert with right-wing elements in northern Korea staged acts of terror in spring 1946 against the Soviet occupation authorities and the leftist leaders of northern Korea. These acts of terror included an attempt on Kim Il Sung's life at a public ceremony in Pyongyang on March 1, 1946, marking the anniversary of the March First Independence Movement. Kim was unharmed when a grenade was thrown at him only because of a Soviet officer's effort to save him. Other acts included attacks on the homes of Kim Ch'aek, Kang Ryanguk, and other leaders of the Communist Party as well as the residence of General Chistiakov, the commander of the Soviet 25th Army.<sup>61</sup> As mentioned earlier, these acts of terror were conducted by *Paegŭisa* ("White Clothes Society"), a right-wing terrorist organization led by Yŏm Tongjin (Yŏm Ŭngt'aek), acting in concert with a paramilitary group affiliated with the Korean Provisional Government and led by Sin Ikhŭi.<sup>62</sup>

The ensuing suppression of the nationalists in northern Korea by the Soviet occupation authorities as well as the series of pivotal reforms undertaken that spring in northern Korea by the Soviets, beginning with the crucially important land reform, meant that the repercussions of the Left-Right split over the trusteeship had reached a stage where the differences between northern Korea and southern Korea as well as between the Soviets and the Americans in Korea became almost irreconcilable. In this unfolding development, the Soviets as well as the leftists throughout Korea began to take on an uncompromisingly hostile attitude toward the nationalists, as they started to denounce the likes of Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee as "fascist terrorists" and "enemies of the people" bent on subjecting Korea to a "colonial rule" by the "American imperialists."<sup>63</sup>

### **The Responses of the Southern Political Forces to the Moscow Decision**

Having discussed the developments in northern Korea in 1945–1946 and how the Soviets as well as the Koreans there reacted to the Moscow decision, it is now time to look more closely at developments in southern Korea and consider how the Koreans as well as the American Military Government there responded to the Moscow decision. As shown in part I, the USAFIK, led by the anticommunist Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, brought back to Korea the leaders of the émigré Korean

Provisional Government from China (Kim Ku, Kim Kyusik, et al.) and from the United States (Syngman Rhee) because of the need to stabilize the chaotic political situation in southern Korea, a situation which was exacerbated further by misguided occupation policies such as initially retaining in service officials of the ex-Japanese Government-General. Although Kim Ku, Syngman Rhee and their colleagues did satisfy Hodge's need to strengthen the Right in southern Korea, Hodge found both Kim and Rhee to be strong personalities with whom it was difficult at best to establish a good working relationship. Moreover, Hodge and even the State Department were very doubtful about the prospects for success at the Moscow Conference in reaching an agreement on the Korean trusteeship, and both were ready to propose alternative solutions in the expectation that the conference would fail to produce a trusteeship agreement. As an outgrowth of this pessimistic assessment of the prospects for cooperation with the Soviets, Hodge and his political advisors in Seoul were already thinking, even before the conference, of the possibilities of using nationalists such as Kim and Rhee as leaders of an embryonic South Korean government, which would ideally expand into northern Korea and result in a unified Korean government over the peninsula. However, Hodge and his advisors were ready to contemplate the establishment of a separate South Korean state if such an embryonic South Korean government would fail to expand itself into northern Korea. Therefore, the chances of Kim and Rhee being used by Hodge as leaders in a separate South Korean government were very good when the conference began. It must thus have come as a shock to Hodge that Kim's opposition to the trusteeship decision turned out to be so violent as to have resulted in what amounted to a coup d'état attempt against the American Military Government. Although Hodge himself was opposed to the trusteeship concept and knew fully well that Kim, Rhee, and virtually all Koreans were opposed to such postponement of independence, Kim's open challenge to his own authority as the leader of the military government was more than Hodge could stomach. As a result, it is fair to conclude that Kim's standing in the eyes of Hodge and the U.S. government collapsed to such an extent that Kim could never again be seriously considered as the Americans' top choice to head a future Korean government. That Kim was, by May 1946, excluded from serious consideration by the U.S. government is indicated in a memorandum on a meeting of the secretaries of state, war, and navy that took place on May 22, 1946. In this meeting, the view was expressed that the United States had "picked the wrong horse in supporting Kim Ku."<sup>64</sup>

Contrary to Kim Ku who practically committed a political suicide by his open challenge to Hodge, Rhee made a handsome political gain by letting Kim lead the anti-trusteeship campaign in such violent fashion and thus

bear the consequences of Hodge's wrath. Although Rhee was also opposed to the trusteeship decision, he was careful to express his opposition in a way that would not irreparably damage his standing with Hodge and the American military government. Thus, in a telegram to the Secretary of State dated May 24, 1946, the Political Advisor in Korea (Langdon) reported:

It will be noted . . . that public opinion from home that the American authorities are backing exclusively such conservative elements as Rhee and Kim Ku are unfounded. We have largely ignored the latter who as a result of his own political ineptitude has almost dropped out of political scene. Rhee, on the other hand, has been cooperative in rallying all shades of opinion toward unification and has been helpful in preventing his following from excessive anti-Allied demonstrations. At the same time he has made conciliatory gestures to the Russians and has urged his many followers to do likewise. General Hodge does not necessarily feel that Rhee is essential or even desirable in a future provisional government, but so long as he is one of the few nationally known leaders among democratic elements, his cooperation now can hardly be dispensed with.<sup>65</sup>

Rhee also used Kim's political downfall as the occasion to engineer, with his American advisor Colonel M. Preston Goodfellow, the effective dismantling of Kim's KPG and its transformation into a purely right-wing organization incorporated into the Representative Democratic Council, an advisory organ of the American military government organized in February 1946.<sup>66</sup> In a report to the secretary of state dated January 28, 1946, Benninghoff, the political advisor in Korea, stated: "Mr. Goodfellow has been working with Korean political groups for the past month with considerable success. Already Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee have agreed to dissolution of their 'Provisional Government' and to cooperate with efforts to form a united group to act with General Hodge . . ."<sup>67</sup> The upshot of these changes in the political configuration after the Moscow Conference was that Rhee established an edge over Kim as the paramount leader of the Right in southern Korea. However, all was not well for Rhee even with this important political victory, as Rhee's inherent stubbornness and autocratic tendencies made him a less-than-appealing partner for Hodge or the U.S. State Department to work with.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, Hodge began to intensely dislike Rhee and did his best to find an alternative candidate for the top job in a future Korean government.<sup>69</sup> At this juncture, the U.S. State Department placed pressure on Hodge to do his best to forge a Left-Right coalition in southern Korea, which would be acceptable to the Soviets as the southern representatives in a future unified Korean government. This pressure, combined with his distaste for Rhee, led Hodge to

consider Kim Kyusik, a moderate rightist, as the leader of the proposed Left-Right coalition and the future Korean government. Hodge also turned to Yŏ Unhyŏng with a request that he work with Kim Kyushik on the proposed Left-Right coalition. However, the Soviets rejected this American initiative for a Left-Right coalition, and Yŏ was criticized by the Soviets and the communists in both halves of Korea for taking part in this initiative.

According to the earlier quoted report on Korea, the Soviet occupation authorities apparently regarded this American initiative as a classic “divide and conquer” strategy, designed to lure Yŏ, Paek Namun, and their supporters into this Left-Right coalition with the goal of preventing the planned merger of the three leftist parties of southern Korea. Furthermore, the American military government, the report states, wanted to first create the Left-Right coalition with participation of leftists such as Yŏ but then to turn such a coalition into an organization dominated by rightists. According to this report, the USAFIK then planned to use such a rightist-controlled organization as the southern representative for consultation in forming a united Korean government in accordance with the Moscow decision. However, the USAFIK failed in this “plot,” the report states, and Pak Hŏnyŏng and Hŏ Hŏn succeeded in creating the Worker’s Party of South Korea, in October 1946, by ousting Yŏ and Paek from the leadership of the People’s Party and the New People’s Party of South Korea and by merging these two parties into their own new entity. This Soviet report severely criticizes Yŏ and Paek for their “opportunistic” and “factionalist” activities and states that the Worker’s Party of North Korea firmly supported Pak and the Worker’s Party of South Korea against these “factionalists.”<sup>70</sup> Given this account of how the Soviets viewed the American initiative for the Left-Right coalition, it was no wonder they rejected this initiative.

Therefore, when the Second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission, held in May–October 1947, failed to achieve any results, the United States turned to the United Nations for resolution of the Korean question and also began to make plans for a separate South Korean state, as discussed in part I. The reaction of Kim Kyusik to this U.S. plan for a separate South Korean state was negative, as he shared Kim Ku’s belief that such a move was bound to permanently seal the division of Korea into two halves. Consequently, Kim Kyusik joined Kim Ku in opposing the American plans to hold elections in southern Korea only, after it had become clear that the UN Temporary Commission on Korea would not be allowed by the USSR to supervise elections in northern Korea. In the meantime, lacking the support of Kim Kyusik and Kim Ku for the creation of a separate South Korean state, the United States had no choice but to return to Rhee, who had publicly

expressed his support for a separate South Korean state as early as mid-1946, as the leader of the proposed South Korean state.

The rest of the history has already been discussed in part I. The elections for the National Assembly for a separate South Korean state were held on May 10, 1948, and the Republic of Korea (the official name for South Korea) was established on August 15, 1948. The political forces of southern Korea that boycotted the elections included: Kim Ku and the section of the Right he represented; Kim Kyusik and the moderate Right he represented; and all Left and moderate Left. These forces that boycotted the elections had sent their representatives to the South-North Joint Conference in Pyongyang in April 1948, attended by Kim Il Sung, Kim Tubong, and other northern representatives, which was convened to oppose the elections and voice support for the creation of a unified Korean government after withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea. The Soviets and the northern Koreans went ahead with creating their own separate North Korean state after the southern elections were held and, later, the Republic of Korea proclaimed despite the opposition from those who attended this conference. Accordingly, the elections for the Supreme People's Assembly of Korea were held in early September 1948, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed on September 9.

### **The Korean Responses to the Trusteeship Decision, 1945–1948: A Summary**

As we have seen earlier, all leftists in northern Korea, ranging from Kim Il Sung's communist party to Kim Tubong's Yanan group, actively supported the Moscow trusteeship decision. Those who opposed the decision, most prominently Cho Mansik, were crushed by the Soviets and came to be branded "enemies of the people" and even "collaborators with the Japanese." The reason why these leftists supported the Moscow decision was mentioned: namely, their utter dependence on the Soviet occupation authorities for their political survival. It was inconceivable for these two Kims, as well as all other leftists, to dare oppose the Moscow decision, as any opposition on their part would have landed them in the same fate that befell Cho, namely, end of their political career and even their physical destruction. No matter what their true feelings may have been on the trusteeship, all of them accepted it as a wise and farsighted policy that best served the interests of the Korean people. Kim Il Sung and other northern Korean leftists, therefore, were acting as faithful allies, if not agents, of the USSR in their wholehearted support for the trusteeship and for Soviet occupation policy in general.<sup>71</sup>

It is also necessary to mention here that the leftists in southern Korea were playing the same roles as Kim Il Sung and the northern leftists, considering that their movement was being shaped, if not actually controlled, by the Soviets and the northern communists from as early as November 1945. Just like their northern brethren, the southern leftists, headed by the likes of Pak Hŏnyŏng, Yŏ Unhyŏng, Hŏ Hŏn, and Paek Namun, were faithful supporters of the trusteeship decision and Soviet policy toward Korea in general. For example, in a report to Paniushkin of the Central Committee secretariat dated March 15, 1946, from M. Burtsev, the director of the Red Army's 7th department, Pak, Yŏ and Hŏ were all described as supporters of the trusteeship decision. Yŏ, in particular, was described as a former member of the Chinese and Korean Communist Parties before 1945 who was now a loyal supporter of the USSR.<sup>72</sup> Later on, in the earlier quoted report dated July 22, 1947, it is stated, when describing the situation in southern Korea in 1946, that all leftist organizations in both halves of Korea supported the trusteeship decision and the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission, which was convened to implement the trusteeship, to the extent where many of their declarations of support, handed in person by their leaders to the commission, were written in blood on silk.<sup>73</sup>

The fortunes of these southern leftists varied considerably, ranging from Yŏ, who was assassinated in Seoul in July 1947, to Pak, who left southern Korea and moved to Pyongyang in October 1946, to Hŏ and Paek, who, like other southern leftists and moderate leftists such as Kim Wŏnbong and Hong Myŏnghŭi, stayed in southern Korea until April 1948, when they attended the South-North Joint Conference in Pyongyang and decided to remain thereafter in northern Korea.<sup>74</sup> Like Pak, who began conferring with the Soviet occupation authorities and Kim Il Sung in fall 1945, most of these southern leftists crossed the 38th parallel from time to time during 1946-1948 in order to confer with the Soviets and Kim Il Sung. More specifically, Yŏ visited northern Korea five times in 1946-1947 to consult with Kim Il Sung, and Hŏ, whose daughter Hŏ Chŏngsuk was already a prominent political figure in northern Korea, also visited Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang in 1946.<sup>75</sup> An important fact about the leftist movement in southern Korea in 1946-1948 was that, as noted earlier, there was a struggle for hegemony between Yŏ and Pak in 1946 and that Hŏ became the de facto successor to Pak as the leader of the southern communists after Pak's move to Pyongyang in October 1946.<sup>76</sup> As for Paek, this Marxist scholar-turned-politician, who also crossed the 38th parallel in 1946-1948 to confer with Kim Il Sung, sided with Yŏ against Pak and Hŏ in this struggle. After Yŏ's assassination, Paek became Yŏ's de facto successor in southern Korea.<sup>77</sup> All these southern leftists, with the exception of Yŏ who was assassinated in 1947, played prominent roles at the South-North Joint

Conference in Pyongyang in April 1948 and, remaining thereafter in Pyongyang, fiercely denounced the separate elections in southern Korea on May 10, 1948.<sup>78</sup>

It deserves to be mentioned that, as pointed out earlier when discussing Kim Tubong's interpretation of the word "trusteeship," these leftists in both halves of Korea may have truly taken the Soviet explanation of the Moscow decision at its face value and decided to support it as the best realistic alternative to the seemingly impossible goal of immediate full independence.<sup>79</sup> For example, at the founding ceremony, on February 15, 1946, of the Democratic National Front (DNF) of South Korea (*Namjosŏn Minjujuŭi Minjok Chŏnsŏn*), the umbrella organization for all southern leftists, Hŏ Hŏn expressed his gratitude for the Moscow decision.<sup>80</sup> Afterward, Hŏ delivered a report at the founding ceremony, on June 25, 1949, in Pyongyang, of the Democratic Unification Front (*Choguk T'ongil Minjujuŭi Chŏnsŏn*), which was formed from the merger between the DNFs of South and North Korea. Commenting at length on the trusteeship decision, Hŏ offered his disparaging view of the U.S. position at the Moscow conference, which, according to him, was designed to enslave Korea for 10 years under a "colonialist trusteeship" without giving the Koreans a possibility of forming their own government. In contrast, Hŏ remarked, the Soviet position at the conference was fully in accord with the aspirations and interests of the Korean people, though the American military government and the southern "reactionaries" distorted the facts of what happened at the conference and depicted the United States, not the USSR, as having been in favor of granting immediate independence to Korea. Hŏ then stated that the Americans could not openly deny the correctness of the Soviet position at the conference and thus reluctantly agreed to the Soviet position forming the basis for the Moscow decision but that the USAFIK and the southern "reactionaries" subsequently distorted the true meaning of this decision as well, this time depicting it as a Soviet ploy to impose a colonialist trusteeship and inciting the "pro-Japanese national traitors" against it.<sup>81</sup>

In thus supporting the Soviet policies toward Korea, these Korean leftists, especially the Soviet Koreans,<sup>82</sup> apparently believed that the USSR offered the best and the ideal model of human society available then in the world and that Korea's future lay in a Soviet-type socialist society with close ties to the USSR. Given both this belief in the correctness of their own ideological convictions and their dependence on the USSR for their own political survival in a country where the southern half was ruled by an ideologically hostile foreign Power and the anticommunist Right, the leftists in both halves of Korea launched a fierce attack on the American military government and the rightists for the latter's opposition to the

trusteeship decision and for the latter's alleged "reactionary" and "pro-Japanese" policies.

