

# **SAMS Monograph**

**General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley in the Korean War and  
the Meaning of the Chairmanship**

**by**

**MAJ Michael D. Forbis**

**United States Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**AY 2011-01**

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 19 May 2011		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> SAMS Monograph		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> June 2010 – March 2011	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley in the Korean War and the Meaning of the Chairmanship				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Major Michael Dennis Forbis				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Command and General Staff College 731 McClellan Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b> CGSC	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley served as the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he played a significant role during the Korean War. Bradley served as the senior military advisor to President Harry S. Truman, and he was the critical link to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur as the United Nations Commander during the war. The most critical events in the Korean War occurred in the first year. Bradley established the military policy that guided the actions for MacArthur in the conduct of military operations. His role with MacArthur was to ensure operations did not violate policy. In the beginning of the war, Bradley granted MacArthur wide latitude as the field commander, yet he restricted his actions later in the war because MacArthur's actions were in contradiction to military policy. Eventually, Bradley recommended the removal of MacArthur to President Truman. As Chairman, Bradley established certain precedents for the job position. He balanced the need to support the field commander in military operations and to enforce the military policy approved by the President					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General of the Army Omar Bradley, Korean War 1950-1953, United Nations Commander, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b> (U)			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  (U)	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  (U)	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Wayne W. Grigsby Jr. COL, U.S. Army
<b>a. REPORT</b> (U)	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> (U)	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> (U)			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 913-758-3302

# SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

## MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

MAJ Michael Forbis

Title of Monograph: General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley in the Korean War and the Meaning of the Chairmanship

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas A. Bruscano, Ph.D. Monograph Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Dejarnette, COL, FA59 Second Reader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne Grigsby, COL, IN Director, School of Advanced Military Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D. Director, Graduate Degree Programs

Disclaimer: Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the author, and do not represent the views of the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, the US Army Command and General Staff College, the United States Army, the Department of Defense, or any other US government agency. Cleared for public release: distribution unlimited.

## **Abstract**

SAMS MONOGRAPH by MAJ Michael D. Forbis, US ARMY, 47 pages.

General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley served as the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he played a significant role during the Korean War. Bradley served as the senior military advisor to President Harry S. Truman, and he was the critical link to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur as the United Nations Commander during the war.

The most critical events in the Korean War occurred in the first year. Bradley established the military policy that guided the actions for MacArthur in the conduct of military operations. His role with MacArthur was to ensure operations did not violate policy. In the beginning of the war, Bradley granted MacArthur wide latitude as the field commander, yet he restricted his actions later in the war because MacArthur's actions were in contradiction to military policy. Eventually, Bradley recommended the removal of MacArthur to President Truman.

As Chairman, Bradley established certain precedents for the job position. He balanced the need to support the field commander in military operations and to enforce the military policy approved by the President.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Bradley Communicates the Military Policy .....	6
Bradley's Pre-Korean War Assessment .....	9
Bradley and the First Year of the Korean War .....	11
North Korean Invasion and the United Nations Response .....	12
Inchon Landing .....	16
Bradley's Promotion to General of the Army (Five-Stars) .....	21
Issue of Crossing the 38 <sup>th</sup> Parallel .....	21
Bradley's Participation at the Wake Island Conference .....	23
Actions to the Yalu River and Manchurian Border .....	25
Chinese Invasion of Korean Peninsula .....	28
Bradley Recommends the Removal of MacArthur .....	32
Conclusions .....	34
Appendix A (Maps) .....	39
Appendix B (Key Leaders) .....	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	46

## Introduction

The Korean War took place over a three year period from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953. The first year experienced the major operations of the entire war, and the remaining two years of the war basically resulted in a stalemate along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel until the armistice. The period of the Korean War was a delicate time in United States history, and the war was part of a larger global problem facing the country with regards to the expansion of communism.<sup>1</sup> General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley served as the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 16 August 1949 to 15 August 1953. During this time in his career, his duty as Chairman overlapped with the Korean War from the initial invasion on 25 June 1950 to the signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953.<sup>2</sup> Bradley's position as Chairman was part of the modern day Department of Defense unifying the service chiefs of the armed forces. The Chairman position was the senior military advisor to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. During Bradley's four year term in this position, he served under both Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Bradley also served with the Secretaries of Defense Louis Johnson, George Marshall, and Robert Lovett. During the Korean War, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and General Matthew Ridgway served as the Far East Commanders.

General Bradley faced many challenges during the Korean War. Since Bradley was the first General to hold the formal position of Chairman, he did not have a basis to refer for this particular job. Instead, Bradley faced the challenge of establishing a precedent for the Chairman position. As another potential dilemma for Bradley in the Korean War, MacArthur was technically Bradley's subordinate by position, yet MacArthur was a higher rank than Bradley. Congress eventually approved Bradley for promotion to General of the Army (5-stars) on 22

---

<sup>1</sup> Allan R. Millett, *The Korean War* (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, 2007), 17-18, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Cole, Lorna S. Jaffe, Walter S. Poole, and Williard J. Webb, *The Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, GPO, 1995), 43.

September 1950.<sup>3</sup> Also, MacArthur had more service time entering the active army in the year 1903 where Bradley entered the active army in the year 1915.

Bradley had a significant role in the decisions on the conduct of military operations from the North Korean Invasion in June 1950 leading up to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950. In this timeframe, Bradley and the JCS granted MacArthur certain freedom of action and restrictions as the Far East Commander. The real challenge became to what degree Bradley exercised authority over MacArthur, and when was it necessary to intervene in MacArthur's role as the field commander to determine the conduct of military operations. In essence, there had to be a balance between the Chairman's role as the senior military advisor to the President and the Chairman's role to support the field commander. In the beginning of the Korean War, Bradley and the JCS granted MacArthur wide latitude as the field commander, yet they restricted his actions leading up to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950 because Bradley had to ensure MacArthur's operations yielded to the policy established by President Truman. As Chairman, Omar Bradley had to ensure the conduct of operations in Korea did not violate national policy that would create greater political and diplomatic problems for the nation.

The literature on the Korean War highlights some of the contributions of Omar Bradley as Chairman, and most of the context takes place during MacArthur's command of the Far East. Most of the context occurs during the first six months of the war from the original North Korean Invasion in June 1950 to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950. The literature emphasizes MacArthur more than Bradley, yet these two have a critical relationship during the war. Overall, literature does not adequately address the critical role between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the field commander. With regard to his role in the Korean War, there is very little

---

<sup>3</sup> Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 553. Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost* (New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986), 155. Bradley by position was senior to MacArthur, yet MacArthur was a higher rank until Truman promoted Bradley to General of the Army in September 1950. This is the only source in the literature review to mention this important point.

attention dedicated to General Bradley's participation and role. Most literature emphasizes the roles of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a summary of the interpretation of Bradley's role during the Korean War, and the context of this interpretation.

Overall, the literature provides an overview of Bradley in a positive manner, yet there are some negative opinions. The five earlier works from 1963 to 1988 generally agree Bradley was active in key leader decisions and engagements. Also, these works mentioned Bradley had a tough challenge with MacArthur as a field commander.<sup>4</sup> The three later works from 1999 to 2010

---

<sup>4</sup>T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1963), 184-185, 252-253, 282-283. On 15 October 1950, Bradley accompanied President Truman on the historic trip to Wake Island to meet with MacArthur, and he recorded the actual conversation. MacArthur assessed the situation in Korea as a short fight, and the troops would be home by Christmas. For this reason, Bradley asked MacArthur on the possibility to release a division for Europe. MacArthur mentioned to Truman that the Chinese did not pose a threat, yet if they did intervene, the Chinese would be met with a complete United Nations retaliation. Bradley replied it would be a "war with the wrong enemy, at the wrong place, at the wrong time," and a war with China was inadvisable under the current global picture. After the Chinese crossed the Manchurian border, Bradley advised Truman to avoid a general war with China if possible, and this was contrary to MacArthur's belief who wanted the Chinese Nationalist troops from Formosa to assist. In April 1951, Truman called a meeting with Acheson, Marshall, and Bradley to discuss the removal of MacArthur. Bradley mentioned to Truman that MacArthur was clearly insubordinate, and MacArthur deserved relief of command.

Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost* (New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986) 159-160, 169, 188-190, 230-233, 256, 290-291, 409. Bradley aimed to give MacArthur the support he needed as the Far East Commander in the beginning of the war, yet he sought to have oversight of MacArthur's plans. For example, Bradley and the JCS approved the general concept of the Inchon Landing, but they wanted him to reconsider the exact amphibious location. Also, Bradley requested the details of the Inchon Landing. Before the Chinese invasion, Bradley believed in avoiding war with China, and he communicated this to MacArthur and the civilian leaders. When MacArthur pushed forces to the Yalu River, Bradley and the JCS posed restrictions on him to not move non-Korean forces into North Korea, and he was not to attack into Manchuria. In April 1951, Bradley and the JCS recommended the removal of MacArthur because he was not "more responsive to the will of the commander-in-chief," and he did not follow the directives issued by the JCS.

Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 120-121, 126, 131, 177-178. After the success of the Inchon Landing, MacArthur sought to push non-Korean forces beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Bradley issued an earlier directive for the prevention of non-Korean forces north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. When MacArthur proceeded to disobey the directive, Bradley and the JCS were unwilling to confront MacArthur on the matter. When MacArthur confronted the Chinese near the Yalu River, Bradley and the JCS imposed restrictions on him approved by the President in order to avoid a war with China. MacArthur complained these restrictions prevented him from achieving victory.

Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-53* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 42, 72, 227, 263-264, 347-348, 472, 527-528, 591. Clay Blair explained how Bradley participated in different significant events during the Korean War. In March 1948, Bradley was the only Joint Chief to not favor

conclude Bradley had a passive role in the Korean War, yet these works provide limited examples.<sup>5</sup> Even with the mixed reviews of Bradley's role, there are specific questions these

---

the immediate troop withdrawal from Korea as other options existed. On 25 June 1950, Truman met with key leaders to discuss the aggression of the North Korean invasion. Bradley mentioned to President Truman this represented a real test against communism, and the United States must not appease the situation. Bradley stated "we must draw the line somewhere," and Korea was this opportunity. In developing the Inchon Landing, Bradley sought a detailed plan from MacArthur, yet MacArthur only provided a generic response preventing Bradley and the JCS from making modifications or a cancellation altogether. On 15 October 1950, Bradley accompanied Truman to Wake Island to discuss the Korean War with MacArthur. Since MacArthur hoped to have troops home by Christmas, Bradley asked about the possibility of sending a division to Europe. MacArthur replied that he could make 2<sup>nd</sup> Division available. In the months of November and December 1950, Bradley noted that MacArthur lost credibility and trust with the entire JCS due to his false assumptions of the Chinese. Bradley stated that Red China made a fool of MacArthur, and the only way for MacArthur to regain his reputation was an all-out war with China. However, Bradley recommended against a general war with China. In April 1951, Truman consulted with key leaders on his decision to remove MacArthur from command. Bradley and the JCS agreed unanimously to recommend the removal of MacArthur, and the group based this on three primary reasons. Truman had Bradley draft the relief order to send to MacArthur.

Doris M. Conduit, *The Test of War 1950-1953*. Vol II of *History of the Office of the Secretary of the Defense* (Washington: GPO, 1988), 78, 104-105, 520, 522. Bradley advised caution was necessary when engaging the Chinese forces after they crossed the Manchurian border because global war was a possibility the United States did not want. On 6 April 1950, Truman asked for Bradley's opinion on the relief of MacArthur. Bradley informed Truman the entire JCS concurred with removing MacArthur, and Bradley drafted the relief order for Truman's approval. As Chairman, Bradley presided over meetings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, yet he had no legal vote in the group. Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett believed this diminished the Chairman position. Bradley and the JCS discussed matters about the Korean War, and Bradley often provided their recommendations to the President without taking an official vote. However, he informed the President where there was disagreement, but this occurred rarely. Bradley and the JCS had no official command authority over unified commands like the Far East under MacArthur, but Bradley operated within the scope of his instructions when advising and recommending decisions to the President of the United States. As Chairman, Bradley led the JCS meetings that informed the President, and he was active in the major decisions and discussions during the Korean War.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Sandler, *The Korean War: No Victors, No Vanquished* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 50, 88. Sandler provided a view of Bradley's role in the war as insignificant. For example, Bradley did not react with great concern about the initial North Korean invasion because he believed it was just "rumours" and simply went to bed. Prior to the Inchon Landing operation, Bradley dismissed the likely hood of it because he believed amphibious operations were no longer needed as mentioned in his "Fancy Dans" speech in October 1949.

Michael D. Pearlman, *Truman and MacArthur: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 87-88, 91-92, 105, 131, 188-189. Michael Pearlman wrote how Bradley was generally passive with MacArthur as the field commander. In MacArthur's planning of the Inchon Landing, Bradley disagreed with MacArthur on its exact location, and he recommended to Truman to postpone the landing because it was risky. However, Truman allowed MacArthur to move forward, and the actual operation proved a huge success. Afterwards, Bradley and the JCS were embarrassed, and they became too worried to challenge MacArthur again. Throughout the rest of the war, Bradley maintained the stance of upholding the military tradition to support the field commander, and MacArthur was "mainly a prima donna figurehead who had to be tolerated."

works do not adequately address. What was Bradley's role in the decisions on the conduct of military operations leading up to the Chinese Invasion, and what does this say about the freedom and restrictions the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should grant a field commander? This leads to another question: when is it necessary to abide by the traditional role of allowing the field commander to determine the conduct of military operations and the Chairman to intervene? This monograph will answer these questions by examining Bradley's participation as it evolved over critical events from June 1950 through December 1950. Also, this monograph will address the sources that discredit Bradley's role in the Korean War.

The overall approach for answering these specific questions is through a historical narrative. It is basically a story of critical events in chronological order, and the overall subject is within the military history context. Through this approach, an understanding of how a story evolved over time from critical historical events provides the foundation for analysis. The analysis then answers the specific questions. The evidence for analysis includes specific personal accounts from the major leaders and actors during the war, and it includes the correspondence of official records during the time of events. In the specific case of Omar Bradley, the chronology of critical events includes: Pre-Korean War assessment, initial North Korean invasion, Inchon Landing, issue of crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, Wake Island Conference, actions near the Manchurian

---

Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence, KS: 2010), 58-59, 61, 111-112, 115, 420-421. Allan R. Millett described Bradley in his role as Chairman as someone who was loyal, but he had many shortcomings. Bradley lacked good judgment, yet Marshall and Collins helped to minimize it. After the North Koreans invaded on 25 June 1950, Bradley mentioned the South Koreans were capable of defending against the North Koreans based on the senior military advisor Brigadier General Roberts' assessment. Days later, Bradley recommended to President Truman that communist aggression needed to cease, and a line had to be drawn somewhere. Bradley emphasized Korea was the place to begin. Millett highlighted Truman's decision to remove MacArthur, and he explained how Bradley did not believe MacArthur was guilty of any legal insubordination. However, Bradley sought to discuss the matter with the other members of the Joint Chiefs. Bradley and the Joint Chiefs agreed MacArthur should leave command because he often planned operations without consultation with Washington. Even though Millett diminished Bradley's role, he did not provide specific examples. Millett, *The Korean War*, 139. In his earlier 2007 book, Millett summarizes that Bradley blamed the misjudgments of the war on MacArthur, yet MacArthur seldom planned a major operation without Bradley's knowledge. However, MacArthur would at times begin an operation without formal approval. Bradley would not seriously challenge MacArthur, and MacArthur knew this to be the case

border, Chinese invasion, and the removal of MacArthur. These events tell the complete story of Bradley as Chairman and his relationship with MacArthur as the field commander.