In contrast to this rather unanimous and monolithic view on the part of the USSR and the leftist Koreans toward the trusteeship decision and Korean unification, the United States and the right-wing Koreans held, at various times and under changing circumstances, no common set of views that bound them together. The American policy on the trusteeship itself was highly ambivalent at best, and the United States never possessed a steady policy toward Korea other than the vague guideline of granting independence to Korea "in due course." The United States was, therefore, willing to experiment with different approaches to Korean independence and unification, ranging from scrapping the trusteeship plan altogether in favor of an immediate military-economic union between the two occupation zones, to forming a Left-Right coalition within southern Korea in order to make the trusteeship plan successful. As we have seen in part I, underlying these shifts and improvisations in policymaking toward Korea was the worrisome but nevertheless real belief on the part of Hodge and other U.S. officials that the temporary division of Korea, drawn in August 1945 at the 38th parallel, was already becoming permanent as early as the fall of 1945 and that all efforts to negotiate with the Soviets to overcome this division were bound to fail. Echoing this lack of consistency and coherence in the U.S. policy toward Korea, the right-wing groups in Korea also lacked unity and a consistency of purpose among themselves. Perhaps this was only to be expected considering that the American military government, despite the Soviet and leftist attacks on it as a "police regime," did permit a degree of political freedom that made it possible for the various elements of the Right under its jurisdiction to disagree among themselves.

## CONCLUSION

In this international history of the Korean division, I explained this division as a product of both international and domestic factors while pointing out the importance of the trusteeship decision and the contingent nature of the division. More specifically, I argued that that the division was by no means a foregone conclusion when Japan surrendered in August 1945. In all the Soviet documents I examined, there was no evidence that Stalin, in fall 1945, was set on sovietizing northern Korea or creating a separate North Korean state. Although the Soviets did strengthen the Korean Left and created Soviet-style institutions in northern Korea, the Soviet policy was that of National Front with Cho Mansik, a nationalist, as head of a coalition between nationalists and leftists. This was clearly in line with the strong Soviet support for the Korean trusteeship, as such a National Front policy was well-suited for cooperation with the United States and the Korean Right on a Left-Right coalition needed for the proposed trusteeship. This National Front policy ended effectively only when the Korean Right turned violently against the Moscow trusteeship agreement and the United States also came out less than enthusiastic about the agreement. Finding Cho and other nationalists now irreconcilably opposed to the trusteeship and to cooperating with them in general, the Soviets could no longer sustain the National Front policy and went on to carry out the radical reforms of 1946 which created the backbones of a socialist regime in northern Korea. With the Korean Right so adamantly opposed to the trusteeship and the United States also ambivalent at best about it, the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission of 1946–1947 could only end in failure, as the Soviets in turn took the hard line stance that only those Koreans who unequivocally supported the trusteeship could be consulted in forming a united Korean government in accordance with the trusteeship agreement. The subsequent transfer by the United States of the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly could not succeed in reunifying the Korean peninsula, as the USSR refused to approve this transfer. Therefore, in this manner, what started as a temporary division in 1945 turned into a permanent division by August–September 1948 when South Korea and

North Korea were established after the failure of the United Nations to reunify the country.

Having presented evidence showing that Stalin took the trusteeship more seriously than did the United States, I suggested that had the United States taken the trusteeship equally seriously and the Korean Right also supported it, U.S.-Soviet and Right-Left cooperation in Korea could have succeeded and the trusteeship itself could have succeeded as a result of which Korea would have emerged as a united independent nation. What form would such a united Korea have taken? It is possible such a Korea, like Finland or Austria, would even have been allowed by Stalin to emerge as a capitalist country as long as its foreign policy orientation was not hostile to the USSR. In the Introduction, I compared Korea to Austria or Finland, pointing out that Korea had been a peripheral area of Great Power rivalries like these two European countries. Although Korea was used by Japan as a stepping stone for expansion into the Eurasian mainland and Stalin was determined to not let Korea be used in this fashion by any hostile Power after World War II, Stalin was flexible, I suggested, about how he was to achieve this Soviet national security objective. Thus, I posited that a united Korea with a foreign policy orientation neutral or friendly to Moscow would have likely served Soviet security better than a divided Korea with a South Korea firmly allied with the United States and Japan in a common anti-Soviet alliance. A divided Korea would also have led to more political instability and more easily to war, dragging the USSR into such a war and thus a bigger security risk for Moscow than a united Korea.

However, I also proposed in this book that such a united independent Korea after a successful trusteeship would likely have eventually leaned closer to Moscow than to Washington. This is because such a united Korea sharing borders with Russia—and, later, Communist China—would have been much more susceptible to communist infiltration, subversion and other forms of influence from Moscow. American officials correctly foresaw this eventual outcome to a successful trusteeship and hence came out at best ambivalent about the trusteeship agreement. Overall, American officials feared the growing power of the Korean Left under active Soviet support and concluded that the strong Soviet support for the trusteeship, therefore, was a Soviet ploy to use the trusteeship in order to create a united Korea that would fall within Moscow's sphere of influence. Were they right, therefore, to, in effect, reject the trusteeship in favor of a separate South Korea allied to the United States? With the benefit of hindsight, the following conclusion is possible. First, by opting for a separate South Korea, the United States certainly kept South Korea from becoming a communist dictatorship like North Korea. However, the partition into the two Koreas exacted the catastrophe of the Korean War, a war that not only

devastated Korea but also threatened to spiral into World War III and prompted the dramatic rise of the military-industrial complex in the United States. Second, by opting for a separate South Korea, the United States prevented the possibility of a united Korea becoming communized and ending up simply as a bigger version of North Korea today, namely, an impoverished and failed totalitarian state with nuclear weapons. Even if such a united Korea managed to avoid communization, it would have likely suffered from political instability with civil unrest along ideological lines in the ensuing Cold War decades. Third, by opting for a separate South Korea, the United States effectively withheld the possibility, though a slim one, of a united Korea like Finland or Austria, namely, a successful capitalist democracy.

Ultimately, by rejecting the trusteeship when this was the only internationally agreed framework for Korea's independence and reunification after Japan's surrender, the Korean Right effectively sealed their country's permanent division. The United States, by turning out at best ambivalent about the trusteeship, also had a role to play in sealing this division. What was ironic was that those Korean rightists such as Cho and Kim Ku who did not want their country's permanent division nevertheless directly contributed to such an outcome by their passionate opposition to the trusteeship. In the end, when the country's permanent division became a near certainty in April 1948, it was the Koreans themselves who stood to lose the most by this outcome: for, whatever their political or ideological differences that contributed to this outcome, almost all Koreans did not want their country to become permanently divided. The ultimate question, therefore, becomes: would the Koreans have been happier living as one nation even if such a nation would have been communized and turned into a failed totalitarian state like North Korea today? Or, did it serve the Koreans better that the southern half of their country managed to escape the disaster that North Korea became but they all suffered from the permanent division and the ensuing Korean War? This is a politically charged question even today, after the end of the Cold War. However, the passage of time will help answer this question. A successful and peaceful Korean reunification, if it occurs, will play a large role in shaping this answer.

### **Findings of this Work: A Summary**

The findings of this book can be classified into a few categories. The first is at the level of holistic synthesis. This study utilizes newly available documents from the ex-Soviet Union and elsewhere and incorporates issues on both international and domestic levels that have not been considered in a discussion on the Korean division. In doing so, it seeks to fill in missing

documentation and dimensions, while putting these together in an original synthesis. In concrete terms, the following efforts have been made. First, I presented a side-by-side comparative analysis of Soviet and American policies toward Korea and the Korean division in a chronological order, starting with a survey of Russian-Korean and U.S.-Korean relations from their beginnings before the twentieth century. While presenting this analysis, I tried to explain some of the most perplexing aspects of the Soviet behavior concerning Korea, such as the following:

First, why Stalin readily agreed to the American suggestion of the 38th parallel in August 1945 as the line of demarcation for the military occupation of Korea by the United States and the USSR. In chapter 2, I provided a set of possible answers to this seeming “mystery” which has long perplexed historians<sup>1</sup> and argued that, taken together, these answers constitute a comprehensive explanation of Stalin’s behavior in this case. In particular, I pointed out the importance of the UN Trusteeship plan in Stalin’s mind and emphasized that Stalin must have possessed a global perspective in which he saw Korea as only a pawn on a global chessboard. These factors likely led Stalin to accept the American offer of the 38th parallel as an advantageous condition for establishing a trusteeship. That is to say, because Stalin knew when the Americans made this offer that Korea’s status was yet to be determined later in a trusteeship agreement with the United States, Britain, and China, the offer of the 38th parallel must have struck him as only a precondition for establishing the trusteeship and that, even as a precondition, this offer must have seemed like a good deal to him, since the United States, China, and Britain together would receive only the southern half of Korea as “their zone of occupation” even though their contributions to the victory over Japan were much greater than the Soviet contribution. In this thinking, Stalin may well have remembered how the USSR received in Germany an area of occupation much smaller than that for its Western allies even though the Soviet contribution to the victory over Germany was greater than the Western contribution.

Second, I pointed out the importance of the atomic bomb in Stalin’s mind as this influenced his decision to accept the American offer of the 38th parallel. Based on recent works in Cold War history and primary accounts such as that by Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin’s daughter, I posited that Stalin may have been too busy absorbing the implications of Hiroshima to pay much attention to the American offer of the 38th parallel, which he may thus have accepted without much thought or which he may have accepted precisely because he feared the new American atomic power and dared not reject what was probably the first substantive American foreign policy proposal to the Soviets after Hiroshima. I also drew on the new scholarly works concerning Soviet espionage in the West during World

War II to point out that Stalin, well informed about the weakness of the USSR vis-à-vis the United States not only in nuclear weaponry but also in overall military power, feared an armed confrontation with the United States, as shown by his extreme caution in avoiding armed conflict with the Americans in the military occupation of Europe and later during the Korean War. I then suggested that this fear of the American military might may have prompted Stalin not only to accept the American offer of the 38th parallel but also to instruct the Red Army occupying Korea to scrupulously avoid conflict with the American troops in southern Korea, an instruction which was duly carried out subsequently.

In chapter 2, I also put forward other possible explanations for Stalin's seemingly enigmatic behavior in this case, namely:

1. Stalin's calculation that accepting the 38th parallel would facilitate American agreement with his request for Soviet military occupation of northern half of Hokkaido in Japan.

2. That the Red Army may actually have lacked the troop strength to occupy all of Korea before the Americans arrived because complications may have arisen in a hurried campaign to enter the war before the Japanese surrendered: thus, in this rushed campaign, the Soviets concentrated most of their troops on attacking the Japanese in Manchuria, which made their operation in Korea a tiny sideshow conducted by a poorly manned 25th Army.

3. That Stalin may have, to a certain extent, interpreted the American suggestion of the 38th parallel as an offer to resurrect the old sphere of influence agreement between tsarist Russia and Japan and accepted this suggestion with the modification that the United States was now to fill Japan's place in Korea. It is worth pointing out here that Stalin may very well have regarded the trusteeship plan and a sphere of influence agreement as compatible with each other. In fact, this may have been precisely how he approached the Soviet claim to establish trusteeships in general, as he saw the trusteeship mechanism as a way to establish Soviet influence and even Soviet control over ex-colonies of capitalist powers.

These three explanations had already been put forward by others writing on the subject, but these, when added to the two new ones I proposed in chapter 2, do not contradict the latter but rather strengthen their explanatory power.

However, the central effort I made in this book is the demonstration of the vital importance of the trusteeship decision for Korea's fate after World War II. As I just stated, a key reason why Stalin accepted the American proposal for the 38th parallel must have been precisely the presence of a

wartime Allied agreement to place Korea under a trusteeship after Japan's defeat. I argued that the trusteeship issue is a missing key to understanding not only the division of Korea at the 38th parallel but also many subsequent political developments in a Korea thus divided until the rise of the two Koreas in 1948. I have also shown how Stalin attempted to use the trusteeship mechanism to bring down capitalist colonial empires after World War II in a bid to expand Soviet global presence. That Stalin saw Korea as a testing ground for implementing this trusteeship mechanism was demonstrated in chapter 3: there, I pointed out that the Soviets were advocating a Korean trusteeship at the same time they were advocating trusteeships for the ex-Italian colonies in northern Africa as early as at the Potsdam Conference (July 17–August 2, 1945) and that the Soviets, having failed to obtain any trusteeship over the ex-Italian colonies at the subsequent London Conference (September 11–October 2, 1945), probably came to regard obtaining a Korean trusteeship as an important policy goal at the subsequent Moscow Conference (December 16–26, 1945).

Originally proposed by Franklin Roosevelt during World War II as a means to dismantle European and Japanese colonial empires, the trusteeship found its most ardent champion in Stalin, who saw in this a golden opportunity to demolish capitalist colonial empires worldwide and to fill the resulting vacuum with Soviet power. I showed how Roosevelt soon yielded to Churchill and de Gaulle in these two leaders' dogged resolve to maintain European colonial possessions and thus ceased to vigorously advocate the trusteeship plan. After Roosevelt's death, with Truman who clearly sided with Britain in taking a hard line against postwar Soviet expansionism, the trusteeship plan thus came to find its only strong advocate in Stalin. In chapter 3, I demonstrated that the Moscow agreement on the Korean trusteeship was possible only because of the Soviets' strong advocacy of this trusteeship with their well-prepared proposal despite the Americans' lack of preparedness for even discussing this question. On this score, I also showed how the Americans were pessimistic and, in the case of Hodge, even reluctant about reaching an agreement on the Korean trusteeship at this conference and how they attempted to use such an agreement as at best a bargaining chip in order to extract Soviet concessions on other areas of the world. As a result, the Soviets, who hailed the conference's agreement on the trusteeship as a victory for four-power cooperation and "peace-loving forces in all the world," did their best to sell this agreement to the Koreans, even using the term "guardianship" rather than "trusteeship" to make the agreement sound more acceptable to the Koreans. This was in strong contrast to the Americans, who made no such active effort to promote the agreement and may even have hinted that the agreement was the work of the Soviets alone so as to

avoid blame by those Koreans who saw it as a gross infringement on Korea's sovereignty.

That Stalin took the trusteeship more seriously than did the Americans was also shown when I pointed out how the Soviets insisted on a pro-trusteeship stance as the litmus test for all Korean political groups whom they would consider acceptable for participating in a unified Korean government, which the Moscow agreement called for, and, in general, for all Korean political groups whom they would consider acceptable. Considering this, it was therefore no wonder that the Soviets parted with Cho Mansik, the leader of the northern nationalists, only when Cho refused to support the trusteeship agreement and that they ended their National Front policy in early 1946 only when it became clear to them that the Americans were not going to carry out the Moscow agreements including the Korean trusteeship. As I pointed out, the Soviets even began to criticize the Americans for inciting "reactionary Korean forces" to oppose the trusteeship and for suppressing "progressive Korean forces" that supported it. This demonstrates yet again that an important reason why the Soviets earlier pursued their National Front policy was that they saw such a policy as suitable for establishing a unified Korean government according to the trusteeship plan. It seems evident the Soviets thus ended this policy when it became clear the trusteeship for which such a policy was designed no longer had a realistic chance of being implemented in the face of what they saw as the opposition by the Americans acting in concert with their "reactionary" Korean allies.

However, I argued that Stalin still did not entirely give up on the trusteeship, either for Korea or for other parts of the world, even after the failure of the Moscow Conference and a definite deterioration in Soviet relations with the West following the Iran crisis of early 1946 and the subsequent "Iron Curtain" speech by Churchill. After presenting evidence showing that Stalin instructed Molotov to actively advocate the trusteeship in relevant parts of the world well into late 1946, I demonstrated Stalin still did not completely give up hopes for reaching an agreement on a Korean trusteeship when I pointed out that the Soviet dictator took the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission of 1946-1947 more seriously than did the Americans—something which was illustrated, for example, by the fact that he assigned high-ranking officials on the Soviet delegation to the commission in contrast to the correspondingly low-ranking officials on the U.S. delegation. The continuing importance of the trusteeship for Stalin in early 1946 was also indicated by the fact that the Soviets still desired to have a non-communist, namely Cho Mansik, as the head of a northern Korean government despite the failure of the Moscow agreements, if Cho would only agree to support the trusteeship. This was most likely in order to leave open the possibility

that the two Korean halves would be reunified via the trusteeship, considering that, in such a case, a nominal coalition regime in northern Korea headed by a non-communist such as Cho would more easily lend itself to reunification with southern Korea than would a completely sovietized northern Korean regime. The Soviets, thus, parted with Cho only when Cho proved to be intransigent in his opposition to the trusteeship.