In the beginning of the Korean War, Bradley granted MacArthur wide latitude as the field commander as evident during the Inchon Landing, yet he restricted his actions leading up to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950. Bradley intervened in MacArthur's role as the field commander because MacArthur continued to disregard JCS directives over the duration of the war, and MacArthur's actions threatened war with China which contradicted policy. As Chairman, Bradley had a more international and global view of the Korean War unlike MacArthur as the field commander, and he served as the most trusted senior military advisor to President Truman.

### **Bradley Communicates the Military Policy**

The National Security Council 68 (NSC-68) resolution established on 14 April 1950 outlined the United States' national security policy, and this served as the basis for the military policy. This overall policy had two portions. The first portion attempted to develop a peaceful international community in the absence of a Soviet threat, and this became the long term goal. In the second portion, the policy sought to contain the Soviet Union's global influence, and this became the immediate short term goal. In actions short of war, the United States achieved containment in four ways: "block further expansion of Soviet power, expose falsities of Soviet pretensions, induce retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence, and foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system."<sup>6</sup> To support this containment policy, a strong military posture was critical in order to help guarantee the security. Otherwise, the containment policy was not creditable. However, the option of negotiation was always an alternative to military

---

<sup>6</sup> National Security Council 68, *United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, 14 April 1950, 38. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-6.htm>

implementation.<sup>7</sup> Bradley and the entire JCS supported the adoption of NSC-68 with Secretary of State Dean Acheson as its principle supporter, yet the Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson did not.<sup>8</sup> This situation proved to be the first of many international affairs where Bradley and Acheson strongly agreed. The real first test of NSC-68 originated in the Korean War, and it provided a framework for decisions and actions.

Bradley used NSC-68 as the basis for establishing the national military policy. In October 1950, both the *Combat Forces Journal* and the *Reader's Digest* published Bradley's article called "U.S. Military Policy: 1950." Bradley used these two forums to communicate a message to the U.S. Armed Services, American population, and international allies. The purpose was to allow these audiences to understand the U.S. military problems and policies, and the *Combat Forces Journal* and *Reader's Digest* reached these audiences. As the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this was one of "many sound precedents" Bradley established.<sup>9</sup>

Bradley wrote the military policy was to provide security for the United States and support the "national objectives of peace throughout the world" established by the civilian authorities.<sup>10</sup> Also, Bradley wrote military policy must be consistent with U.S. foreign policy, and there were three objectives uniting these two policies. The first fundamental objective was to protect the American form of government and way of life against any threat or challenge. The second objective was not to provoke war and not to start a preventative war, yet this was not to occur at the price of appeasement. In other words, the United States was not to give into an

---

<sup>7</sup> National Security Council 68, 38-39.

<sup>8</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 519.

<sup>9</sup> Omar N. Bradley, "U.S. Military Policy: 1950," *The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley* Volume III, 40.

<sup>10</sup> Bradley, "U.S. Military Policy," 41.

enemy's demands like Germany prior to World War II. The third objective was to seek peace for other nations, and this meant supporting the United Nations.<sup>11</sup>

In the military policy, Bradley outlined what the strategic priorities were for the United States. Foreign and military policy established the first strategic priority as the defense of Western Europe. It was critical to emplace prepared defenses in Western Europe and to avoid the liberation of these countries afterwards like in World War II. Bradley stated the Korean War represented a secondary strategic priority for the United States, yet it signified drawing a "line against Communist aggression in Asia."<sup>12</sup> He emphasized the importance of the Korean War as part of the commitment of the United Nations to condemn Communist aggression. Bradley mentioned how the defense of South Korea had the full endorsement of the President, Secretary of Defense, and the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>13</sup>

Bradley's article on military policy provided strategic communication to key audiences, and it served the same purpose as the modern day National Military Strategy (NMS) published by the Department of Defense. The significance of this article provides a fundamental understanding of how the military policy drove theater strategy and operations during the Korean War. In particular, this article helps to explain the basis of Bradley's decisions to ensure MacArthur's actions in the Korean War were consistent with military policy which is essentially a reflection of containment found in NSC-68. Even though Bradley clearly stated and communicated the policy, it was not as simple for Bradley to enforce this policy because the first real test of it came during the Korean War.

---

<sup>11</sup> Bradley, "U.S. Military Policy," 42.

<sup>12</sup> Bradley, "U.S. Military Policy," 43.

<sup>13</sup> Bradley, "U.S. Military Policy," 44.

## Bradley's Pre-Korean War Assessment

In World War II, the Japanese held the Korean peninsula under its military control. After the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, the United States and Soviet Union decided to divide the Korean peninsula along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel for administrative reasons, and the United States envisioned a united Korea at a later date. Eventually, two separate Korean factions developed on the peninsula. From 1947 to 1950, North Korea grew into its own state founded on a communist platform, and the leader Kim Il-sung developed his own military regime. In August 1948, the Republic of South Korea formed under the new president Syngman Rhee, yet it did not have a significant military force as North Korea. The United States established a Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) to help train and raise a capable military force in South Korea.<sup>14</sup> The tensions on the divided Korean peninsula grew into a very significant problem in the years from 1945-1950.

General Bradley was the U.S. Army Chief of Staff in 1948, and he recognized the possibility of North Korea invading South Korea. He believed South Korea needed the military presence of the United States and a withdrawal of forces in 1948 was premature. Other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1948 rejected Bradley's view and believed military forces should withdraw. Bradley argued a reassessment of the Korean situation should occur before the withdrawal of combat troops. If a North Korean invasion happened, he believed the Security Council of the United Nations should address the situation.<sup>15</sup> Contrary to Bradley's advice, the

---

<sup>14</sup> Millett, *The Korean War*, 7-10.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), 16. J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 29. Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 42.

U.S. military eventually reduced its occupation forces, and its primary role was as an advisory group to the South Korean military forces.<sup>16</sup>

In February 1950, Bradley and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff visited MacArthur for the first time in the Far East (Toyko, Japan) since May 1946. The purpose of the trip was to gain an assessment from MacArthur on the issues in the Far East. Over the course of several days, MacArthur and Bradley covered the overall Far East strategy. Bradley communicated to MacArthur that if the Soviet Union launched a global war, the United States would conduct a strategic offensive in Europe and a strategic defensive in the Far East. In other words, Europe had a higher strategic priority than the Far East. Within the Far East, Bradley and MacArthur agreed the main priority was the defense of Japan and Okinawa. The island of Formosa (Taiwan) was critical to the Chinese Nationalists, and Formosa in communist possession threatened U.S. war plans.<sup>17</sup> With regard to South Korea, Bradley and MacArthur shared the same view. There was little strategic interest in South Korea, and the South Korean forces were capable of defending against a North Korean attack. Bradley and MacArthur concluded their meeting in February 1950 with no significant issues or disagreements.<sup>18</sup>

From 11-24 June 1950, Bradley made a second trip to the Far East with Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. The strategic outlook remained the same in the Far East, and Korea was still of little strategic interest. MacArthur mentioned his primary concern was for the United States to emplace measures to protect Formosa from a communist power. During the visit, Bradley conversed with the chief of the U.S. Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) Brigadier General William L. Roberts. Even though there were reports that North Korea was on the verge of invading South Korea, Roberts and other members of KMAG agreed the South

---

<sup>16</sup> James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1950-1952: Vol. III of History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington: GPO, 1998), 19-21.