Overall, I made the suggestion that Stalin pursued a two-pronged strategy of actively advocating the Korean trusteeship while engaging in a *de facto* sovietization of northern Korea as an insurance policy in case such a trusteeship was to fail. However, the important point here is that, though pursued to a significant extent in northern Korea in fall 1945, sovietization was done under the National Front policy and thus in an unofficial way that allowed room for an agreement with the Americans on a Korean trusteeship. Indeed, this *de facto* sovietization was arguably a preparatory step for the proposed trusteeship, as the Soviets most likely used this sovietization in order to strengthen the Korean Left and their own position in a unified Korea which the trusteeship called for. At any rate, it seems evident sovietization was accelerated in early 1946 with the radical reforms such as land reform, thus effectively ending this National Front policy, only when the Moscow agreements turned out to be a failure and a Korean trusteeship became much more unrealistic. Therefore, the accelerated sovietization of northern Korea carried out in 1946, which contributed greatly to permanently sealing the division of Korea, was most likely caused, to a very large extent, by the failure of the Moscow trusteeship agreement, which suggests that this failure of the trusteeship constituted a pivotal reason why the artificial division of Korea in 1945 turned into the permanent division in 1948 that gave rise to the two Koreas. On this score, I contended that the sovietization of northern Korea carried out in 1946 in contrast to the absence of such change in southern Korea was pushing the two Korean halves further apart from each other and that, by late 1947, this sovietization was almost complete, which meant that the only realistic chance to reunify Korea, if there ever was, passed away with the failure of the First U.S.-USSR Joint Commission in 1946, a year in which such sovietization was still not complete and the possibility, though a faint one, still existed of U.S.-Soviet accommodation on a unified Korean government. In this fashion, Korea lost, with the failure of the First U.S.-USSR Joint Commission in 1946, its only realistic chance of going the route of Finland or Austria after World War II—that is to say, becoming either a united autonomous state with a foreign policy orientation friendly to the USSR or a united sovereign state with a neutral foreign policy—and instead embarked firmly on the trajectory that led it to the outcome eventually achieved in Germany, namely, the division into two separate, ideologically opposed states.

It is true that the USSR, expecting the impending failure of the Second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission in 1947, proposed Korean reunification by means of simultaneous immediate withdrawal of Soviet and American troops from Korea and that this remained the official Soviet position until when the separate Korean states were established in August–September 1948. This suggests that Stalin was willing to entertain the creation of a unified Korea, though by means other than the trusteeship, even until the very eve of the creation of the two Koreas in 1948. This Soviet proposal, however, was rejected by the Americans who knew about the extent of sovietization carried out in northern Korea by late 1947 and feared that such troop withdrawal would only lead to communization of all Korea. The American response, therefore, was to refer the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly by means of which Korea might be reunified via general elections supervised by a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea. The American rationale was that general elections under the aegis of the UN would prevent a communist-dominated unified Korean government. However, by this time, the Cold War was in full swing, with the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, and U.S.-Soviet distrust had become such that Stalin refused to allow the UNTCOK to supervise elections in northern Korea, considering such UN-sponsored elections as designed to undermine the sovietized northern Korea that he had already created by then. In the light of all this, it is fair to conclude that, with the failure of the Second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission in 1947 and the sovietization of northern Korea carried out by then, the alternative proposals for Korean reunification advanced by the USSR (i.e., reunification after immediate withdrawal of foreign troops) and the United States (i.e., reunification via UN-supervised elections throughout Korea) could only fail, as the two occupation zones had by then already turned into *de facto* states with very different politico-economic systems.

Much of this discussion on the trusteeship has been concerned with not only how the Soviets and the Americans viewed this key issue but also how the various Korean groups reacted to it. This is indeed a central component of this book. I already alluded to the fact that the Soviets accused the Americans of acting in concert with “reactionary Korean forces” in opposing the Moscow trusteeship agreement. Although the evidence I presented in this book does not support the view that the Americans actually colluded with right-wing figures such as Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee in opposing the trusteeship, it is important to note that the Soviets viewed the Americans as having acted in this way. This is because the determined anti-trusteeship campaigns led by Kim Ku in the south and Cho Mansik in the north caused the Soviets to conclude that a trusteeship under a Left-Right

coalition was impossible and that the only kind of trusteeship acceptable was one that included only non-rightist Koreans who supported the trusteeship. An important aspect of this was the terrorist acts committed in early 1946 against Kim Il Sung, other northern leftist leaders and the Soviet occupation authorities by elements of this rightist camp, which convinced the Soviets and the northern leftists that cooperation with the rightists such as Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee—suspected of having been the masterminds behind these terrorist acts—was impossible. Partly as a consequence of these terrorist acts but mainly because of their opposition to the trusteeship, the rightists such as Kim and Rhee were thus deemed unacceptable by the Soviets for inclusion in a future unified Korean government, and the Soviets conveyed this assessment of these rightists to the Americans at the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission. However, this Soviet opposition to including these rightists was too much for the Americans to swallow and thus ended the commission in failure. In this manner, therefore, the negative reactions to the trusteeship on the part of the Korean Right formed a critical element in sealing the division of Korea. It was entirely plausible that, if the southern rightists such as Kim and Rhee had supported the trusteeship and proved to be cooperative in working with the Soviets, then they would have been allowed by the Soviets to take part in a unified Korean government. This is especially the case since the Soviets promised Cho that he would remain as the top northern Korean leader if only he cooperated with them in supporting the trusteeship agreement. There is no difficulty imagining the Soviets making the same kind of offer to Kim and Rhee for the top leadership posts in a unified Korean government, considering that these two and Cho shared the same brand of nationalism and that Cho was in fact a supporter of the Korean Provisional Government led by Kim.

In stating the conclusions of this book, it is worth dwelling further on the point that Korea's division became permanent, to a considerable extent, because the United States and the USSR took different approaches to the Moscow trusteeship agreement. Whereas the Soviets wanted the trusteeship to succeed, the Americans, particularly Hodge, were convinced of its failure and even may have secretly wanted it to fail. The Americans' concern, as I suggested, was that a successful trusteeship would result in a Korea controlled by leftists. It is, however, also true that the Americans probably were not willing to face even a capitalist united Korea with a neutral foreign policy. This was similar to the concern the United States had in Germany, where the Americans feared that a united Germany, even with a neutral foreign policy, would eventually lean closer to the USSR given the strength of the Left in a country located much closer to the USSR than to the United States. It was also probably the case that the Americans regarded

the Korean Left, who received direct support from the USSR, as powerful and that they feared a united Korea, even with a neutral foreign policy, would eventually lean unacceptably closer to the USSR, a country sharing borders with Korea and thus seen as having a stronger strategic interest in Korea than did the United States. In this American fear of a leftist-dominated Korea, the roles played by anticommunist early Cold Warriors such as Hodge and MacArthur were pivotal, as they opposed the official State Department policy of reaching an accommodation with the USSR on a Korean trusteeship and probably did not do their best to work for success of the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission. Furthermore, Hodge and the U.S. Military Government did not even try to promote the Moscow trusteeship agreement to the Koreans and may even have hinted to Koreans such as Syngman Rhee that the U.S. Military Government itself was opposed to the trusteeship agreement. However, as I have indicated in this book, the role played by Truman was arguably even more pivotal, since it was he who disapproved of the Moscow agreements—as negotiated by Byrnes—as being too “soft on communism” and went on to noticeably toughen U.S. policies toward the USSR. Given this overall change of tone in Truman’s stance toward the USSR, a Korean trusteeship as a result of successful U.S.-Soviet cooperation in Korea was almost a foregone conclusion. Thus, considering this overall opposition by both Truman and Hodge to reaching an accommodation with the USSR, there was some semblance of truth to the Soviet perception that the Americans were inciting “reactionary” Koreans to oppose the trusteeship, in so far as the Americans were certainly not *encouraging* these Koreans to support the trusteeship.

This last point brings one to an interesting counterfactual question. Namely, would the Korean Right led by Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee have supported the Moscow trusteeship agreement if Hodge and the U.S. Military Government had taken a supportive view of the agreement and encouraged these right-wing Koreans to swallow their national pride and support the agreement as the only available means to reunify Korea? In answering this question, two considerations come to the fore. First, as earlier stated, the Americans most likely viewed a successful trusteeship as leading to a leftist-dominated unified Korea with a foreign-policy orientation unacceptable to the United States, and, consequently, there was little chance they could have come out in active support of the agreement. Second, even if the Americans had come out in active support, as unlikely as this was, the evidence indicates that the rightists such as Kim Ku would not have turned pro-trusteeship. This is because these rightists regarded the trusteeship not as the only available means to reunify Korea but as the gravest insult to the Korean capacity for self-government, as made clear in the KPG’s opposition to the independence “in due course” proviso of the

Cairo Declaration. Apparently, as seen in Kim's campaign during 1946–1948 to achieve Korean reunification by getting the KPG recognized as the legitimate government of all Korea, Kim lost all faith in working with the leftists and the USSR in carrying out the Moscow agreement and instead sought to effect Korean reunification through some other means. However, these efforts by Kim could not succeed, as the Soviets viewed the trusteeship as the only acceptable means to reunification and viewed all opposition to it as subversive. That Cho Mansik, a rightist who shared Kim's brand of nationalism, persisted in opposing the trusteeship even in the face of a determined Soviet campaign to promote the agreement and in defiance of the intense Soviet pressure on him to accept it suggests that Kim also would probably have persisted in his anti-trusteeship campaign even if the Americans had come out strongly in support of the agreement and encouraged him to support it.

Taking into account these conclusions, therefore, an important dimension of the Soviet support for the trusteeship is that the Soviet policy in 1945–1948 underwent changes and was apparently flexible enough throughout this period to accommodate the creation of a unified Korea even though the Moscow trusteeship agreement itself met a conclusive failure in its implementation by late 1947 with the breakdown of the Second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission. This finding differs from the conventional view that Stalin only wanted to create a Soviet satellite regime in northern Korea throughout this period and that this inflexible position was the only policy goal Stalin had in mind for Korea. At the same time, this finding is similar to the observation Naimark (1995) makes regarding Soviet policy toward Germany during roughly the same period (1945–1949), according to which this Soviet policy underwent changes over time and Stalin simultaneously pursued a number of parallel policies for Germany's future that were seemingly mutually contradictory.

However, the important point in my comparison of Korea with Germany is not so much that Korea and Germany both became divided into two separate states in 1948–1949 as the possibility that Korea could have gone the route of Finland or Austria. It does not seem unreasonable to accept that the same Stalin who tolerated a unified capitalist Finland—albeit with a foreign policy friendly to the USSR—next door to Leningrad and the same Stalin who remained ambivalent about what to do with Austria until his death in 1953 was also ambivalent about what to do with Korea when the Soviet military occupation of Korea began in August 1945. It also does not seem difficult to accept that the same Stalin who was undecided about the future of Germany, a country strategically a lot more important than Korea, was also undecided about Korea's future at the same time. A major difference between Korea on one hand and Germany,

Austria and Finland on the other is that Stalin favored implementing a trusteeship over Korea while he had no such plans for the latter. Given that Korea already had an internationally agreed framework for achieving reunification, namely the trusteeship, unlike Germany or Austria where no such framework existed to achieve reunification of the separate occupation zones, it seems even more plausible that Stalin may have been more optimistic about reunifying Korea than about reunifying Germany or Austria.

After considering all these factors, therefore, Stalin's Korea policy during 1945–1948 may be characterized in the following fashion.

Given the strategic importance of Korea as a buffer against possible future threats from a resurrected Japan in alliance with the United States, Stalin, in the fall of 1945, probably favored creating a unified Korean state by means of the trusteeship that would be neutral or preferably friendly to the USSR in its foreign-policy orientation. Stalin probably saw such a unified Korea as better suited for Soviet national security than a divided Korea with a South Korea firmly allied with the United States and Japan against the USSR. However, apparently in order to strengthen the chances that such a unified Korea would not turn pro-American, Stalin decided to sovietize northern Korea to a certain extent and also to prop up leftist forces throughout Korea in a bid to make sure that any unified Korea created as a result of the trusteeship would be dominated by leftists. It was thus only when the United States and the Korean Right turned out against the Moscow trusteeship agreement that Korea no longer effectively had an internationally agreed framework for reunification, an outcome which prompted Stalin to accelerate the sovietization of northern Korea in 1946 as an insurance policy in the now likely event that Korea would not be reunified. However, until the country's permanent division in 1948, Stalin still left open the possibility of reunification via the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission of 1947 or some other means, such as reunification following immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. In sum, therefore, Stalin's Korea policy in 1945–1948 was apparently a complex one that underwent changes and a flexible one that provided for unexpected contingencies—such as a favorable turn of events in the international arena—to make reunification possible, though preferably on Moscow's terms, until the very eve of the rise of the two Koreas in 1948.

Apart from the main summary presented above, I have made other findings in this book, including the following. First, my research showed that the Soviets were actually quite involved in supporting and directing leftist movements in southern Korea during 1945–1948, a finding which differs from the view that the Soviets did not seek to influence events in the U.S.-occupied southern Korea. Indeed, a finding of particular interest is that Kim Il Sung and the northern communists were deeply influencing, if not

actually controlling, the southern leftists as early as late 1945—early 1946. I have thus demonstrated, based on new archival evidence, the nature of the relationships between the Soviets and the various Korean leftist groups in both halves of Korea, while at the same time shedding light on the nature of the Soviet occupation regime. I also provided evidence on how the Soviets related to Kim Ku, Syngman Rhee, Kim Kyusik, and other southern rightists and explained how the Soviet attitudes toward these southern rightists changed over time.

Second, I have supplied a discussion of how the Soviets saw Korea as intricately connected to developments in Japan, East-Central Europe and elsewhere in the world and how this affected their policies toward Korea during 1945–1948. By making explicit linkages between the developments in Korea and those elsewhere, I have argued that Stalin’s Korea policy cannot be examined in isolation from his policies toward other parts of the world. Furthermore, I tried to explain Stalin’s policy toward Korea, including his caution to avoid “fraternization” between Soviet and American troops stationed there, in terms of Soviet domestic politics—namely, Stalin’s need to maintain his grip on power at home in the face of a liberalizing tendency after the successful wartime alliance with the Western capitalist powers.

Third, I have suggested that the failure to implement the Moscow agreements facilitated an early onset of the Cold War in Korea and that the U.S.–Soviet disagreements in Korea and Japan also contributed to an onset of the Cold War worldwide which was earlier (i.e., early 1946) than the conventional starting date for the Cold War (i.e., March 1947, with the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine). By thus highlighting how the U.S.–Soviet discords in Korea—including the failure to implement the trusteeship—contributed in an important way to postwar failures of the United States and the USSR to work together multilaterally, I have sought to make the Korean case relevant to scholars studying early–Cold War history in other parts of the world.

Finally, I made an additional set of findings at the level of adding new dimensions or new information to interpretations of well-known facts or documents. First, I provided a fresh look at the Cairo Declaration of 1943. By pointing out that the Declaration’s “due course” clause was the work of Churchill and Roosevelt, I suggested that the British desire to maintain European colonial empires after the war and Roosevelt’s low opinion of the Korean capacity for self-government combined with his complicity in this British scheme may have led to withholding Korea’s immediate independence after Japan’s defeat. Second, I presented information on the state of American expertise on Korea until the early 1940s and how this affected U.S. policy toward Korea, especially in comparison with the state of

Korean studies in the USSR and the Soviet expertise on Korea. Overall, I made the assessment that Korean studies and expertise on Korea were more advanced in the USSR than in the United States at the end of World War II despite the damage done to the Soviet Korea expertise by Stalin's persecution of Soviet Koreans. Accordingly, I posited that this Soviet advantage in Korea expertise, abetted by the presence of a Soviet consulate-general in Seoul throughout 1925–1946, contributed to a Soviet Korea policy which was better prepared and more nuanced than the U.S. policy toward Korea.

Third, I supplied new information on the extent to which Alger Hiss and other Soviet agents in Western governments may have helped shape U.S. policy toward Korea in a way favorable to the USSR both during World War II and afterward. Based on this new evidence regarding Soviet espionage and an examination of the Yalta Conference documents on Korea, I suggested that the Roosevelt administration may have too easily conceded to the Soviets an important role in shaping Korea's future after the war.

Fourth, I presented an analysis of the complex international factors that went into the operation of the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK). This is an important aspect in the international history of the Korean division. I observed here that it was precisely the domination of the UN by the United States and her allies in the early postwar years which Stalin wanted to end. Stalin thus saw the trusteeship as a useful instrument for achieving this objective, since successful trusteeships over colonies of capitalist powers would lead to these colonies' independence and membership in the UN. At the same time, however, I also observed that the politics within the UNTCOK was by no means dominated by the United States and that the UNTCOK's decisions on Korea were determined as much by the UNTCOK members' own national interests in other parts of the world as by any objective assessment of the Korean people's needs as such.