<sup>17</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 523-524, 527.

<sup>18</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 529.

Korean forces were able to defend against any North Korean attack. Bradley trusted Roberts' judgment, and he believed there was no major concern for Korea.<sup>19</sup> This was the same assessment provided by the KMAG at a congressional hearing in June 1949.<sup>20</sup> On 18 June 1950, MacArthur's Assistant Chief of Staff G-2 Major General Willoughby briefed Bradley and Johnson on the South Korean Army capability. Willoughby discussed there was some concern about the South Korean Army, yet it was capable of maintaining itself against North Korean forces.<sup>21</sup>

Bradley returned from his second Far East trip to Washington, and his general assessment was the South Korean Army was capable of defending itself against a North Korean attack. His discussions with MacArthur, MacArthur's staff, and the KMAG all supported this assessment. However at one point in 1948, Bradley argued against the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from South Korea because North Korea had a stronger military force. He was the only member of the JCS to have this view. As Chairman, Bradley relied on MacArthur as the field commander for the assessment of South Korean forces capabilities, and he trusted the judgment of MacArthur and his staff in this situation. Unfortunately, Bradley and everyone else would be proven false within days of Bradley's return to Washington, and Bradley's initial assessment in 1948 proved correct. This served as the first of many situations where MacArthur's credibility diminished with Bradley.

## **Bradley and the First Year of the Korean War**

The first year of the Korean War from June 1950 to May 1951 posed the most significant events and challenges. The first event was the surprise initial invasion by North Korea. Some

---

<sup>19</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 42-43. Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 530.

<sup>20</sup> J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 42.

<sup>21</sup> C. A. Willoughby, "General Orientation for the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Intelligence Aspects of the Far East Command," 18 June 1950, pages 1-2, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

other events included MacArthur's successful Inchon Landing and his planned invasion to the Yalu River. Finally, the surprise Chinese invasion on the Korean peninsula and MacArthur's removal from command were both significant events in the first year. During all of these events, Omar Bradley had a critical role.

### **North Korean Invasion and United Nations Response (see map page 39)**

After Washington received word of the North Korean invasion, the days immediately following required significant dialogue among key civilian and military leaders. Initially, Bradley believed the South Korean forces could handle North Korea based on his recent visit to the Far East, and the Army Chief of Staff General Collins shared this same view.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Bradley did not react with great concern about the initial North Korean invasion because he believed it was just "rumours" and simply went to bed.<sup>23</sup> Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson believed Formosa was more important than Korea, and he expressed this to President Truman. However, Secretary of State Dean Acheson believed there was cause for concern with Korea, and he expressed the need to support Korea with additional military aid.<sup>24</sup>

On 26 June 1950, President Truman stated the North Korean invasion was a "serious breach of the peace," and the United States was going to assist South Korea against this "lawless action."<sup>25</sup> Bradley and other key leaders believed the failure to take action was a sign of appeasement, and Bradley recommended drawing a firm line against communism. He mentioned the situation in South Korea was the necessary opportunity to perform this action, and President Truman agreed with Bradley. To better assess the situation, Truman directed Bradley and the

---

<sup>22</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 532. Millet, *The War for Korea*, 111-112. After the North Koreans invaded on 25 June 1950, Millet explains how Bradley believed the South Koreans were capable of defending against the North Koreans based on the senior military advisor Brigadier Roberts' assessment.

<sup>23</sup> Sandler, *The Korean War*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Condit, *The Test of War*, 48-49.

<sup>25</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President on the Violation of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel in Korea," 26 June 1950, *Public Papers of the Presidents: 1950* (Washington: GPO, 1965), 491.

Service Chiefs to begin necessary measures to support Korea, and this included MacArthur's on-site survey.<sup>26</sup> At this point, the United States only committed to support South Korea with Air and Naval resources.<sup>27</sup>

On 29 June 1950, MacArthur left Tokyo and assessed the front line of Korea for himself. He witnessed how the North Koreans were easily advancing against the South Korean forces, and he predicted North Korea would completely occupy the peninsula. The South Koreans were incapable of stopping the North Koreans even with adequate air and naval support from the United States. After his assessment was complete, MacArthur wired a message to Washington. He stated it was necessary to introduce "United States ground combat forces into the Korean battle area." Otherwise, North Korea "will threaten the over-running of all of Korea."<sup>28</sup> Bradley had mixed reactions on the commitment of ground forces, yet he realized it was unavoidable and inevitable. On 30 June 1950, Truman approved MacArthur's request for ground troops to the front lines of the Korean War.<sup>29</sup> In a matter of five days, Truman, Bradley, and the entire JCS significantly changed their view towards Korea as a higher priority in the Far East, and there was "no turning back" because the United States had "fully committed its prestige to the defense of South Korea."<sup>30</sup> Bradley now believed communism was willing to use arms to achieve its ends. He further realized this was a fundamental change, and it forced a re-evaluation

---

<sup>26</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Vol. II Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 335-336. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 14. Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 535. Millet, *The War for Korea*, 115. Millet explains that Bradley recommended to President Truman that communist aggression needed to cease, and a line had to be drawn somewhere. Bradley emphasized Korea was the place to begin.

<sup>27</sup> JCS Message 84681 sent to MacArthur, 29 June 1950, 200-201, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>28</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: De Capo Press, 1964), 333-334. MacArthur message C56942 sent to JCS, 30 June 1950, pages 222-224, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>29</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 539-540. JCS message 84718 sent to MacArthur, 30 June 1950, page 225, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>30</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 123.

of the military needs of the United States with regard to communism in international affairs.<sup>31</sup>

After these recent changes in events, President Truman discussed the idea of a formal approval from Congress. However, Acheson recommended to Truman not to seek approval and simply rely on the President's constitutional authority as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Bradley shared the same view as Acheson, and he believed Congress would delay the immediate need to send additional troops, resources, and other support to MacArthur.<sup>32</sup>

In early July 1950, Bradley and the JCS received a draft resolution from the Department of State that outlined the concept of a United Nations unified command in Korea. The draft resolution requested the United States to designate a commander to lead the unified command and report to the Security Council. Bradley and the JCS accepted the resolution of appointing the unified commander, and the individual was General MacArthur. However, Bradley and the JCS did not want MacArthur to report directly to the Security Council. Instead, MacArthur reported directly to the United States, and then Bradley sent the reports to the Security Council. This change to the draft resolution ensured Bradley and the JCS maintained active control between operations in Korea and the Security Council.<sup>33</sup> On 8 July 1950, Bradley and the JCS recommended to Truman the appointment of MacArthur, and Truman approved the recommendation. On this same day, Truman announced the United Nations appointed General MacArthur as the unified commander of military forces in Korea, and he was to "use the United Nations flag in the course of operations" against North Korea.<sup>34</sup> As another immediate concern,

---

<sup>31</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1969), 436.

<sup>32</sup> Dean Acheson, *The Korean War: An International History* (New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1971), 32-33.

<sup>33</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 133-135. Conduit, *The Test of War*, 55. Memo signed by Omar Bradley, "Proposed U.S. Position with Regard to Forces in Korea," 5 July 1950, pages 231-233, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>34</sup> Truman, "Designation of MacArthur to lead the Allied Military Forces in Korea," 8 July 1950, 520. Memo signed by Omar Bradley, "Designation of a United Nations Unified Commander by the U.S.,"

Bradley stated to Truman the need to work out the differences between the State and Defense Departments on the peace treaty for Japan. Bradley believed it was important “to begin consultation with key allies and preparation of a broad plan” for the defense of Japan because the aggression of North Korean forces was a threat to this country.<sup>35</sup>

Upon his appointment, Bradley and the JCS clearly communicated instructions to MacArthur on his generic role as the unified commander. First, operations in Korea were in support of the United Nations Security Council. Second, the control of operations centered in Washington, and the basis for the directive was Washington had a broader global view than MacArthur as the Far East Commander. Finally, Bradley and the JCS instructed MacArthur to send reports on operations directly to them. Thus, Bradley and the JCS served as the “intermediary between General MacArthur and the Security Council.”<sup>36</sup>

Over the course of events in late June 1950 and early July 1950, Truman met more frequently with Bradley, and he began to rely on Bradley more often in his decisions. Bradley briefed Truman on a daily basis on the war’s progress, and he eventually gained the trust of the President. Truman did not trust Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, and he gradually sought George Marshall to replace him. In addition, Truman had some reservations of MacArthur as a field commander. Even though he did not realize it at the time, Bradley became “Truman’s chief” and “most trusted military advisor” with regards to military affairs.<sup>37</sup>

---

8 July 1950, page 234, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>35</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 434.

<sup>36</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 137, 141. JCS message 85370 sent to MacArthur, 10 July 1950, page 238, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library. War directive 85743 sent to MacArthur, 12 July 1950, page 239, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>37</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 541-542. Conduit, *The Test of War*, 520. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. II, 344.

During the first weeks of the Korean War, Bradley established a clear command and control relationship with MacArthur, the U.N. Security Council, and President Truman. After learning of the North Korean invasion, Bradley was the first key leader to approach President Truman of the need to address this communist aggression, and he demonstrated this was consistent with the recent U.S. containment policy. Even though Bradley had mixed opinions on the introduction of U.S. ground troops, he proceeded to support MacArthur's on-site assessment as the field commander. This was a dramatic change from MacArthur's pre-war assessment a few weeks earlier. Most importantly, Bradley gained the trust of President Truman after this short response time to the North Korean invasion.

### **Inchon Landing (see map page 40)**

In July 1950, General MacArthur began drafting plans for an offensive against the North Korean forces, and one key action was Operation Chromite, an amphibious assault on the coast of Inchon located west of Seoul. On 23 July 1950, MacArthur communicated his initial plan to Bradley and the JCS. His note explained that the plan called for an amphibious landing in mid-September that would destroy the enemy forces in the rear in conjunction with the Eighth Army attack from the South. MacArthur believed this operation delivered a decisive blow to the enemy. MacArthur explained the alternative to this plan was a "frontal attack which can only result in a protracted and expensive campaign."<sup>38</sup> Bradley characterized MacArthur's plan as "bold and very risky," and the Inchon site "was probably the worst possible place ever selected for an amphibious landing."<sup>39</sup> In October 1949, Bradley predicted in his speech before Congress that amphibious operations would never happen again, yet he clarified in his remarks it was not

---

<sup>38</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 346.

<sup>39</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 544.

on a large scale such as Normandy.<sup>40</sup> Even though Operation Chromite was a potential embarrassment for him from his previous statement before Congress, Bradley did not state amphibious operations were impossible on a small scale like Inchon.

Bradley was in a very awkward situation. Field commanders exercised broad responsibility, and the JCS did not assume control for tactical operations. However, the Inchon Landing plan was very risky, and there was no formal U.S. declaration of war in Korea. The failure of the operation had significant consequences beyond Korea and MacArthur's responsibility. For this reason, Bradley "determined to keep a close eye on the Inchon plan" and cancel it if necessary.<sup>41</sup> This approach by Bradley and the JCS was somewhat different from their traditional roles, yet it proved necessary to ensure operations in Korea did not contradict policy. The Inchon Landing plan was a test of this new approach.

On 8 August 1950, MacArthur revealed the details of the Inchon Landing. Ridgway explained in a memorandum to Bradley the plan was "brilliant."<sup>42</sup> Ridgway supported the amphibious assault, yet he mentioned the final decision on the plan required Bradley and JCS approval. To achieve victory, Ridgway believed the plan required "perfect timing, perfect luck, precise coordination, complete surprise, and extreme gallantry."<sup>43</sup> Even with this positive feedback, Bradley and the JCS still required a detailed plan from MacArthur.

Since MacArthur "was not very communicative about his plans," General Collins and Admiral Sherman from the JCS visited MacArthur in Toyko to review the details on 23 August

---

<sup>40</sup> Omar N. Bradley, "Statement of General Omar N. Bradley Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Before the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives," 19 October 1949, *The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley Volume III*, 234. Sandler, *The Korean War*, 88. Sandler simply addresses that Bradley dismissed the likelihood of the Inchon Landing being possible. He states Bradley believed amphibious operations were no longer needed based on his speech before Congress in October 1949.

<sup>41</sup> Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 120-121. Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 545.

<sup>42</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 546.

<sup>43</sup> Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 38.

1950.<sup>44</sup> MacArthur believed the purpose of their visit was to “dissuade” the entire concept of operations for the Inchon Landing.<sup>45</sup> However, this was not the case. MacArthur provided Collins and Sherman the details of the plan, and there was not a real objection to the amphibious assault itself. Collins suggested an alternate landing at Kunsan because it had few of Inchon’s physical drawbacks. He also voiced the concern about the ability of Eighth Army to link with Tenth Corps forces because there was a large divide between them. At the end of the briefing, Collins “was favorably impressed but still had some reservations.”<sup>46</sup> When Collins and Sherman returned to Washington, they briefed Bradley on the Inchon Landing and stated their reservations. Bradley later explained to Secretary of Defense Johnson and President Truman the results of the trip, and he recommended postponing the Inchon Landing until Eighth Army successfully held the Pusan Perimeter. However, President Truman had “great confidence it would succeed” even though “it was a daring strategic conception.”<sup>47</sup> On 28 August 1950, Bradley and the JCS sent MacArthur a message approving the general preparations for the amphibious assault, yet it was “subject to reconsideration.”<sup>48</sup>

Over the next several days, the events in Korea changed, and modifications to the original Inchon Landing plan were inevitable. On 5 September 1950, Bradley and the JCS sent MacArthur a note requesting the detailed modifications to the amphibious operation. MacArthur replied the general outline of the plan remained the same, and he sent an officer courier with the detailed descriptions of the modified plan with an expected arrival on 11 September 1950. Bradley mentioned MacArthur clearly knew the courier would arrive “too late for the JCS to

---

<sup>44</sup> Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 121.

<sup>45</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 347.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 123,126. See also MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 349. Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 209.

<sup>47</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 547. Truman, *Memoirs* Vol.II, 348, 358.

<sup>48</sup> Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 127. Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 211.

make a sensible evaluation” of the modified plan, and he believed this was clearly an “act of arrogance” by MacArthur.<sup>49</sup>

On 7 September 1950, Bradley and the JCS requested an “estimate as to the feasibility and chance of success” of the operation “if initiated on planned schedule.”<sup>50</sup> When MacArthur received this message, he felt he “might be ordered to abandon” the operation because he wondered if “Washington lost its nerve.” He replied to Bradley saying “I regard the chance of success of the operation as excellent,” and this operation represented the “only hope of wresting the initiative from the enemy.” He stated all the subordinate commanders and staff officers “are enthusiastic and confident of the success of the enveloping operation.”<sup>51</sup> However, MacArthur’s remarks were not entirely true. In particular, Major General Courtney Whitney served on MacArthur’s staff and described how MacArthur felt the day before the actual Inchon Landing. MacArthur felt doubt, and it was possible Inchon was to be “one of the great United States military disasters,” and it was a “tremendous gamble.”<sup>52</sup>

On 8 September 1950, Bradley and the JCS briefed President Truman of MacArthur’s confident appraisal of the Inchon Landing operation. Since it was too late to formally disapprove Inchon, Bradley and the JCS recommended a formal approval to President Truman of the Inchon Landing. Bradley and the JCS sent MacArthur a message stating “we approve your plan and the President has been so informed.”<sup>53</sup> On 14 September 1950, MacArthur’s official courier Lieutenant Colonel Lynn D. Smith arrived and briefed the modified Inchon Plan to Bradley and

---

<sup>49</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 554-555. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 127-128. Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 212

<sup>50</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 213.