## NOTES

### *Introduction*

1. Zachary Karabell, *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World and the Cold War, 1946-1962* (Louisiana State University Press, 1999). In this examination of U.S. interventions in Greece, Italy, Iran, Guatemala, Lebanon, Cuba, and Laos in 1946–1962, Karabell concludes that the roles played by local actors or conditions in these countries were as important as the decisions made in Washington in shaping these interventions. Karabell thus argues that third-world actors, as much as the Great Powers, have shaped the international system and that Great Power interventions in the third world cannot succeed without entrenched local interest groups these Powers can work with. For other recent works that draw this picture of the tail wagging the dog—that is, the smaller powers manipulating the Great Powers, see, for example: Alexandr A. Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, “One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958–1964 (W.W. Norton, 1997); Ilya V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Ivan R. Dee, 1996); and Hope Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton University Press, 2003).
2. I borrowed the phrase “God’s playground” from the title of Norman Davies’ work on Poland, that is, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland, Volume I: The Origins to 1795* (Columbia University Press, 1982). The rough parallel between Korea and Poland here is an apt one, as both nations had enjoyed an earlier history of greatness (Korea during the Three Kingdom period with the powerful kingdom of Koguryō and Poland during the era of the Polish-Lithuanian Empire), followed by a more recent history of victimization by their Great Power neighbors (Korea by China, Japan, and Russia and Poland by Germany and Russia).
3. Stefan Creuzberger and Manfred Görtemaker (eds.), *Gleichschaltung unter Stalin? Die Entwicklung der Parteien in östlichen Europa, 1944-1949* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002).
4. Norman Naimark, Review of Creuzberger and Görtemaker (eds.), *ibid.*, in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 171–72.
5. Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak* (St. Martin’s Press, 1999), pp. 4–5.

6. For representative works by diplomatic historians on American policy toward Korea after World War II including the Korean War years, see, for example, Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume I: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* and *Volume II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton University Press, 1981, 1990); James Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade-American Foreign Policy in Korea, 1941-1950* (University of Hawaii Press, 1985); and William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History and Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton University Press, 1997, 2004).
7. Bischof, *Austria*, pp. 3–4.
8. Robert Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (University of California Press, 1972); Cumings (1981, 1990), *The Origins of the Korean War*; Erik Van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone: Stalin's policy in Korea, 1945-1947* (Oxford: Berg, 1989); and Kathryn Weathersby, *Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 8 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1993).
9. See Van Ree, *Socialism*; and Weathersby, *Soviet Aims*. For two recent works covering northern Korea under Soviet occupation (1945–1948), see: Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Cornell University Press, 2003); and Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945-1960* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
10. Norman Naimark, “Stalin and Europe in the Postwar Period, 1945–53: Issues and Problems,” *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 2, 2004/1, pp. 31–32.
11. Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 8–9. Agreeing with Naimark’s assessment of the German situation in 1945 is a recent work on the post-1945 history of Eastern-Central Europe based in part on new archival materials: A.D. Nekipelov (chief ed.), *Tsentral’no-Vostochnaia Evropa vo vtoroi polovine XX veka: tom pervyi: stanovlenie “real’nogo sotsializma” 1945–1965* (Moscow: Izd. Nauka, 2000), pp. 443–446.
12. Wilfried Loth, *Stalin’s Unwanted Child: The Soviet Union, the German Question and the Founding of the GDR*, Robert Hogg (trans.) (St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. xi.
13. Loth, *Unwanted Child*.

## I U.S. and Soviet Policies toward Korea, 1945–1948

### 1 U.S. and Soviet Policies toward Korea until August 1945

1. Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (University of Hawaii Press, 1990).

2. It is important to note that China's traditional policy toward Korea within the context of the old tributary system could not be described as "predatory" in the modern Western imperialist sense of this term. The relationship between China as the suzerain and Korea as the vassal in the tributary system was of an informal yet complex nature and indeed was somewhat of a mystery to those Western diplomats in the late nineteenth century who tried to understand the nature of this relationship using Western concepts of international relations. However, this traditionally informal tributary relationship did turn into a more interventionist and predatory one after 1876, as China's weaknesses in the face of Japan's aggressive expansion into Korea gradually prompted Li Hungchang and other Chinese officials to assert China's claims on Korea in a much more forceful fashion, which was resented by Kojong, the Korean king. The resulting confrontation between China and Japan over Korea was resolved only by a show of force, when the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 ended in Japan's complete victory. For China's policies toward Korea in the 1876–1885 period and how these departed from the traditional tributary relationship, see: Frederick Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy, 1876-1885* (The Shoe String Press, 1967); and Kim Dal Choong, "Chinese Imperialism in Korea: With Special Reference to Sino-Korean Trade Regulations in 1882 and 1883," *Journal of East and West Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1976), pp. 97–110. For a discussion of the tributary system and how this differed from Western concepts of international relations, see: Melvin Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Louisiana State University Press, 1945). As for the Russian and Japanese designs on Korea and how these eventually clashed in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, see the following section on Russian policies toward Korea up to August 1945.
3. Yur-bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (eds.), *Korean–American Relations 1866-1977* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 1–4.
4. For T. Roosevelt's views on human civilization and the almost Lamarckian cataloguing of the world's various peoples according to a Social Darwinist worldview, see *Biological Analogies in History* (Oxford University Press, 1910), the text of his lecture given at Oxford in 1910. It is to be noted that Roosevelt was not a racist per se, as his views on the subject included room for according respect and admiration to those non-Western peoples such as the Japanese who had proven by their actions their capacity to emulate or match Western achievements in modernization. This allowed Roosevelt to prefer Japan to Russia, which he viewed as a reactionary, despotic power that posed a threat to U.S. interests in the Far East. For his views on Russia compared to Japan, see his letter to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, June 13, 1904, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: Volume IV The Square Deal 1903-1905* (Harvard University Press, 1951), Elting E. Morison (ed.), pp. 829–833.
5. T. Roosevelt's letter to Hermann Speck von Sternberg, August 28, 1900, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: Volume II The Years of Preparation 1898-1900* (Harvard University Press, 1951), Elting E. Morison (ed.), p. 1394.

6. T. Roosevelt's letter to George von Lengerke Meyer, February 6, 1905, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: Volume IV The Square Deal 1903-1905* (Harvard University Press, 1951), Elting E. Morison (ed.), p. 1116.
7. Sources quoted by Robert Dallek in his *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 390–91. It is to be noted that, though Roosevelt wrote the letter, he phrased it in such a way as to make it appear that it was written by Owen Lattimore, an American expert on Asia, in response to Chiang's earlier request to Lattimore to pass on his ideas on postwar peace to Roosevelt.
8. Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull: Volume II* (Macmillan, 1948), pp. 1595–1596. See also Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning* (Cassell, 1965), p. 378.
9. For the text of this declaration, see: "Conference of President Roosevelt, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Prime Minister Churchill in North Africa," The Department of State *Bulletin*, December 4, 1943, vol. IX, no. 232, p. 393.
10. In a discussion on the proposed agenda for Roosevelt's conferences with Chiang, Churchill, and Stalin, Marshall, the army chief of staff, asked Roosevelt whether it would be wise to discuss with Stalin the matter of Chiang's attitude toward Russia's participation in the Pacific War. In response, Roosevelt said the following: "The Chinese desire equal rights with Russia in Outer Mongolia. Chiang Kai-shek wants Manchuria back. Unquestionably a discussion of this subject will cause trouble. The matter might be worked out, however, on the basis of 'free zones'. The Generalissimo [i.e., Chiang] desires a trusteeship over Korea, administered by Russia, China and the United States as trustees." See: Minutes of the President's Meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 19, 1943, 2 PM, Admiral's Cabin, U.S.S. "Iowa," *FRUS*, Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943, I. Pre-Conference Papers, p. 257.
11. Hull, *Memoirs*, p. 1584.
12. Evidence for this includes, for example, the memorandum by the Chinese delegation at the Cairo Conference containing a proposed conference agenda, which was circulated to Hopkins and Roosevelt, in which is stated: "China, Great Britain and the United States should agree to recognize the independence of Korea after the war. The adherence of the USSR to this agreement for the recognition of Korea's independence is welcomed at any time." See Memoranda by the Chinese Government [Cairo, November 24, 1943] *FRUS*, Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, II. The First Cairo Conference, p. 389.
13. Minutes of the president's Meeting with the joint chiefs of staff, November 19, 1943, 2 PM, Admiral's Cabin, U.S.S. "Iowa," *FRUS*, Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, I. Pre-Conference Papers, p. 257.
14. Hull, *Memoirs*, p. 1584.
15. See, for example, Robert E. Sherwood's *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 777, where Roosevelt is quoted as telling Stalin with pride about the "American record in helping the people

- of the Philippines to prepare themselves for independence” while launching on “one of his favorite topics, which was the education of the peoples of the Far Eastern colonial areas . . . in the arts of self-government.”
16. *FRUS*, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, p. 770.
  17. *FRUS*, Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, p. 869. This is a record of the minutes of a meeting of the Pacific War Council, held in January 1944, shortly after the Tehran Conference, during which Roosevelt informed the council of his discussions with Stalin and Chiang at the conference. According to Roosevelt, “Marshal Stalin had specifically agreed to the idea . . . that the Koreans are not yet capable of exercising and maintaining independent government and that they should be placed under a 40-year tutelage.” It is to be noted that Roosevelt here does not say who the originator of the idea of the 40-year tutelage was, but it is obvious the idea had been approved by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Chiang before it was presented to Stalin for his consent.
  18. See this assessment of Roosevelt’s anticolonial, antiimperialist attitude in the introduction to *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume I Alliance Emerging*, Warren F. Kimball (ed.) (Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 14–15.
  19. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 511–513.
  20. Eden, *The Eden Memoirs*, p. 514.
  21. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, p. 511.
  22. See also Eden’s account of this episode in his memoirs, *The Eden Memoirs*, p. 514.
  23. For information on the UN trusteeship system and on the work at the UN Conference in San Francisco of April 1945 on this subject, see the article entitled “Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Charter of the United Nations,” The Department of State *Bulletin* December 30, 1945, vol. XIII, no. 340, pp. 1037–1044, written by Ralph J. Bunche, then an official in the State Department who had been a member of the American delegation at the San Francisco Conference. Bunche, no doubt following the official State Department policy of publicly emphasizing the unity of the Allied powers on this issue, as well as on others, glosses over the serious difference between the U.S. and British positions on this issue and gives only a hint of such a difference.
  24. This Soviet article was published at roughly the same time as Bunche’s article and the difference in emphasis between the two pieces is striking: E. Zhukov, “K voprosu ob opeke,” *Novoe Vremia* no. 14 (24) December 15, 1945, pp. 3–6.
  25. Bunche, “Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Charter of the United Nations,” pp. 1041–1042.
  26. Zhukov, “K voprosu ob opeke,” p. 5.
  27. Bunche, “Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Charter of the United Nations,” p. 1040.
  28. Truman in his memoirs says that the decision to go ahead with the San Francisco Conference and to hold it as if “Roosevelt had directed” it was

- the first decision he had made as president. See *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Volume One Year of Decisions*, p. 9.
29. For example, Truman scolded Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov on April 23 for Soviet violations of the Yalta agreements, to which Molotov protested he had “never been talked to like that” in his life. See *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Volume One Year of Decisions*, p. 82.
  30. See Dower’s description of this turf war in John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1979), pp. 105–106, 110, 229, 294, 310–311.
  31. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), pp. 15–16.
  32. On these figures as well as the deplorable state of Korean studies or expertise on Korea in the United States until the end of World War II, see: “George McAfee McCune (1908-1948) and His Works,” *The Journal of Modern Korean Studies*, vol. 2, December 1985, pp. 34–42; “Shannon McCune and His Korean Studies,” by Han-kyo Kim, *The Journal of Modern Korean Studies*, vol. 4, May 1990, pp. 9–10; “Benjamin Burch Weems (1914-1986),” *The Journal of Modern Korean Studies*, vol. 3, December 1987, pp. 148–149; and “Gregory Henderson and His Korean Scholarship,” *The Journal of Modern Korean Studies*, vol. 4, May 1990, pp. 94–95.
  33. Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. ix–xi, 10–15.
  34. According to the official Soviet version of the role played by the Red Army in Japan’s defeat, the two-week-long Soviet campaign against the Japanese army on the Asian mainland in August 1945 goes down as one of the most glorious chapters in the military history of Russia-USSR. An article in a Soviet current affairs journal denounces what the author calls the “various falsifiers of history,” who “belittle the immense role played by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces in routing militaristic Japan and, at the same time, overestimate the part played by the United States.” See: I. Kovalenko, “The Rout of Japanese Militarism and the National Liberation Revolutions in Asia,” *Far Eastern Affairs*, no. 4, 1985, pp. 13–14. This official version of the Soviet role in the defeat of Japan will be contested later in discussing the reasons why Stalin agreed to the American proposal for the 38th parallel.
  35. The overview of Russo-Korean contacts and Russian/Soviet studies on Korea presented in this paragraph and the following few paragraphs is based largely on the excellent recent work on this topic *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost’*, Iuri V. Vanin (ed.) (Moscow, 1999), which has been published in South Korea in a Korean language translation as *Rōsiaūi han’guk yōn’gu*, Ki Kwangso (trans.) (Seoul: P’ulbit, 1999). My overview is based on the relevant sections of this Korean language edition, found on pages 13–191. The citations that follow that are from this book refer to pages in the Korean language edition.

36. See Vanin (ed.) (1999), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, p. 13, which cites: Dzhiovani del' Plano Karpini, *Istoriia mongolov: puteshestviia v vostochnye strany Plano Karpini i Rubruka* (Moscow, 1957), p. 34.
37. Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 14–19, which cites: B.D. Pak, *Rossia i Koreia* (Moscow, 1979), pp. 29–30. These works include: travelogues by the explorer N.F. Kruzenshtern who collected valuable materials on Korea in 1805 during one of his world voyages; also travelogues in 1824 in St. Petersburg by E.F. Timkovskii, the head of the Russian Orthodox mission in Beijing, who described his encounters with the Koreans in Beijing; and a collection of information about the ancient peoples of Asia published by N. Ia. Bichurin (also known as Iakinf), a renowned sinologist who lived in Beijing during 1807–1821 as head of the Russian Orthodox mission, which describes the ancient history of Korea based on *Shiji*, the famous second-century, B.C., work of history by Sima Qian.
38. The Korean refugees in the Russian Far East had no legal status until 1884, when Russia and Korea established diplomatic relations. Thereafter, those who had arrived in Russia before 1884 were given the right to acquire Russian citizenship and a 40-acre plot of land. Those arriving after 1884 could become Russian citizens under the condition that they had lived in Russia for at least five years, were in good health, and were engaged in a useful occupation. Between 1898 and 1917, about one out of every four Koreans in the Maritime Province possessed Russian citizenship. See John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 74–76.
39. See Stephan, *The Russian Far East*, p. 75, for information in the rest of this paragraph.
40. Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, p. 54, which cites: L.R. Kontsevich and G.V. Podstavin, *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1976, no.1. Podstavin also published numerous teaching materials and manuals in the field of Korean studies.
41. Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 35–39, which cites, among others: A.D. Stashevskii, *Koreia: Geograficheskii ocherk, Voennyi sbornik*, no. 11, 12, 1885; and M.A. Podzhio, *Ocherki Korei* (Saint Petersburg, 1892).
42. For contemporary Russian descriptions of Korea at the time of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, see Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 39–40, which cites, for example: I.P. Azbelov, *Iaponiia i Koreia* (Moscow, 1895); and P.N. Simanskii, *Iapono-kitaiskaia voina 1894–1895 gg.* (Saint Petersburg, 1895).
43. See, for example: Furuya Tetsuo, *Nichi-Ro Sensō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1966); Kurobane Shigeru, *Nichi-Ro Sensō Shiron* (Tokyo, 1982); Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881-1904* (University of California, Berkeley, 1958); Okamoto Shumpei, *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War* (New York, 1970); and John A. White, *The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (Princeton, 1964).

44. This, at least, is the main conclusion of Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (Longman, 1985). The rest of this paragraph draws on the main points made in Nish's work.
45. Nish, *The Origins*, p. 7.
46. For Mao's account of his feelings at the time toward Japan's victory over Russia, see Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (Grove Press, 1968), pp. 137–138.
47. According to documents preserved in the present Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), the Soviet Union conferred, in 1920, official diplomatic recognition on the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) in exile in Shanghai, which maintained its own diplomatic mission in Moscow until June 1922. See: "Vopros o edinom vremennom pravitel'stve dlia Korei," prepared by Zabrodin, deputy director of the Second Far Eastern Department, December 1945, AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, p. 1, d. 9, l. 16. This is an important document which shows that the USSR was the only foreign state that conferred official diplomatic recognition on the fledgling KPG during the course of the latter's entire existence.
48. J. Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949* (Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 10.
49. Pak Hwan, *Rōsia hanin minjok undongsa* (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1995). A representative "revolutionary martyr" was A.P. Kim Stankevich (1885–1918), who was born in the Russian Maritime District in a Korean farmer's household and grew up to become a Bolshevik by the time of the first Russian Revolution in 1905. When the Reds took over Khabarovsk in December 1917, Kim became one of the three members of the Bolshevik city council and, at the same time, the foreign affairs commissar of the city soviet. Kim was also the leading force behind the organization, in Khabarovsk in 1918, of *Hanin Sahoedang* (Korean Socialist Party), the first socialist organization in Korean history. Arrested and killed, along with other Bolshevik leaders, by the Whites and the foreign interventionist troops in 1918, Kim was subsequently made into a revolutionary martyr by the Soviet authorities. To this day, on the street corner of the building in Khabarovsk where Kim used to work, one can see a bronze plaque bearing her facial portrait dedicated to the memory of her "heroic death." After Kim's death, Yi Tonghwi, Kim Rip, and other leaders of *Hanin Sahoedang* carried on the legacy of her work. See Pak (1995), *Rōsia hanin minjok undongsa*, pp. 279–301.
50. For the changes under the Bolsheviks in the area of history, see Anatole G. Mazour, *The Writing of History in the Soviet Union* (Stanford University, Hoover Institution Press, 1971), pp. xi–23.
51. For a discussion of the Soviet approaches to Asian economic development, including Soviet academic debates on the concept of the Asiatic mode of production, see Leonid A. Petrov, "Turning Revolutionaries into Party Scholar-bureaucrats: Marxist Historians in Colonial Korea and DPRK," a paper presented at the International Conference "Between Colonialism and

- Nationalism: Power and Subjectivity in Korea, 1931-1950," University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, May 4-6, 2001) [<http://www.fortunecity.com/meltingpot/champion/65/bureaucrats.html>], pp. 3-7. Petrov's work also provides a discussion of the developments in Marxist historiography in Korea, Japan, and China in the 1920s-1930s.
52. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam June, 1961), pp. 177-255.
  53. "The British Rule in India," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker (ed.) (W.W. Norton, 1978), pp. 657-658. For Marx's Orientalist views and his concept of the Asiatic mode of production, as well as the problems in applying Marx's analytic framework to a non-Western context, see the trenchant analysis in: Germaine A. Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 127-178.
  54. V.I. Lenin, "Imperializm kak vysshiaia stadiia kapitalizma," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th edition, vol. 27, August 1915-June 1916 (Moscow, 1969), pp. 299-426. For Soviet and Comintern efforts to apply Marxism-Leninism to Asian contexts, see Hoston, *Marxism*, pp. 89-94, 127-145.
  55. The information presented in this paragraph and the following two paragraphs is based on Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 89-125, 140-149, 157-191.
  56. Vanin (ed.), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 90-91.
  57. N. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (translators) (Little, Brown & Co., 1990), p. 81.
  58. M.M. Narinskii, "Politika Sovetskogo Soiuzu v Evrope v 20-30-kh godakh," in *Rossiiskaia diplomatiia: istoriia i sovremennost'*, I.S. Ivanov et al. (eds.) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), p. 371. For Stalin's public speech enunciating the doctrine of socialism in one country, see "Vopros o pobeде sotsializma v odnoi strane," *K voprosam leninizma*, contained in *I. Stalin: sochineniia*, vol. 8, January-November 1926 (Moscow, 1948), pp. 60-90.
  59. Michael Sheng demonstrates in his *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin and the United States* (Princeton University Press, 1998) that Stalin exerted a considerable degree of influence on Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1930s and 1940s, contrary to the conventional scholarship that sees Mao as pursuing a nationalistic foreign policy often in resistance to Stalin's mistaken interference and pressures in this same period. In fact, Sheng argues, during China's war of resistance against Japan, Mao did everything in his power to consolidate his ties to Moscow. Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2003), shows that this strong Soviet influence over Mao and the CCP continued during the early post-World War II years.
  60. The discussion of Soviet foreign policy in 1933-1939 in this paragraph drew from, among others, Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World, 1917-1991* (Arnold Publishers, 1998), pp. 50-54.

61. "Russian Archives, Collection," Protokol no. 52: Resheniia Politbiuro TsK VKP (b), August 1–September 9, 1937: Reshenie no. 734—O koreitsakh [Decision no. 734—"On the Koreans"].
62. "Russian Archives, Collection," Protokol no. 54: Resheniia Politbiuro TsK VKP (b), September 23–October 25, 1937: Reshenie no. 22—O koreitsakh [Decision no. 22—"On the Koreans"].
63. Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing*, pp. 9–19.
64. Vanin (ed.) (1999), *Izuchenie Korei v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 119–121.
65. See Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (Oxford University Press, 1996), for a work that emphasizes this Soviet insecurity.
66. Naimark (1995), *The Russians in Germany* and (2004) "Stalin and Europe in the Postwar Period, 1945–53: Issues and Problems." See, among others, Antonio Varsori and Elena Calandri (eds.), *The Failure of Peace in Europe, 1943–1948* (Palgrave, 2002).
67. Loth (1998), *Unwanted Child*.
68. Naimark (1995), *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 9–10, 465–471.
69. In his remarks to the Yugoslav communist leader Milovan Djilas in April 1945 regarding Soviet plans for postwar settlement, Stalin said: "This war [i.e., World War II] is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise." Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* Michael B. Petrovich (trans.) (Harcourt Brace & Co., 1962), p. 114.
70. Kennan's account of this meeting, as well as his analysis of Stalin's thinking, is contained in his *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1961), pp. 379–382.
71. For these quotes, see Kennan (1961), *Russia and the West*, pp. 379–382.
72. Harriman's telegram to Roosevelt, December 15, 1944, *FRUS*, The Conference of Malta and Yalta, 1945, pp. 378–379.
73. Kennan (1961), *Russia and the West*, pp. 379–382.
74. "Post-War Status of Korea," *FRUS*, The Conference of Malta and Yalta, 1945, pp. 358–361.
75. For these quotes, see the same *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 358–361.
76. The Venona documents establish beyond doubt that Hiss, as well as others such as Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were Soviet agents: *Venona: Soviet espionage and the American response, 1939–1957*, Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner (eds.) (National Security Agency–Central Intelligence Agency, 1996). The U.S. National Security Agency declassified and released the Venona documents in batches between 1995 and 1998. For discussions of the Venona documents and of Soviet espionage in the United States in the 1940s, see: John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (Yale University Press, 1999); and Nigel West, *Venona: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War* (Harper Collins, 1999). The first work by Haynes and Klehr draws on the Venona documents

themselves as well as documents from the Moscow archives (including the Comintern files at RGASPI), FBI files, and other American materials.

77. For a record of this Roosevelt–Stalin conversation at Yalta, see FRUS, *The Conference of Malta and Yalta, 1945*, p. 770.
78. These quotes are taken from the same FRUS, *ibid.*, p. 770.

## 2 *U.S. and Soviet Policies in August–December 1945*

1. It is to be noted that Rusk, in a memorandum dated July 12, 1950, remembers the timing of this SWINK meeting as the night of August 10–11, 1945: FRUS, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1039. However, for purposes of our discussion here, the difference between August 14 and August 10–11 is not significant.
2. Dean Rusk, *As I saw it*, Daniel S. Papp (ed.) (W.W. Norton & Co., 1990), pp. 123–124.
3. On the eclipse of the State Department's influence in foreign-policy making during and at the end of World War II, see Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 11–12, 15–16, which also discusses the bureaucratic infighting within the department during those years. Kennan also discusses the department's powerlessness and the military's dominance in policy-making during and immediately after the war in his memoirs: Kennan, *Russia and the West*, pp. 369–371. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, pp. 28–29, also makes the same points.
4. George M. McCune, "Korea: The First Year of Liberation," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 1 (3/1947), p. 5.
5. For MacArthur's handling of the occupation of Korea, see D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur: Volume III Triumph and Disaster 1945-1964* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985), pp. 388–396. It is to be noted that even Japan, or for that matter, Asia as a whole, was given a lower priority in terms of manpower and resources during World War II than Europe, given the "Europe first" strategy of F.D. Roosevelt and his military advisors. MacArthur himself was the most ardent critic of this "Europe first" strategy. See Michael Schaller, "MacArthur's Japan: The View from Washington," *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader*, William M. Leary (ed.) (University of Nebraska Press, 2001), pp. 289, 291.
6. Khrushchev notes that Stalin, who already was acting dictatorially before World War II, began to act even more arbitrarily after the defeat of Germany. Even during the war, Khrushchev, though he was a member of the politburo, was rarely let in on the important foreign-policy decisions Stalin made: Khrushchev (1990), *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 84. For a brief synthesis of recent evidence illustrating Stalin's control over Soviet foreign policy, see Naimark (2004), "Stalin and Europe in the Postwar Period, 1945–53: Issues and Problems," pp. 28–31.
7. Khrushchev, for one, was certainly aware of this when he wrote: "If we compare what we [the Soviet Union] contributed with what the United

- States contributed to the defeat of Japan, then we have to recognize that we did even less in the war against Japan than the Americans and the British did to defeat Hitler's Germany. In fact, their contribution against Hitler was larger, even though they gained victory mainly through the blood of the Soviet people and the exhaustion of our resources." See Khrushchev (1990), *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 84. That the Red Army's victory over Japan was achieved at a relatively little cost to the USSR is attested to also by Dean Rusk, who wrote the following regarding the Soviet victory over the Japanese Kwantung Army: "They [i.e., the Soviets] vastly overestimated Japanese strength there, and when the Russians attacked, they found that Japan's once-elite Manchurian army had been heavily depleted to reinforce Japanese positions in the Pacific. The Soviets encountered very little opposition in Manchuria." See Rusk (1990), *As I saw it*, p. 123.
8. David Murphy, *What Stalin Knew: The Enigma of Barbarossa* (Yale University Press, 2005); and Constantine Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly: The Tragic First Ten Days of World War Two on the Eastern Front* (Houghton Mifflin, 2005). Anastas Mikoyan, one of Stalin's top lieutenants, left a detailed personal account of how Stalin dismissed all warning signals of the impending German attack in June 1941. See: A.I. Mikoyan, *Tak bylo: razmyshleniia o minushem* (Moscow: Vagirus, 1999), pp. 378, 388.
  9. A.V. Torkunov, *Zagadochnaia voina: koreiskii konflikt, 1950-1953 godov* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000). As for Stalin's care not to be dragged into a direct armed conflict with the United States once the Korean War started, this has already been demonstrated by the archival materials presented in Cold War International History Project *Bulletin*, issues 6–7, Winter 1995–1996 (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.), pp. 30–119.
  10. According to Khrushchev's account of the German capitulation in the closing days of World War II, Stalin was impressed by Eisenhower's integrity in observing Allied agreements: the American general, in accordance with these agreements, let the Soviets capture Berlin when his troops could have done so first and, in overall occupation of Germany, held back his armies to observe agreed-upon lines of demarcation. See Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, pp. 220–222. In general, Stalin apparently had a very high opinion of the fighting caliber of American troops and of the importance of keeping agreements with the Americans regarding troop deployments in areas of joint military occupation. It is thus plausible that Stalin remembered Eisenhower's integrity in Germany and thus decided to observe the agreement regarding the 38th parallel, expecting a similar observation on the part of the American troops in Korea.
  11. See the citation in David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy 1939-1956* (Yale University Press, 1994), p. 132.
  12. Though Hiroshima and Nagasaki hit Stalin with a full-blown immediacy of the power of atomic weapons, Stalin had been aware of the importance of atomic bombs and had been secretly informed about the progress of the

- Manhattan Project well before Truman informed him at Potsdam Conference of the successful testing of the American atomic bomb. As Edvard Radzinsky says, the atom bomb had troubled Stalin already for a long time before Hiroshima, and it meant “life or death” to everything Stalin stood for. See E. Radzinsky, *Stalin* H.T. Willetts (translator) (Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), p. 496.
13. Holloway, *Stalin and the bomb*, p. 127.
  14. For a stimulating discussion of these early estimates, see Larry A. Valero, “The American Joint Intelligence Committee and Estimates of the Soviet Union, 1945–1947: An Impressive Record,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Summer 2000, no. 9 (Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA), pp. 70–71. Valero notes that these early estimates were, on the whole, very accurate.
  15. Valero, “The American Joint Intelligence Committee and Estimates of the Soviet Union, 1945–1947: An Impressive Record,” p. 71.
  16. Valero, “The American Joint Intelligence Committee and Estimates of the Soviet Union, 1945–1947: An Impressive Record,” p. 70.
  17. V.V. Pozniakov, “Tainaia voina Iosifa Stalina: sovetskie razvedyvatel’nye sluzhby v SSHA nakanune i v nachale kholodnoi voiny, 1943–1953,” A.O. Chubar’ian (ed.), *Stalinskoe desiatiletie kholodnoi voiny: fakty i gipotezy* (Moscow: NAUKA, 1999), pp. 188–206. See also the earlier-quoted works on the Venona documents and Soviet espionage in the United States during and after World War II [i.e., Haynes and Klehr (1999), *Venona*, and West (1999), *The Greatest Secret of the Cold War*].
  18. Khrushchev (1990), *Khrushchev Remembers*, pp. 82–83.
  19. Another important dimension of the American atomic bombings is how these acts were interpreted in Soviet minds. Though the Americans gave the official rationale that dropping the bombs was necessary to quickly end the war against Japan and thereby save American lives, Stalin, in his suspicious mind, may have seen the bombings as primarily directed not against Japan but against the USSR. This makes sense if one considers that the bombings, by ending the war as quickly as possible, were in a sense designed to end the war before the USSR could enter the war against Japan. It also makes sense just considering the bombs’ sheer power as an instrument to intimidate the USSR. Holloway (1994), *Stalin and the bomb*, p. 132, and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Truman, Stalin and the Surrender of Japan* (Harvard University Press, 2005) make similar arguments.
  20. See the correspondence no. 363 “Personal and secret from Premier J.V. Stalin to the President, H. Truman,” August 16, 1945, in *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945*, Volume II (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1957), p. 266 (in the Russian language edition, pp. 263–264).
  21. Correspondence no. 364 “For Generalissimo Stalin from President Truman,” August 18, 1945, Volume II (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1957), p. 267 (p. 264 in the Russian-language edition).

22. For the interpretation presented in this paragraph, see Musashiya T. Harimao (Korean name Pak Süngök) *38söndo 6.25 han'guk chönjaengdo migugüi chakp'um iötta!* (Seoul: Saeroun saramdül, 1998), pp. 36–37. Born in 1919 in Korea but adopted by a Japanese couple and raised in Japan, Harimao had served as an officer in the Japanese military during World War II and, after the war, served for over 30 years in the U.S. intelligence agencies in the Far East.
23. James, *The Years of MacArthur*, p. 389.
24. James, *The Years of MacArthur*, p. 390.
25. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, pp. 40–42. See also Kennan, *Russia and the West*, pp. 369–373, which also discusses the power of these “proconsuls.”
26. It is unfortunate that no book-length study has been published in any language that examines Hodge’s record in Korea from a biographical perspective. Needless to say, there is no biography of Hodge’s life in general. A possible reason is that Hodge apparently left no memoirs or autobiography or “personal papers.” For a short biographical essay on Hodge, focusing mainly on his years of service in Korea, see Kim Hakchun, *Haebang konggan üi chuyöktül* (Seoul: Tonga Ilbosa, 1996), pp. 63–71.
27. The consul general at Manila (Steintorf) to the secretary of state, Manila, August 26, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1041.
28. The political advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the secretary of state, Seoul, September 15, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1049–1050.
29. *ibid.*, p. 1053.
30. According to William Langdon, Hodge’s acting political advisor at the time, this was a distortion of Hodge’s remark made at a press conference. Reporting on the negative coverage of the U.S. military government’s policies by certain members of the foreign press in Korea, Langdon wrote to the secretary of state on November 26, 1945: “I have looked up the origin of the ‘breed of cats’ story. From the press conference record, it seems that the subject discussed at that moment was the Korean police in Japanese service. General Hodge remarked that ‘Koreans consider them the same breed of cats as Jap policemen.’ ” The acting political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state, November 26, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1135.
31. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the joint chiefs of staff, Tokyo, December 16, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1145.
32. MacArthur believed the BEF was led by communists and issued some extreme public statements at the time. See William M. Leary, “Introduction,” *MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader* (2001), *ibid.*, p. xviii.
33. See MacArthur’s speech entitled “Bulwark of Christianity in the East,” given upon acceptance of the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Santo Tomas, the Philippines, August 25, 1945 [printed in *A Solider Speaks: Public Papers and Speeches of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur* (Praeger, 1965), pp. 145–147].