<sup>51</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 351-352. MacArthur message C62423 to the JCS, 8 September 1950, pages 266-267, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>52</sup> Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History* (New York: Knopf, 1956), 358.

<sup>53</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 556. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 128-129. JCS message 90958 to MacArthur, 8 September 1950, page 268, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

the JCS. Since the Inchon Landing was only a matter of hours away, Bradley and the JCS were too late to cancel the plan altogether.<sup>54</sup>

The Inchon Landing occurred on 15 September 1950, and Bradley thought it “proved to be the luckiest military operation in history.”<sup>55</sup> Eighth Army and Tenth Corps successfully linked together and cleared the North Koreans from Seoul by 28 September 1950.<sup>56</sup> In a short period of two weeks, MacArthur was able to significantly turn the tide of the Korean War to favor the United Nations. At this point, Bradley and the JCS pondered on the next military action, and there was the question of whether to pursue the fleeing North Koreans across the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Bradley realized Korea ceased to be “purely a military problem and became a politico-military problem.”<sup>57</sup>

The communication between Bradley and MacArthur prior to the Inchon Landing pushed the limits of the command and control relationships established earlier by Bradley in the Korean War. MacArthur was slow to provide the modified details of the Inchon Landing plan, and he did not listen to the concerns of the risks expressed by Bradley and the JCS with respect to the actual site location.<sup>58</sup> Even with MacArthur’s lack of cooperation, Bradley did not seriously challenge MacArthur. However, Bradley faced the aspect of being a lesser rank than MacArthur at this point in the war, and he served as the first Chairman of the JCS without knowing the full requirements of the job. Under these circumstances, there was not any significant negative

---

<sup>54</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History JCS*, 215.

<sup>55</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 556.

<sup>56</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 354.

<sup>57</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 557. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 143.

<sup>58</sup> Pearlman, *Truman and MacArthur*, 87-88, 91-92. According to Pearlman, Bradley disagreed with MacArthur on the exact location of the Inchon Landing, and he recommended to Truman to postpone the landing because it was risky. However, Truman allowed MacArthur to move forward, and the actual operation proved a huge success.

consequence, yet it potentially complicated the professional relationship between these two leaders.

### **Bradley's Promotion to General of the Army (Five-Stars)**

General Omar Bradley was technically a lesser rank than General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, yet he held a higher position of authority as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also, MacArthur had twelve more service years than Bradley graduating from West Point in 1903 and Bradley in 1915. This potentially posed a dilemma for Bradley. During the first two months of the Korean War, Truman began to rely on Bradley as the most key advisor on his staff outside Secretary of State Dean Acheson.<sup>59</sup> Truman had decreased regard for Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, and he asked for Johnson to resign on 19 September 1950. George Marshall replaced Johnson as Secretary of Defense on 21 September 1950.<sup>60</sup> In early September 1950, Truman recommended Bradley for promotion to General of the Army, and Congress approved it. On 22 September 1950, Truman promoted Bradley with his fifth-star.<sup>61</sup> The appointment of Marshall and promotion of Bradley established a new team within the Department of Defense with two key leaders Truman trusted and held in high regards. Truman's actions also reduced the potential dilemma Bradley faced because Bradley was now technically the same rank as MacArthur.

### **Issue of Crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel**

After the success of the Inchon Landing, President Truman realized the possibility of Chinese intervention existed. He issued instructions to Bradley and the JCS to prepare a recommendation to cover this possible contingency as a directive for MacArthur.<sup>62</sup> On 27 September 1950, Bradley and the JCS sent instructions to MacArthur that his military objective

---

<sup>59</sup> David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 794.

<sup>60</sup> Conduit, *The Test of War*, 33-35. Truman, *Memoirs*, 256, 362.

<sup>61</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 552-553.

<sup>62</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 362.

was the destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces. Bradley gave him authorization to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel only if there was no entry by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces into North Korea. The directive also included instructions not to cross the Manchurian and Soviet borders, and MacArthur was not to use non-Korean ground forces in the provinces along the Manchurian and Soviet borders. Once MacArthur developed his detailed plan, he was to submit it to Bradley and the JCS for approval.<sup>63</sup>

On 28 September 1950, MacArthur replied to Bradley and the JCS with his general concept. The Eighth Army was ready to attack across the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and X Corps was to make an amphibious landing at Wonsan. Tentative dates for the attack were between 15 and 30 October 1950. MacArthur mentioned a detailed plan followed at a later date, and there was no indication of “entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces.”<sup>64</sup> As the situation developed, Bradley and the JCS learned of the possibility of Chinese forces entering North Korea. For this reason on 6 October 1950, Bradley recommended to President Truman a change to MacArthur’s original instructions. The change was that MacArthur was not to engage against Chinese forces without gaining approval from Washington first. Truman approved the change, and Bradley issued it to MacArthur.<sup>65</sup> In this particular issue, Bradley clearly communicated to MacArthur the limits of his authority to engage the Chinese, and Bradley gained President Truman’s approval. This basic directive remained constant for the duration MacArthur’s time in command.

---

<sup>63</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 563. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 146-148. MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 358. JCS message 92801 sent to MacArthur, 27 September 1950, pages 274-276, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>64</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 358. MacArthur message C64805 sent to JCS, 28 September 1950, page 277, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>65</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 570-571. Truman, *Memoirs*, 362. Memo signed by Omar Bradley, “Proposed Amplifying Directive to General MacArthur,” 6 October 1950, pages 283-284, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

## **Bradley's Participation at the Wake Island Conference**

President Harry S. Truman had never personally met General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, and he believed it was necessary for them to meet. Truman was disappointed that MacArthur denied visiting the States over the years, and he believed MacArthur had to familiarize himself with the situation according to Washington. Truman announced he was to meet with MacArthur sometime from 13 to 17 October 1950 at a designated location.<sup>66</sup> Bradley attended this meeting with President Truman, and he represented the entire JCS on the trip.

On 15 October 1950, Truman met with MacArthur on Wake Island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. MacArthur provided some opening remarks at the conference. He stated formal resistance will end throughout the Korean peninsula by Thanksgiving. He emphasized that he already seized Wonsan, and X Corps was on the verge of taking Pyongyang. MacArthur stated he hoped to return Eighth Army to Japan by Christmas, and the United Nations would be able to hold elections by the first of the year. After his opening remarks, MacArthur stated later in his brief that there was little chance of Soviet or Chinese intervention, and he was “no longer fearful of their intervention.”<sup>67</sup>

During this conference, Bradley asked some key questions to MacArthur. Bradley asked MacArthur about the relation between the Japanese population and the presence of troops in Japan. MacArthur stated the Japanese people liked their presence, yet Eighth Army would no longer need to be an occupying force in Japan when it returned from Korea. Bradley then asked MacArthur about the possibility of sending a division from Japan to Europe in April 1951 since MacArthur predicted the early return of the Eighth Army. MacArthur replied in confidence that

---

<sup>66</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 363.

<sup>67</sup> Bradley, Omar N. “Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference on 15 October 1950, Compiled by General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Notes kept by the conferees from Washington,” 1-2, 11, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library. Note: This serves as the official transcript of this entire conference.

he could send the well trained veteran 2<sup>nd</sup> Division by January 1951, and this was three months earlier than Bradley's original idea.<sup>68</sup>

Later in the conference conversation, Bradley mentioned the subject of additional troops from the United Nations. Even though MacArthur predicted the early conclusion of military operations by November 1950, Bradley inquired about pressing the continued effort to bring these troops to Korea with an expected arrival in February or March 1951. The purpose of the additional troops from the United Nations was for the perceived political balance of forces from various countries. MacArthur agreed with Bradley on this point, yet the additional troops were useless from a military point of view.<sup>69</sup> Inherently, the additional troops from these other nations potentially offered a different perspective in the conduct of the war.

The Wake Island Conference ended on a positive note, and MacArthur praised the support he received from Bradley and the JCS. He stated "no commander in the history of war has ever had more complete and adequate support from all agencies in Washington than I have."<sup>70</sup> The significance of this conference ensured a clear understanding of the war's current status and the immediate way ahead. Bradley believed the crisis in the Korean War was almost complete, and this enabled him to address other global concerns such as Europe.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the earlier complications Bradley had with MacArthur during the Inchon Landing, it appeared their working relationship improved with a common and clear understanding on the way forward for actions in Korea. At this point, Bradley supported MacArthur's assessment as the field commander, and he did not have a sound reason to doubt MacArthur

---

<sup>68</sup> Bradley, "Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference", 13-14. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 154. Truman, *Memoirs*, 365. Note: MacArthur in his book *Reminiscences* disagrees with this account of the conference on page 362.

<sup>69</sup> Bradley, "Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference," 20-21.

<sup>70</sup> Bradley, "Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference," 7.

<sup>71</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 576-577.

otherwise. During this conference, Bradley saw MacArthur's actions were consistent with policy and previously issued JCS directives.

### **Actions to Yalu River and Manchurian Border (see map page 41)**

On 17 October 1950, MacArthur issued an operations order to have the United Nations forces to drive toward the Yalu River and Manchurian Border, yet forces would stop short by forty miles. Success was almost immediate with the capture of the North Korean capital Pyongyang by 20 October 1950, and the United Nations proved to be a truly effective international force.<sup>72</sup> However, portions of his operations came very close to violating Bradley's JCS directive from 27 September 1950 with the use of international forces near the Manchurian border.<sup>73</sup> On 24 October 1950, Bradley sent a message to MacArthur stating he used non-Korean ground forces in the provinces near the Manchurian border without prior approval from Washington as stated in the previous JCS directive, yet he believed MacArthur had "sound reasons for issuing these instructions." Bradley mentioned Washington needed to be informed of using non-Korean forces in the future.<sup>74</sup> MacArthur responded to Bradley stating he saw no conflict with his actions and the 27 September 1950 JCS directive.<sup>75</sup>

MacArthur soon learned the Chinese Communist Forces were actually present in North Korea. The capture and interrogation of soldiers of Chinese nationality indicated a significant presence of Chinese forces, yet these soldiers appeared to be merely volunteers from China in support of their North Korean comrades. MacArthur did not believe this was a volunteer force,

---

<sup>72</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 578. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 175. MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 364-365. Truman, *Memoirs*, 371.

<sup>73</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 579. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 177.

<sup>74</sup> JCS message 94933 to MacArthur, 24 October 1950, page 303, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>75</sup> MacArthur message C67397 to JCS, 25 October 1950, page 304, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

and he now considered Red China a serious immediate threat. On 4 November 1950, MacArthur notified Bradley and the JCS of the presence of these Chinese forces.<sup>76</sup>

In early November 1950, MacArthur informed Bradley and the JCS of the increasing danger he believed existed from the Chinese, yet he was not able to “authoritatively appraise the actualities of Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea.” He mentioned large forces were “pouring across all bridges over the Yalu from Manchuria,” and this movement threatened the forces under his command. MacArthur stated the only way to stop this movement was the destruction of the bridges on the Yalu River. He wanted this restriction lifted and brought to the immediate attention to the President.<sup>77</sup>

Upon receipt of MacArthur’s message on 6 November 1950, Bradley met with George Marshall and the JCS to discuss the situation. Basically, there was agreement to support MacArthur’s request, but it required Truman’s approval. Bradley called Truman on the phone, and informed him of the situation.<sup>78</sup> Truman agreed with Bradley’s recommendation to give the order for the bombing because “there was an immediate and serious threat to the security of troops.”<sup>79</sup> After this approval, Bradley sent a message to MacArthur authorizing the bombing of the Yalu bridges as it would contribute significantly to the security of U.N. forces. However, Bradley emphasized it was vital to “localize the fighting in Korea” in order to avoid violating Manchurian territory, and MacArthur had to send updates to the situation.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 366. MacArthur message C68284 from to JCS, 4 November 1950, page 324, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>77</sup> MacArthur message C68285 to the JCS, 4 November 1950, pages 322-323, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library. MacArthur message C68396 to JCS, 6 November 1950, page 325, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>78</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 586.

<sup>79</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 374-376.

<sup>80</sup> JCS message 95949 to MacArthur, 6 November 1950, page 326, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

On 7 November 1950, MacArthur indicated to Bradley and the JCS that the situation in North Korea had significantly changed. He stated Chinese Communist Forces were building up against the United Nations forces, yet the exact strength was not possible to determine. MacArthur further stated the introduction of Chinese Communist Forces in the Korean campaign “completely changed the overall situation.”<sup>81</sup> In response to this new information, Bradley and the JCS realized this required the re-examination of MacArthur’s objective in the “destruction of the North Korean armed forces,” and Bradley informed MacArthur this re-examination was taking place at the highest level.<sup>82</sup>

Bradley and the JCS believed three courses of actions existed: force the successful conclusion of fighting in Korea, establish a defensive line short of the Korean border, or withdrawal. Since there were well-organized Chinese Communist units near the Manchurian border, a greater risk of global war existed. Bradley and the JCS recommended to the President that “every effort should be expended as a matter of urgency to settle the problem of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea by political means,” and they recommended MacArthur’s military objective should remain the same until further clarification of the Chinese Communist intentions.<sup>83</sup> Even though the President took no formal action on these recommendations, they were put into effect.<sup>84</sup> In essence, this recommendation allowed MacArthur to proceed with his planned offensive to the Yalu River against North Korean forces.

---

<sup>81</sup> MacArthur messages C68465 and C68436 from MacArthur to JCS, 7 November 1950, pages 328, 331, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>82</sup> JCS messages 95978 and 96060 to MacArthur, 7 and 8 November 1950, pages 332-333, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library. Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 587-588. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 204-205.

<sup>83</sup> Memo signed by Bradley, “Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea,” 9 November 1950, pages 334-340, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>84</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 594. Collins, *Wartime in Peace*, 207-208.

In early November 1950, there was the potential presence of Chinese Communist forces in Korea. Bradley based this concern from the reports sent from MacArthur, and Bradley proceeded to support MacArthur on his request to bomb the bridges along the Yalu River. Even though there was a lack of clarity to the exact Chinese presence, Bradley did not second guess MacArthur. Also, MacArthur indicated a few weeks previously at the Wake Island conference he did not believe a large Chinese invasion would occur. At this delicate point in the war, Bradley provided options to President Truman in the event MacArthur's current situation significantly changed with the actual presence of Chinese Communist forces. At the same time, Bradley did not undermine MacArthur's direction as the field commander.