34. Still, MacArthur harped on “Japan’s utility as a spearhead of Christian proselytizing in Asia” when lecturing high-powered visitors to his headquarters in Tokyo, including Eisenhower, Averell Harriman, and James Forrestal. See Schaller (2001), “MacArthur’s Japan: The View from Washington,” p. 295.
35. “Memorandum for the President: Notes on the Current Situation in Japan,” Edwin A. Locke, Jr., Chungking, China, October 19, 1945, *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, Dennis Merrill (general editor), vol. 22 (University Publications of America, 1998), pp. 28–29.
36. The acting political advisor in Japan (Acheson) to the secretary of state, Tokyo, October 15, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, pp. 1091–1092.
37. Chŏng Pyŏngjun (2001), *Yi Sŭngman ūi tongnip nosŏn kwa chŏngbu surip undong*, Seoul National University Ph.D. dissertation, pp. 188–189. Chŏng’s conclusion is based, in part, on archival documents showing communications between Hodge and Benninghoff, his political advisor in Korea, and between Benninghoff and officials in the State and War Departments immediately after the Tokyo meetings of mid-October.
38. See James, *The Years of MacArthur*, p. 22.
39. James, *The Years of MacArthur*, pp. 25–26.
40. James, *The Years of MacArthur*, p. 26.
41. Memorandum of Conversation, by the director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) [Washington], October 24, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Japan, p. 778.
42. Dean Acheson, the under-secretary of state, for example, stated in a trans-pacific teletype conference on October 22, 1945, with officials in the State and War Departments and those in the SCAP in Tokyo: “Our problem in dealing with the Soviet request arises from difficulty of denying them the meager position which they have accorded us in the Balkans. This amounts merely to the right to be informed and to express views.” See: Record of Trans-Pacific Teletype Conversation [Washington, October 22, 1945] *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Japan, p. 771.
43. Dean Acheson, in the same trans-pacific conversation on the Soviet role in Japan, noted: “Soviet [Union] has in practice in Balkans established practice of acting first and informing [the Allied] Council later when they found this desirable.” See *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 771. Furthermore, Harriman, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, in discussing with Stalin the Soviet complaint regarding Japan, specifically referred to the Anglo-American resentment against Soviet actions in the Balkans when he stated, “the Americans and the British had been upset as to the treatment accorded their representatives [in Bulgaria and Romania].” However, to this complaint by Harriman, Stalin, in turn, charged, “the Americans were accorded the same treatment [in Romania and Bulgaria] the Soviets were extended in Italy.” See: Memorandum of Conversation, by the First Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union (Page), Gagri, October 25, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Japan, pp. 792–793.

44. *Memorandum: Deterioration in Relations between the Soviets and Britain and the United States and Its Serious Threat to Peace*, dictated by Joseph E. Davies, September 29, 1945, Merrill (general editor) (1995), *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 427.
45. A good recent description of the negotiations at the London Conference and other diplomatic forums is Saul Kelly, *Cold War in the Desert: Britain, the United States and the Italian Colonies, 1945-52* (St. Martin's Press, 2000), which focuses on the ex-Italian colonies in northern Africa.
46. Oleg Troianovskii, *Cherez gody i rasstoianiiia: istoriia odnoi sem'i* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1997), pp. 124–125. According to Troianovskii, what made the London Conference a harbinger of the emerging Cold War was not only the fact that it ended without any agreement, itself unprecedented in terms of wartime relationships between the USSR and her Western allies, but also the more general tone of the conference, which he describes as “the most unpleasant” among all the negotiations with the United States and Britain in which he took part throughout his diplomatic career.
47. See Pechatnov, *ibid.*, pp. 70–71.
48. Pechatnov, *ibid.*, p. 78.
49. The quote is from David McCullough, *Truman* (Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 262.
50. The quotes are from Truman (1955), *ibid.*, p. 82.
51. Khrushchev (1990), *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 82.
52. Khrushchev (1970), *ibid.*, p. 221.
53. See, for example, E. Radzinsky, *Stalin*, p. 178, which states that, in March 1922, the Bolsheviks allocated 4 million lire to the Italian Communist Party, 47 million marks to the Germans, and 640,000 francs to the French. Radzinsky goes on to state that the resources of the Soviet state were “lavished on the preparation of world revolution” and that the Comintern “spent money without counting, squandered it recklessly.” See also a summary of Comintern documents on payments to foreign Communist parties during 1919–1922, which is reprinted in: Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fredrik Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 22–24. Furthermore, Dmitri Volkogonov gives additional figures on the size of Soviet subsidies to foreign parties/organizations in his *Lenin: A New Biography*, Harold Shukman (translator and editor) (The Free Press, 1994), pp. 399–400.
54. Stéphane Courtois et al., *Le livre noir du Communisme: Crimes, terreur, répression* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, S.A., 1997); The English-language translation is: *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, Mark Kramer and Jonathan Murphy (translators) (Harvard University Press, 1999).
55. Radzinsky, *Stalin*, pp. 494–496.
56. See Pechatnov (1999), *ibid.*, pp. 73–85. Pechatnov's article, based on new Soviet archival materials including records of correspondences between Stalin and Molotov from this period (fall of 1945), is extremely interesting for the light it sheds on the dynamics of Soviet power politics (including foreign policy-making process) at the highest level. According to Pechatnov, it

- was Stalin who was the real hardliner at the London Conference and in the fall of 1945 in general, as he cracked down harshly on any perceived liberalizing tendencies on the part of his top lieutenants, including Molotov, concerning Soviet relations with wartime Western allies.
57. Quoted in: Martin Kitchen, "British Policy Towards the Soviet Union, 1945-1948," *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991: Retrospective*, Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.) (Frank Cass, 1994), p. 114.
  58. Truman himself recounts at length this incident of Byrnes' "insubordination" in his memoirs. Byrnes, the ex-U.S. senator from South Carolina and Supreme Court justice who had served as a de facto "assistant President of the United States" in charge of war mobilization under Roosevelt during World War II, felt that Roosevelt should have chosen him, rather than Truman, as his running mate in the 1944 U.S. presidential elections and apparently proceeded to regard foreign policy as his personal domain in the fall of 1945 in much the same way he had administered domestic war-mobilization under Roosevelt, who had given him an unprecedented freedom of action in this area. Besides, it appears that, after the failure at London Conference, Byrnes felt he needed a diplomatic victory, and this need for a victory perhaps translated into the "concessions" he made to the Soviets in Moscow for which Truman reproached him afterward. At any rate, after this incident of "insubordination," Byrnes' standing with Truman fell to a depth from which it never recovered, though officially he stayed on as secretary of state until January 1947. See Truman (1955), *ibid.*, pp. 23, 546-553.
  59. The political advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the secretary of state [Seoul] September 15, 1945, in *FRUS* 1945, Vol. VI, Korea, pp. 1049-1052.
  60. Memorandum by Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur at Tokyo [Seoul] September 24, 1945, in *FRUS* 1945, Vol. VI, Korea, pp. 1054-1055.
  61. The political advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the secretary of state [Seoul], September 26, 1945, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 1059-1060.
  62. See the Anglo-American position paper on postwar Korea at the Yalta Conference, entitled "Postwar Status of Korea" in *FRUS*, The Conferences of Malta and Yalta, 1945, p. 359.
  63. In these efforts to contact the Soviet command, Hodge and Benninghoff were being encouraged by the joint chiefs of staff and the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) in Washington. In a telegram to MacArthur, Marshall, the army chief of staff, lays out the following policy guideline: "Now before the SWNCC is a proposal that an international trusteeship should be set up for Korea at the earliest possible date. The committee has likewise recognized that the present line dividing Korea between United States and Russian Forces is highly artificial, and that for many reasons a single administration for the whole of Korea would be preferable. The proposal before the committee concludes that present liaison on a military level should be strengthened and expanded . . . The United States

- Occupation Commander should seek, through such strengthened and expanded liaison, to ensure the greatest possible uniformity of administrative practice in the two zones, United States and Russian." See: Marshall to MacArthur, October 1, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1067–1068.
64. For references to evidence for Soviet backing of leftist elements in southern Korea, see, for example: The political advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the acting political advisor in Japan (Atcheson) [Seoul] October 10, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 1070; and Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, at Tokyo [Seoul] November 2, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 1106. In the latter, Hodge states, "Communitic activities [i.e., in southern Korea] are reaching point where they may gain control unless positive action is taken . . . Communist propaganda is so insidious and well handled as to have influenced materially American press at times in criticism of US efforts in southern Korea."
  65. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the joint chiefs of staff [Tokyo] December 16, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1144–1148. This is Hodge's report, which MacArthur transmitted to the joint chiefs of staff in Washington.
  66. The acting political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state [Seoul] November 20, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1130–1133; The acting political advisor in Korea [Langdon] to the secretary of state [Seoul] November 26, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1134–1136; The acting political advisor in Korea [Langdon] to the secretary of state [Seoul] December 11, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1140–1142; The acting political advisor in Korea [Langdon] to the secretary of state [Seoul] December 14, 1945, in *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 1142–1144.
  67. This evidence will be discussed in part II.
  68. B. Iarovoi, "Koreia, ee proshloe i nastoiashchee," *Novoe Vremia*, August 15, 1945, no. 6 (16), pp. 24–27.
  69. For content of this summary as well as the quotations, see Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945–1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 8* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 1993), pp. 6–7.
  70. See AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, d. 10, l. 1, in 225 pages, which were compiled by A.I. Shabshin and I. Konstantinov.
  71. Suzdalev, "Spravka o iaponskoi voennoi i tiazheloi promyshlennosti v Koree," December 1945, AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, d. 15, p. 1, ll. 22–29.
  72. Memorandum by Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur at Tokyo [Seoul] September 24, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1055.
  73. Petukhov, "Sovetsko-amerikanskaia okkupatsiia Korei i vopros ob ekonomicheskoi i politicheskoi sviazi mezhdru severnoi i iuzhnoi Korei," December 1945, AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, d. 9, p. 1, ll. 4–13.
  74. Petukhov, "Sovetsko-amerikanskaia okkupatsiia Korei i vopros ob ekonomicheskoi i politicheskoi sviazi mezhdru severnoi i iuzhnoi Korei," pp. 12–13.

75. Zabrodin, "Vopros o edinom vremennom pravitel'stve dlia Korei," December 1945, AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, d. 9, p. 1, ll. 14–20.
76. "Po voprosu o edinom pravitel'stve dlia Korei," December 10, 1945, AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, d. 9, p. 1, l. 23.
77. "Po voprosu o edinom pravitel'stve dlia Korei," ll. 23–24.

### 3 U.S. and Soviet Policies, December 1945–August 1948

1. According to Kitchen, "British Policy Towards the Soviet Union, 1945–1948," p. 116, Bevin, the British foreign secretary, was so incensed by Byrnes' action that he initially considered refusing to attend the Moscow Conference. He changed his mind only after being persuaded otherwise by the British ambassadors in Moscow and Washington.
2. Pechatnov, *Istochnik*, no. 2 (1999), p. 84.
3. For the following summary of this article, see "K itogam Moskovskogo soveshchaniia trekh ministrov," *Novoe Vremia*, January 1, 1946, pp. 3–4.
4. Kelly (2000), *Cold War in the Desert*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
7. See Byrnes' memoirs: James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 315.
8. The quote, as well as the information about the London Conference presented here, is from Pechatnov, *ibid.*, *Istochnik*, no. 2 (1999), pp. 72–73.
9. See Ku Taeyöl, *Han'guk kukche kwan'gyesa yön'gu 2: haebang kwa pundan* (Seoul: Yöksa pip'yöngsa, 1995), p. 202. Ku gives citations for the British policy memo (dated September 8, 1945) on the Korean trusteeship prepared for the London Conference and also for the British document (dated August 1, 1945) concerning the Soviet advocacy of the Korean trusteeship at Potsdam.
10. For this quote as well as the information regarding the Paris conference, see V.O. Pechatnov, "Na etom voprose my slomaem ikh antisovetskoe uporstvo . . ." (Iz perepiski Stalina s Molotovym po vneshnepoliticheskim delam v 1946 godu), *Istochnik*, 3 (1999), p. 92.
11. For the quotes and the information regarding the UN General Assembly session presented in this paragraph, see Pechatnov, *ibid.*, *Istochnik*, 3 (1999), pp. 100–101.
12. Pechatnov, *ibid.*, *Istochnik*, 3 (1999), pp. 100–101.
13. For this quote and the information in this paragraph and the next paragraph on Stalin's position on Japan at the London Conference, see Pechatnov, *ibid.*, *Istochnik*, no. 2 (1999), pp. 75–76.
14. Pechatnov, *ibid.*, *Istochnik*, no. 2 (1999), pp. 75–76.
15. D. Petrov, "Likvidatsia ochagov agressii ili ikh sokhranenie?" *Novoe Vremia*, October 1, 1945, no. 9 (19), pp. 29–31. The book under review by Petrov in this article is *The Control of Germany and Japan*, by Harold G. Moulton and Louis Marlio (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1944).

16. E. Zhukov, "Manevry iaponskoi reaktcii," *Novoe Vremia*, November 15, 1945, no. 12 (22), pp. 3–6.
17. The ambassador to the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the secretary of state, Moscow, October 30, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Japan, pp. 808–809.
18. See, for example, Loth (1998), *Unwanted Child*, p. 2, for Stalin's predictions in August 1944–April 1945 that Germany would recover quickly after the war and once again become a threat to the USSR.
19. This quote and the next are from: Memorandum of Conversation, by the First Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union (Page), Gagri, October 25, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Japan, pp. 789–790.
20. For the discussions of the proceedings at the Moscow Conference on the Korean question presented in this section, I have relied on the relevant sections of *FRUS*, 1945, vol. II, Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, pp. 587–821. For information on the first formal session of the Conference dealing with Korea, see *ibid.*, pp. 618–621.
21. For the text of Harriman's letter, see *ibid.*, p. 627. As was shown previously in Pochtarev (1999), *ibid.*, p. 147, the Soviet command in northern Korea did lack directives from Moscow on this matter until mid-November 1945 and thus did lack authority to conduct negotiations with Hodge.
22. For information on the second formal session of the conference as well as the text of the American proposal on Korea, see *ibid.*, pp. 639 and 641–643. The American proposal on Korea is also preserved, in Russian translation, at the Russian Foreign Ministry archives in Moscow: see AVP RF, f. 102, year 1945, op. 1, p. 1, d. 1, ll. 1–3, Vtoroi Dal'nevostochnyi Otdel Referentura po Koree.
23. Such a Soviet interpretation was indeed given to this 10-year trusteeship proposal. For example, in the reports to the Central Committee of the CPSU, dated July 22, 1947, from officials in the Maritime Military District of the Soviet Far East, one finds the following comments on the American position at the conference: "The point of view of the American delegation boiled down to imposing, without any thought for the national interests of Korea, a long colonial trusteeship of the four relevant powers—United States, Great Britain, China, and USSR—on her and then turning Korea from an ex-Japanese colony into a joint colony of these four powers. In this, the United States calculated that, relying on its own economic and military power, it would achieve a dominant position in Korea and gradually turn the latter into a zone of its own exclusive influence." See: "On the political situation in Korea," RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, l. 143.
24. Regarding the agreement on Korea reached at the Moscow Conference, Byrnes wrote in his 1958 memoirs the following: "At Moscow we also decided to create a commission . . . to work out an agreement for a four-power trusteeship for Korea, for a period up to five years, the aim being the 'the establishment of the national independence of Korea.' The agreement was sound, but as usual the Soviets, with their armed forces in northern Korea, intended neither to withdraw them nor to allow the commission to operate." See Byrnes (1958), *ibid.*, p. 336.

25. It bears noting that even this 10-year trusteeship was, after all, a “concession” to Korean national pride in comparison to the 20–30 year trusteeship that Roosevelt was talking about at the Yalta Conference.
26. For information on the fifth formal session of the conference dealing with Korea as well as the text of the Soviet proposal on Korea, see *ibid.*, pp. 697–700. The text of the Soviet proposal is also preserved, in the Russian original, in the same aforementioned file at the Russian Foreign Ministry archive: see AVP RF, f. 102, year 1945, op. 1, p. 1, d. 1, l. 4.
27. Considering the importance of the UN trusteeship mechanism in the mind of Stalin, as shown earlier in this chapter, it is very possible that the Soviets already had in their hands a well-prepared proposal on the trusteeship for Korea when the conference started and that this counter-proposal was only a slightly modified version of this original proposal.
28. “On the political situation in Korea,” July 22, 1947, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 143–146.
29. For the American reaction to the Soviet proposal, see *ibid.*, pp. 716–717.
30. For Byrnes’ request to Molotov for concessions on Romania and Bulgaria in return for the American acceptance of the Soviet proposal on Korea, see *ibid.*, p. 728.
31. For the text of the final Moscow communiqué on Korea, see *ibid.*, pp. 820–821.
32. For the text of the suggested minor modifications made by the Americans to the Soviet proposal, which were incorporated in the final communiqué on Korea, see *ibid.*, p. 721.
33. See: *ibid.*, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, l. 146.
34. Although Byrnes of course does not admit in his memoirs that he needed a diplomatic triumph after the dismal failure at the London Conference, the fact that he was a very experienced politician who cared for his own political career and was sensitive to reactions in the American press to his failures in London must be seen as a main reason for the concessions he made to the Soviets at Moscow. For Byrnes’ sensitivity toward the U.S. press reaction to his performance at London, see his own account in his memoirs (*ibid.*, p. 317).
35. For Truman’s reactions to Byrnes’ conduct at the Moscow Conference, see Truman (1955) *ibid.*, pp. 546–552. The straight-talking U.S. president, who had been kept in the dark by Byrnes while the latter was conducting negotiations in Moscow, wrote the following regarding his reaction when he found out what Byrnes had agreed to in Moscow by reading the text of the Moscow communiqué released after Byrnes’ departure from Moscow: “I did not like what I read. There was not a word about Iran or any other place where the Soviets were on the march. We had gained only an empty promise of further talks” (p. 549). Furthermore, after he had given Byrnes a dressing-down upon meeting the latter in person, Truman wrote the following: “Byrnes . . . had taken it upon himself to move the foreign policy of the United States in a direction to which I could not, and would not, agree. Moreover, he had undertaken this on his own initiative without consulting or informing the President” (p. 550).

36. Truman (1955), *ibid.*, pp. 551–552.
37. See Natalia I. Yegorova, *The “Iran Crisis” of 1945-1946: A View from the Russian Archives*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 15 (1996), pp. 19–20. It needs to be noted that, in a failure of Soviet diplomacy, this oil deal was never put into effect, as the new Iranian Parliament which was to ratify the agreement within seven months, according to the terms of the concession, was not elected in time to meet this deadline. For the view that Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech was directly prompted by the Iran crisis, which threatened vital British interests in the Middle East, see, for example, Kitchen (1994), *ibid.*, p. 119.
38. For the American account of this conference and information presented in this paragraph, see: The political advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 15, 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, pp. 633–636. Van Rhee (1989), *ibid.*, pp. 189–195, provides an exhaustive account of this conference.
39. Benninghoff, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 634.
40. For this quote and the next, see: Benninghoff, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 635.
41. For Petukhov’s account of the conference, see: V.I. Petukhov, *U istokov bor’by za edinstvo i nezavisimost’ Korei* (Moscow: Izd. Nauka, 1987), pp. 60–65. A summation of Petukhov’s account of this conference is also available in his article entitled, “Podderzhka sovetskimi soюзom bor’by koreiskogo naroda za edinstvo i demokraticeskoe razvitie rodiny,” in *Za mir na zemle korei: vospominaniia i stat’i*, Iu.V. Vanin (ed.) (Moscow: Izd. Nauka, 1985), p. 104.
42. T.F. Shtykov, the chief Soviet delegate, however, refused to comply when the Americans proposed a Joint Food Committee to investigate the food situation in the two zones for comparison purposes.
43. Petukhov (1987), *U istokov bor’by za edinstvo i nezavisimost’ Korei*, pp. 61–63, 65.
44. Benninghoff, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 636.
45. For an overview of the process of communist takeover in Eastern Europe and elsewhere before and after World War II, see Nekipelov (2000), *ibid.*; *The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, Thomas T. Hammond (ed.) (Yale University Press, 1975); Eduard Mark, *Revolution by Degrees: Stalin’s National Front Strategy for Europe, 1941-1947*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 31 (2001); Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii (eds.), *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949* (Westview, 1997); and Ben Fowkes, *Eastern Europe 1945-1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation* (Longman, 2000), pp. 17–40.
46. This directive is found in a document preserved at the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, Russian Federation (TsAMO RF, f. 66, op. 178499, d. 4, ll. 632–633), which A.N. Pochtarev quotes in his “Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnoshenii v 20-50-e gody,” *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1999, no. 5, p. 145.
47. See the relevant discussion in part II for evidence showing that the Soviet occupation command in northern Korea was financing and instructing Pak and the southern communists as early as the fall of 1945.

48. It is important to note here that the left in southern Korea had initially been also anti-trusteeship but turned pro-trusteeship upon hearing explanations for the trusteeeship decision from the Soviet occupation command in northern Korea and the northern communists such as Kim Il Sung. This important policy shift will be discussed more fully in part II.
49. Winston Churchill, "Alliance of English-Speaking People," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, March 5, 1946, pp. 329–332.
50. See the reprint of this interview "Otvét korrespondentu *Pravdy*," *I.V. Stalin: sochineniia*, vol. 3 [XVI] 1946–1953 (Stanford University Press: The Hoover Institution, 1967), pp. 35–43.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
52. "Cherchill' v roli podzhigatel'ia voyny," *Novoe Vremia*, March 15, 1946, no. 6, pp. 1–2.
53. The secretary of state to the secretary of war (Patterson), Washington, April 1, 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 655.
54. The political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state, Seoul, May 8, 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 669.
55. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul [Received May 9], 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 665.
56. For the quotes and the information in this paragraph, see *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 666–667.
57. "Russian Archives, Collection": The July 26, 1946, directive is found as an attachment [in the so-called special file or "osobaia papka"] to the Politburo decision no. 330 ("On the directive to the Soviet delegation to the Soviet-US Joint Commission on Korea"), which is grouped under Protocol no. 52 [politburo decisions dated May 8–August 4, 1946]. Copies of this directive were sent to Molotov, Shtykov, and Meretskov, the commander of the Maritime Military District in the Soviet Far East.
58. "Russian Archives, Collection," *ibid.*, pp. 120–122.
59. "Russian Archives, Collection," *ibid.*, pp. 122–123.
60. Indeed, Stalin did achieve such a result in northern Korea by February 1947, fully three months before the resumption of the Joint Commission sessions in May 1947, when the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea, the executive and legislative organ of the de facto embryonic North Korean state founded in February 1946, was reorganized and renamed the People's Committee of North Korea, thus signifying the official founding of a socialist North Korea.
61. "Shtykov's proposal regarding the make-up of the provisional Korean government," received on March 16, 1946, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 998, ll. 3–4.
62. M. Burtsev to A.S. Paniushkin, March 15, 1946, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 61, ll. 1–11.
63. A discussion of the Korean political landscape in 1945–1948 will follow in part II, in which the various Korean political leaders mentioned on these lists of proposed candidates for the Korean provisional government will be discussed in some detail. Suffice it to note here that Yŏ Unhyŏng, nominated

- for prime minister on these lists, had been—according to the report submitted by Burtsev—a former member of the Chinese and Korean Communist Parties prior to 1945 and was described in the same report as “being loyal” to the Soviet Union as of March 1946: see M. Burtsev to A.S. Paniushkin, March 15, 1946, *ibid.*, p. 3.
64. A full discussion of Kim Kyusik and Yŏ Unhyŏng will be presented near the end of part II.
  65. Pak’s letter is quoted in a TASS news dispatch from Seoul dated March 27, 1946. See: “Pak Hŏnyŏng’s letter to the Soviet-US Joint Commission in Seoul,” AVP RF, year 1946, f. 102, op. 6, p. 3, d. 11, ll. 3–4. As we have seen earlier, Pak was, by March 1946, working with Shtykov, the Soviet “viceroy” in northern Korea, in leading the Korean Communist Party. It is therefore highly likely that this letter to the Commission was approved beforehand by Shtykov, who headed the Soviet delegation to the Commission.
  66. For this letter dated May 14, 1946, see: AVP RF, year 1946, f. 102, op. 6, p. 2, d. 2, ll. 1–11.
  67. AVP RF, year 1946, f. 102, op. 6, p. 2, d. 1, ll. 1–4.
  68. *Ibid.*
  69. For this letter dated June 8, 1946, see: AVP RF, year 1946, f. 102, op. 6, p. 2, d. 2, ll. 1–11.
  70. According to the record of interrogations by the Soviet military of Kim Chŏngŭi, one of the perpetrators of the terrorist acts in northern Korea, Kim Ku himself was not personally involved in ordering the terrorist acts, though the question of whether Kim knew of the plans for these acts remained unanswered. The record of interrogations, which took the form of three sessions in April, is preserved in a report sent in August 1946 by B. Sapozhnikov, the deputy director of the 7th Department of the Red Army, to M.A. Suslov of CPSU Central Committee. See: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, ll. 99–120. These acts of right-wing terror in northern Korea in the spring of 1946 will be discussed more fully in part II.
  71. See, for example, Radzinsky (1996), *Stalin*, pp. 488–491, 501–519.
  72. Though Kim Il Sung was proclaimed vice-chairman of the new party, he and his supporters controlled the party apparatus and Kim was thus the real leader, making the nominal chairman, Kim Tubong, the leader of the dissolved New People’s Party, a mere figurehead.
  73. These efforts by Hodge in 1946–1947 to forge a Left-Right coalition will be discussed in part II.
  74. The political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state, Seoul, May 21, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, vol. VI, Korea, p. 646.
  75. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the secretary of state, Tokyo, July 2, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *ibid.*, pp. 683–684.
  76. The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, July 7, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *ibid.*, pp. 690–691.
  77. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, July 10, 1947, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 700.

78. The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, July 21, 1947, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, pp. 710–711.
79. Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Korea [Washington] August 4, 1947, *FRUS*, *ibid.*, p. 741.
80. The secretary of state to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, Washington, August 11, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 749.
81. The acting secretary of state to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, Washington, September 4, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *ibid.*, p. 779.
82. “Russian Archives, Collection”: Protokol no. 58: Resheniia Politbiuro TsK VKP (b), April 29–June 25, 1947: from May 20, 1947, Reshenie no. 78–Vopros MID. The directives, in three sections on eight pages, are found as an attachment (*prilozhenie*) to this Politburo decision, which was made in Stalin’s name.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 4 of the directives.
84. It is to be noted that the Soviet delegation was to carry out this goal (i.e., of achieving the result that half of the southern Korean parties and organizations to be consulted were leftist) in secret (i.e., by hiding this negotiating objective from the American delegation). See: *ibid.*, p. 5 of the directives.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 5 of the directives.
86. Petukhov (1985), *U istokov bor’by za edinstvo i nezavisimost’ Korei*, pp. 110–111.
87. The acting secretary of state to the political advisor in Korea (Jacobs), Seoul, April 5, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1170.
88. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 14, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1110.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 1110.
90. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 26, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1133.
91. The state of Israel was established on May 14, 1948, and was immediately recognized by the United States. The following day, five Arab countries including Syria sent forces to attack the new state.
92. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 22, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1125–1127.
93. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 24, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1130–1131.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 1131.
95. For example, in a memorandum to Ia. A. Malik, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, dated April 23, 1948, L. Baranov, the deputy director of the Central Committee foreign relations department, concluded with the following about the draft North Korean constitution: “The draft, on the whole, requires serious reworking in the direction of more clear delineation of the political and economic foundations of the Korean state structure, taking into account domestic political and economic situations in the country and the experiences of creating constitutions in countries of people’s democracy in Eastern Europe. It is advisable to reconsider the draft

- constitution after its reworking” (p. 51). See: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1173, ll. 47–51.
96. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1070, l. 11 (Protokol no. 63: Resheniia Politbiuro TsK VKP (b), March 29–May 26, 1948), Reshenie no. 26.
  97. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1070, l. 21 (ibid.), Reshenie no. 63.
  98. Im Yōngt’ae, *Pukhan 50nyōnsa* (Seoul: Tūlnyōk, 1999), p. 177.
  99. The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 8, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1097.
  100. The UN Interim Commission was the functional equivalent of the UN General Assembly, when it met between regular sessions of the General Assembly. The secretary of state to the acting political advisor in Korea (Langdon), Washington, February 27, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1134.
  101. See for example: The acting political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state, Seoul, March 12, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1150–1153. In this telegram, Langdon discusses the split within the UNTCOK and informs the Secretary that five of the eight UNTCOK members “can reasonably be counted on” to vote for observing the elections (p. 1153).
  102. The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, April 28, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1184.
  103. See, for example, the text of the UNTCOK press release no. 59, made on May 13, by Yasin Mughir, the Syrian delegate, quoted in: The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, May 13, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1195–1197. See also Jacobs’ comments the same day on Mughir’s press release in: The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, May 13, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1197–1198.
  104. The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, June 30, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1231.
  105. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge to the secretary of state, Seoul, June 28, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1229.
  106. “Russian Archives, Collection”: Protokol no. 63: Resheniia Politbiuro TsK VKP (b), March 29–May 26, 1948, Reshenie no. 38 (from April 12, 1948): Sovety dlia t. Kim Ir-Sena. A copy of this policy directive, issued under Stalin’s name, was sent to Molotov.
  107. There is much evidence that a main reason for Kim Kyusik’s boycott of the separate southern elections and for his participation in the South–North Joint Conference was his conviction that a South Korean state, created as a result of such elections, would not be able to survive, both militarily and economically, in the absence of a definite commitment by the United States to ensuring its survival. It appears that, because such a commitment was not forthcoming, Kim went ahead with taking part in the Joint Conference. See: The acting political advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the secretary of state, Seoul, February 19, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1120–1121; see also: The political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the secretary of state, Seoul, May 26, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, p. 1210. In addition, that the United States had not yet, as of mid-1948, created a

South Korean armed force sufficiently strong to meet the North Korean military threat in the absence of foreign troops in Korea is shown in policy documents such as: Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Secretary of State, [Washington] March 4, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 1138–1139.

## II U.S. and Soviet Occupation Policies in Korea and the Korean Responses, 1945–1948

### 4 *The Koreans, the USSR, and the United States*

1. These include: Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (Columbia University Press, 1988); Wada Haruki, *Kim Nichisei to Manshū kōnichī sensō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1992); and Yi Chongsök, *Chosŏn rodongdang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Yōksa Pip'yōngsa, 1995). Besides, there is Kim Il Sung's own autobiography, in eight volumes, which covers his life up to his return to Korea in 1945. Volume 8, which covers from 1942 up to fall 1945, provides information on his time in the USSR and his return to Korea. See: *Segi wa tōburō: Kim Ilsŏng tongji hoegorok* (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Rodongdang Ch'ulp'ansa, 1998). Obviously, the scholar examining Kim's autobiography needs to sift out fabrication from fact.
2. Pochtarev (1999), "Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnoshenii v 20-50-e gody," p. 141.
3. *Ibid.* It is also very likely the Brigade received training from officers of the NKVD, the Soviet Interior Ministry with its secret police. See: Georgii Tumanov, "Kak izgotovliali velikogo vozhdia," *Novoe Vremia*, no. 16 (1993), pp. 32–33.
4. Pochtarev, "Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnoshenii v 20-50-e gody," pp. 141–142.
5. Aleksandr M. Vasilevskii (1895–1977), a Marshal and a two-time Hero of the Soviet Union, served as the chief-of-staff of the Red Army in 1942–1945. In June–September 1945, he served as the commander of the Soviet troops in the Soviet offensive against Japan.
6. Marshall R.Ia. Malinovskii (1898–1967), a two-time Hero of the Soviet Union, served as the commander of the Trans-Baikal Front in the Soviet war against Japan in 1945.
7. Kirill A. Meretskov (1897–1968), a Hero and a Marshal of the Soviet Union, served as the Red Army's chief-of-staff in 1940. In August–September 1945, he served as the commander of the First Far Eastern Front in the Soviet offensive against Japan.
8. Kim Il Sung (1998), *ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 448–455. Though Kim's autobiography contains many fabrications in order to exaggerate his role in the anti-Japanese struggles, Kim had little reason to fabricate this account of his meetings with the Soviet leaders before his return to Korea in 1945, considering that this account, after all, acknowledges that Kim was part of the

- Soviet victory in the war against Japan, not the usual fabrication which purports to show Kim's crucial role in liberating Korea from Japan.
9. This is based on the testimony of Ivan Kovanenko, who was serving at the time as an aide to Vasilevskii, the commander-in-chief of the Soviet forces in the Far East. Kovanenko's testimony, quoted in Im Yŏngt'ae, *Pukhan 50nyŏnsa* (Seoul: Tŭlnyŏk, 1999), p. 56, is taken from *Pirok Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Inmin Konghwaŭuk*, vol. 2, written by a special reporting team of the Seoul daily *Chungang Ilbo* (Seoul: Chungang Ilbosa, 1993), pp. 202–206.
  10. The evidence is from the earlier-cited personal recollections of Tumanov (1993), *ibid.*, p. 33. See also Andrei Smirnov's interview with Pak Il, one of the Soviet Koreans sent to northern Korea in 1946 as part of the "group of 37," published in the June 26, 1998, issue of *Trud-7*, p. 8.
  11. This evidence is found in an earlier interview given by Pak Il, according to which Stalin and the Soviet leaders decided on Kim Il Sung as the leader of Soviet-occupied Korea in spring 1945. See Pak's interview with Andrei Smirnov, "Kak Sovetskaia Armiia vnedrila v Severnuiu Koreiu prezidenta Kim Ir Sena i ego pravitel'stvo," *Sovershenno Sekretno*, no. 8, 1992, p. 10.
  12. Lankov, *From Stalin*, pp. 4–5, 114–116, 127.
  13. Pochtarev (1999), p. 143.
  14. Pochtarev, "Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnoshenii v 20–50-e gody," p. 145.
  15. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 159–160.
  16. See pages 16–25 of *Orŭn nosŏnŭl wihaya*, edited by Korean Industrial Labor Bureau of Investigation [*Chosŏn sanŏp nodong chosaso*] (Seoul: Uri Munhwasa, 1945), which is found in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 997, ll. 101–105.
  17. "Political parties and organizations in southern Korea," RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, l. 37.
  18. "On the question of unified government for Korea," AVP RF, f. 0102, op. 1, p. 1, d. 9, ll. 22–23.
  19. Pochtarev (1999), *ibid.*, p. 145.
  20. *Ibid.*, pp. 145–146.
  21. There is strong evidence that Kim Il Sung and the communist leadership in Korea were receiving active support of Stalin himself in 1945–1948. Relevant Soviet documents show that Kim visited the USSR at least once during this period and met with Stalin. See the letter to A.A. Zhdanov, the Central Committee secretary, from M. Suslov and G. Aleksandrov dated April 25, 1947 in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, l. 93.
  22. Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Cornell University Press, 2003), *ibid.*, pp. 74–86, 148–165.
  23. See, for example, Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945–1960* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), *ibid.*, pp. xi, 26–27, 194.
  24. For reliable testimonies of these atrocities, see, for example, the memoirs of Ham Sŏkhŏn (1901–1989), who was in Sinŭiju, North P'yŏngan Province,

- when the Soviet army entered the city: *Chugŭl ttae kkaji igŏrŭm ūiro* (Seoul: Han'gilsa, 1983), pp. 284–286. Ham, a Christian nationalist, fled northern Korea in March 1947 and later became a political dissident in South Korea, opposing the dictatorships of Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee. In general, the same types of behavior on the part of the Red Army's soldiers were observed in Germany and other parts of Central–Eastern Europe occupied by the Red Army at the end of World War II. See Naimark (1995), *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 69–204.
25. See, for example, the report, dated July 22, 1947, to the Central Committee secretariat from the military council of the Maritime Military District in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 132–141.
  26. Lankov, *From Stalin*, p. 6; and Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, pp. 42–44.
  27. *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, Korea, pp. 1050–1051.
  28. For documentary evidence of this Soviet economic extraction in northern Korea, see, for example, Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, pp. 44–45.
  29. For eye-witness testimonies regarding these actions by the local communists, see Ham (1983), *Chugŭl ttae kkaji igŏrŭm ūiro*, pp. 45–53, 283–297.
  30. For information on the Sinŭiju crisis, see Im, *ibid.*, pp. 69, 73–74. For an eye-witness account by one of the key participants in the events, see Ham, *Chugŭl ttae kkaji igŏrŭm ūiro*, pp. 48–50, 290–293. See also Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, pp. 62–64, and Lankov, *From Stalin*, pp. 22–23, which quotes another eye-witness account of the crisis. Ham was then serving as the head of the education department of the People's Committee of North P'yŏngan Province. Ham, on pages 289–290, provides information on a disturbance in Yongamp'o, North P'yŏngan Province, against local communists and the Soviet occupation, which immediately preceded the Sinŭiju crisis.
  31. On Kim Il Sung's role in resolving the Sinŭiju crisis, see Im, *ibid.*, pp. 73–74, and Ham, *Chugŭl ttae kkaji igŏrŭm ūiro*, p. 295. For the discussion presented in this paragraph regarding the aftermath of the crisis and the effect the crisis had on the relationship between the nationalists and the communists in northern Korea, I benefited from Im, *ibid.*, pp. 73–74.
  32. For information on *Paegŭisa*, the terrorist acts committed in northern Korea in spring 1946, and the assistance given by *Paegŭisa* to the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) of the U.S. Army in sending agents into northern Korea, see the article, by An Kisŏk on Yŏm Tongjin, the leader of *Paegŭisa*, in the October 2001 issue of *Sindonga*.
  33. See the article by Ko Chisu, entitled “Yi Kangguk ūn CIA taebuk kongjaktan e koyong toeŏtta,” in the November 2001 issue of the journal *Nambuŭi hamke hanŭn minjok*21, pp. 116–121.
  34. On Kim Yongbŏm's record as a communist before 1945, see the report on the political situation in Korea dated November 5, 1945, in: RGASPI,

- f. 17, op. 128, d. 47, l. 19. This report contains biographical information on Kim and his election as the first secretary of the North Korean branch of the KCP. On Vera Tsoi, see the biographical sketch contained in the report entitled, “On the political parties and social organizations in the Soviet zone of occupation of Korea as of May 20, 1946” in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, l. 24.
35. Im, *ibid.*, pp. 76–77.
  36. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 47, l. 24.
  37. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, l. 1–4.
  38. See: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 47, l. 20.
  39. This information is from Pochtarev (1999), *ibid.*, p. 149, who bases this information on documents from the Presidential Archive and the Central Archive of the Defense Ministry in Russia.
  40. See the aforementioned article in *Nanbugi hamke hanŭn minjok 21* (November 2001).
  41. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, l. 132–133.
  42. The figure of 2,000 as of October 1945 is given in Im (1999), *ibid.*, pp. 65–66. Im notes that even this figure was an exaggeration. This figure of 2,000 seems reasonable, considering that the membership of the communist party in southern Korea at about this time was around 3,000, according to the earlier quoted report dated November 5, 1945, from Sapozhnikov to Dimitrov. The figure of 30,000 as of March 1, 1946, is cited in a report to Paniushkin from E. Kovalev of the CPSU Central Committee secretariat, dated May 4, 1946, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1004, l. 41.
  43. “On the political parties and social organizations in the Soviet zone of occupation of Korea as of May 20, 1946,” sent to Paniushkin from the political department of the Soviet army in Korea: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 205, l. 17–19. The membership figures given here may have been grossly exaggerated in some cases.
  44. See the report from B. Sapozhnikov to G.M. Dimitrov on November 5, 1945: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 47, l. 20–21.
  45. “Democratic Transformations in North Korea,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 251–252.
  46. Kim Tubong was the leader of the so-called Yanan Group, a group of Korean communists-socialists associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) while the CCP was headquartered in Yanan in the early 1940s. This group, led by Kim and Mujǒng (full name: Kim Mujǒng), returned to northern Korea in 1945–1946. Like other leftist political groups in northern Korea after Liberation, such as the Soviet Koreans and the domestic communists, this group lost out to Kim Il Sung’s Manchurian partisan group in the ensuing power struggles and was later purged.
  47. For Kim Tubong’s opinion on the Moscow decision and the difference in meaning between these two terms, see his press statement in the

- January 10, 1946, issue of *Chosŏn Inminbo* [contained in Sim (1993), *ibid.*, pp. 246–247].
48. Even between the word *sin'tak* and *hugyŏn*, there is a significant difference in meaning. However, with the word *t'ongch'i* added to *sin'tak*, the difference in meaning between *sin'tak t'ongch'i* and *hugyŏn* is even greater, with the former having much more humiliating connotations for the Koreans.
  49. “Opeka” was the term used by the Soviets in all their official documents referring to the UN Trusteeship mechanism and to the Moscow trusteeship decision in particular. Thus, this term was used in the official Russian-language text of the Moscow decision.
  50. See Kim’s press statement contained in the January 14, 1946, issue of *Chosŏn Inminbo* [reprinted in Sim (1993), *ibid.*, p. 248].
  51. See January 10, 1946, issue of *Chosŏn Inminbo* [reprinted in Sim (1993), *ibid.*, p. 247].
  52. *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 616.
  53. Unfortunately, not much scholarship exists on Cho Mansik, a vitally important figure in any discussion of northern Korea immediately after Liberation, and the few available works are either outdated or hagiographic. Bearing this in mind, I have consulted the earlier-cited work by Kim Kyosik [*Cho Mansik* (Seoul: Kyesŏng Ch’ulp’ansa, 1984)] and the more hagiographic *Kodang Cho Mansik*, by Han Kŭnjo (Seoul: T’aegŭk Ch’ulp’ansa, 1972). The aforementioned memoirs by Ham Sŏkhŏn (1983) contain interesting evaluations of Cho by someone who knew him personally.
  54. Kim Kyosik (1984), *ibid.*, pp. 410–412.
  55. Kim, *ibid.*, pp. 410–412.
  56. This thinking was based in part on news reports released on November 12 and December 27, 1945, which stated that the USSR was advocating the trusteeship for Korea. See: Ch’oe Yŏnghŭi (1996), *ibid.*, p. 134.
  57. The communists in northern Korea issued their statement supporting the Moscow decision on January 1 and the communists in southern Korea, headquartered in Seoul, issued theirs on January 2. See Ch’oe, *ibid.*, pp. 139–140.
  58. Kim, *ibid.*, p. 414.
  59. For the circumstances of this meeting on January 5 and Cho’s arrest the same day, see Kim, *ibid.*, pp. 418–421.
  60. *FRUS*, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 622.
  61. See Im, *ibid.*, pp. 108–109, and Lankov, *Soryŏn ŭi charyoro pon pukhan hyŏndaeh chŏngch’isa*, p. 81.
  62. Information on *Paegŭisa* is available in Yi Yŏngsin, *Pimil kyŏlsa Paegŭisa*, vol. 1 (Seoul: Allimmun, 1993), and also in a recently declassified document of the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), the United States Armed Forces in Korea, entitled “Kim Koo [Kim Ku] (Background Information Concerning Assassination),” dated July 1, 1949, a report submitted by George E. Cilley to the director of intelligence, U.S. Army General Staff.

63. In a telegram to the secretary of state from Moscow dated January 25, 1946, George Kennan, the chargé in the USSR, reported on an editorial in the January 12, 1946, issue of *Izvestiya*, the Soviet newspaper, which attacked Rhee and Kim as reactionaries and collaborators with the Japanese. See: FRUS, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, pp. 619–620.
64. FRUS, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 682.
65. Ibid., pp. 688–689.
66. On the KPG's transformation into a purely right-wing organization after Kim Wŏnbong (Kim Yaksan) and other leftists within its ranks deserted it in late January, see the January 24, 1946, issue of *Chosŏn Ilbo*, the influential Seoul daily.
67. FRUS, 1946, vol. VIII, Korea, p. 627: in the footnote to Goodfellow's name, Goodfellow was described as "a friend of Syngman Rhee." See also an article in the January 26, 1946, issue of the Seoul daily *Chayu Sinmun*, which reported on a meeting between Hodge, Kim Ku, and Rhee and the extensive role played by Goodfellow in behind-the-scenes political maneuverings.
68. In a policy proposal for MacArthur dated February 28, 1946, the State Department suggested finding Korean leaders other than Kim Ku or Syngman Rhee for Hodge to work with, showing its frustrations in working with these latter two. See: FRUS, 1946, vol. VII, Korea, p. 646.
69. For the conflict between Hodge and Rhee, see the telegram to the secretary of state on July 21, 1947, from the political advisor in Korea (Jacobs) in FRUS, 1947, vol. VI, Korea, p. 710. See also the telegram from Jacobs to the secretary of state on February 10, 1948, in FRUS, 1948, vol. VI, Korea, p. 1100.
70. See RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 292–296.
71. For a comprehensive look at the northern leftists' support for the Moscow decision and the U.S.–USSR Joint Commission, see the booklet published by the secretariat of the Democratic National Front of North Korea (*Pukchosŏn Minjujuŭi Minjok T'ongil Chŏnsŏn*), the umbrella organization for all northern leftist forces, which contains public statements released by northern leftists in support of the Moscow decision and the commission. See: *Somi kongdong wiwŏnhoe e kwanhan cheban charyojip*, revised and expanded edition (Pyongyang: Pukchosŏn Chungang Minjŏn Sŏgiguk, 1947), in *Han'guk hyŏndaesa charyo ch'ongsŏ*, vol. 13, Kim Namsik, Yi Chŏngsik and Yi Honggu (eds.) (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1986), pp. 32–144.
72. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 61, ll. 1–9.
73. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, l. 286.
74. For concise information on the activities of these southern leftists in 1945–1948, see: Kim Hakchun, *Haebang konggan ŭi chuyŏktŭl* (Seoul: Tonga Ilbosa, 1996). For studies on individual leaders, see: Chŏng Pyŏngjun, *Mongyang Yŏ Unhyŏng p'yŏngjŏn* (Seoul: Hanul, 1995); Kim Namsik and Sim Chiyŏn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng nosŏn pip'an* (Seoul: Segyesa, 1986); Sim Chiyŏn, *Hŏ*

- Hŏn yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Yŏksa pip'yŏngsa, 1994); Yi Kongsun's essay on Paek Namun in *Palgul han'guk hyŏndaesa innul*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Han'gyŏre Sinmunsa, 1992), pp. 229–235; Kim Sŏnggŏl's essay on Hong Myŏnghŭi in *Palgul han'guk hyŏndaesa innul*, vol. 3 (1992), *ibid.*, pp. 71–78; Kang Yŏnggu, "Hong Myŏnghŭi yŏn'gu 8: Hong Myŏnghŭi wa nambuk yŏnsŏk hoeŭi," *Yŏksa pip'yŏng*, Summer, 1998; and Kim Chonggu's essay on Kim Wŏnbong in *Palgul han'guk hyŏndaesa innul*, vol. 3 (1992), *ibid.*, pp. 163–169.
75. For details on Yŏ's five visits to northern Korea and consultations with Kim Il Sung, see, Chŏng *Mongyang Yŏ Unhyŏng p'yŏngjŏn*, pp. 205–391.
76. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 292–296.
77. Paek Namun organized the Seoul branch of Kim Tubong's Korean Independence League (*Chosŏn Tongnip Tongmaeng*) in January–February 1946 after a visit to northern Korea and meetings with Kim and other leaders of KIL. When Kim's KIL changed its name to New People's Party (*Chosŏn Sinmindang*) in February 1946, Paek founded New People's Party of South Korea (*Namjosŏn Sinmindang*) and became its chairman.
78. A record of the South–North Joint Conference in Pyongyang (April 19–23, 1948) is available in a lengthy report, dated July 24, 1948, to Suslov of the Central Committee from Shtykov. This report contains verbatim transcripts of the reports and speeches made by the conference attendees. It also contains a copy of the communiqué adopted at the close of the Conference. See: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 615, ll. 1–161.
79. For this position on the part of the northern leftists regarding the Moscow decision, see the earlier quoted *Somi kongdong wiwŏnhoe e kwanhan cheban charyojip* (1947).
80. See Sim, *Hŏ Hŏn yŏn'gu*, p. 307.
81. See, *ibid.*, pp. 391–393. It bears noting that this description by Hŏ of the positions taken by the United States and the USSR at the Moscow conference is exactly the same as the official Soviet account of the conference and its aftermath as narrated in the earlier-quoted report, dated July 22, 1947, made to the CPSU Central Committee by officials in the Maritime Military District [i.e., "The decision at the Moscow conference of the foreign ministers of the USA, USSR, and Great Britain regarding Korea," RGASPI, f. 17, op. 128, d. 1119, ll. 142–149].
82. Soviet Koreans were Soviet citizens of Korean ethnic origin. A number of these Soviet Koreans served in the Soviet occupation of northern Korea in 1945–1948, playing an important role in the construction of the North Korean state. For information on the Soviet Koreans, see Lankov, *From Stalin*, pp. 110–135.

### Conclusion

1. Reflecting the general sense of puzzle with which scholars have long regarded this Soviet acceptance of the American proposal for the 38th

parallel, the leading English-language textbook on Korean history states the following about this Soviet acceptance: “to everyone’s surprise the Soviets agreed.” See: *Korea Old and New: A History*, Carter J. Eckert, et al. (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers for the Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), p. 335.

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**Note:** The following entries under each category are listed in alphabetical order, with Russian-language materials listed first, followed by Korean-language materials and then English-language materials. A few sources in other languages are interspersed among Korean-language and English-language materials in their respective categories.

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The Archive of the President, the Russian Federation [Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii], abbreviated as AP RF.

The Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, the Russian Federation [Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii], abbreviated as TsA MO.

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