### **Chinese Invasion of Korean Peninsula (see map pages 42-43)**

On 24 November 1950, MacArthur paid a visit to the Eighth Army headquarters in Korea to gain a better understanding of the situation. He claimed the Chinese were committed to entering Korea, and he stated this Chinese movement could have stopped if Bradley and the JCS granted him permission to bomb the bridges on the Yalu River. In addition, MacArthur told officers during his visit that Bradley wanted two divisions home by Christmas based on comments during the Wake Island conference, and this was the primary reason for the prediction of a quick success.<sup>85</sup> However, these comments were far from the truth. Bradley sought permission from Truman to grant MacArthur the authority to bomb the Yalu bridges if it improved the security of his troops. Also at the Wake Island conference, Bradley asked MacArthur about the possibility of sending a division to Europe in April 1951 if operations in Korea actually ended quickly as MacArthur suggested.

On 25 November 1950, MacArthur sent a message to Bradley and the JCS explaining his findings after his battlefield tour. MacArthur mentioned how United Nations forces were

---

<sup>85</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 372. Whitney, *MacArthur*, 415.

successful and had the initiative to interdict any hostile moves from the Chinese. He claimed there were no noticeable indications from the Soviet or Chinese military. MacArthur's plan was to replace American forces with South Korean forces near the Yalu River and announce the return of American forces to Japan.<sup>86</sup> Essentially, MacArthur's appraisal of the situation was positive, yet he later changed his story in his memoirs *Reminiscences*. In the process, MacArthur attempted to shift blame to Bradley and the JCS.

On 26 November 1950, the Chinese Communist forces initiated an offensive operation into North Korea. MacArthur explained to Bradley and the JCS the immediate concern of this situation. He stated "the Chinese military forces are committed in North Korea in great and ever-increasing strength," and he wanted to change the strategic plan from the offensive to the defensive.<sup>87</sup> Bradley discussed the situation with Truman after receiving MacArthur's message, and he recommended that MacArthur proceed to a defensive posture. Truman supported the recommendation.<sup>88</sup> Bradley and the JCS responded to MacArthur approving his plan for a defensive action, and they asked about the coordination between Eighth Army and X Corps.<sup>89</sup>

At this point, MacArthur lost significant credibility, and Bradley with the JCS began to "exercise more direct control over MacArthur's tactical operations."<sup>90</sup> On 29 November 1950, MacArthur strongly recommended to Bradley and the JCS for troops from Formosa to assist in Korea. Bradley responded to MacArthur that this had "world-wide consequences," and Formosa

---

<sup>86</sup> MacArthur message C69808 to JCS, 25 November 1950, pages 347-349, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>87</sup> MacArthur message C69953 to JCS, 28 November 1950, pages 345-346, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>88</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 598. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 222. Truman, *Memoirs*, 385.

<sup>89</sup> JCS message 97592 to MacArthur, 29 November 1950, page 354, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>90</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 599.

troops were “wholly unacceptable” because it might extend hostilities beyond Korea.<sup>91</sup> In a matter of four days, the Chinese forces demonstrated significant capability over the United Nations forces. On 30 November 1950, Bradley and the JCS stated to MacArthur he needed to withdraw X Corps and link it with Eighth Army. The purpose for this action was to establish a better unity of command among the ground forces.<sup>92</sup> On 3 December 1950, MacArthur replied in disagreement with Bradley, and he stated there was no practical benefit “to attempt to unite the forces of the Eighth Army and X Corps.”<sup>93</sup> However by 15 December 1950, X Corps eventually withdrew and linked with Eighth Army through Pusan.

The Chinese invasion caused dramatic changes on the Korean peninsula, and the United Nations General Assembly sought a cease-fire resolution to end the hostilities immediately. On 12 December 1950, Bradley recommended certain terms to George Marshall and President Truman for the cease-fire arrangement. Generally speaking, the terms included: cease-fire confined to Korea, agreement by all respective countries involved, all governments refrain from introducing additional war equipment and personnel, establish a demilitarized zone along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, prisoner of war exchange, and a commission to inspect compliance with terms and conditions. Bradley emphasized this cease-fire arrangement prevented the goal of the United Nations to establish a free and united Korea.<sup>94</sup> President Truman approved the cease-fire

---

<sup>91</sup> MacArthur message C50021 to Bradley, 29 November 1950, page 353, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library. JCS message 97594 in response to MacArthur message C50021, 29 November 1950, page 355, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>92</sup> JCS message 97772 to MacArthur, 30 November 1950, page 356, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>93</sup> MacArthur message C50332 to JCS, 3 December 1950, pages 359-362, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>94</sup> Memo signed by Bradley, “United States Position Regarding the Terms of any United Nations General Assembly Cease-Fire Resolution for the Korean War,” 12 December 1950, pages 378-381, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

arrangement from the United States' view point.<sup>95</sup> The goal for a cease-fire signaled a significant shift for the conduct of actions in the Korean War. Essentially, it meant the halt of military actions up to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.

The Chinese Army eventually invaded into South Korea, yet fortunately for MacArthur, General Ridgway now commanded Eighth Army after the death of General Walker. From January 1951 to April 1951, Ridgway led a counter-offensive that succeeded in driving the Chinese back towards the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Ridgway proved "eminently qualified to command the Eighth Army," and Bradley soon looked "beyond MacArthur to Ridgway for reliable military assessments and guidance."<sup>96</sup> Bradley and the JCS "had in effect assumed field command, operating through Ridgway and by-passing MacArthur in the chain of command."<sup>97</sup> MacArthur himself admitted Ridgway as the best commander with aggressive fighting qualities.<sup>98</sup>

After MacArthur's failed predictions of China's non-intervention and a quick success in Korea, Bradley essentially steered away from the traditional role where military operations were strictly in the realm of the theater commander. MacArthur began to prove unreliable, and the situation in Korea was too delicate as an international crisis with communism appeared more possible. At this point in the war, Bradley's actions in Korea were more consistent with policy. He followed the military policy against communism as a strategic defense in Asia, and the United States was not to provoke a global war with Communist China. MacArthur did not share this same view, and he believed a more offensive war was necessary with the Chinese. His view was not consistent with the stated military policy. The real question was how long Bradley could

---

<sup>95</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 399-400, 418.

<sup>96</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 623. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 238.

<sup>97</sup> Whitney, *MacArthur*, 454.

<sup>98</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 383.

continue to allow MacArthur to stay in command and rely on Ridgway for accurate information about the Korean War front.

### **Bradley Recommends the Removal of MacArthur**

During the Korean War, President Truman tolerated MacArthur's public criticism about the United States' governmental policy until 6 April 1951. MacArthur sent a letter to U.S. Representative Joe Martin answering his questions about the Korean War policy because MacArthur "always felt duty-bound to reply frankly to every Congressional inquiry."<sup>99</sup> However, Truman did not agree with MacArthur's actions. On 6 April 1951, Truman asked for input on his consideration to remove MacArthur from command. Truman mentioned Bradley believed MacArthur was clearly insubordinate, yet he wanted to confer with the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>100</sup>

Despite Truman's impression of Bradley's first response, Bradley did not find that MacArthur was "insubordinate as defined in Army Regulations," and this was the primary reason he wanted to discuss this issue with the entire Joint Chiefs.<sup>101</sup> Bradley and the JCS met privately from President Truman, and they discussed different options. When the discussion ended, Bradley and the JCS agreed unanimously that MacArthur should leave command, and Bradley recommended this action to President Truman.<sup>102</sup>

Bradley provided a memorandum explaining the three reasons for recommending MacArthur's removal. In the first reason, Bradley stated MacArthur's public statements and

---

<sup>99</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 386.

<sup>100</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 447.

<sup>101</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 631.

<sup>102</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General's Life*, 634. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 283. Truman, *Memoirs*, 448. Millett, *The War for Korea*, 420-421. Millett highlighted Truman's decision to remove MacArthur, and he explained how Bradley did not believe MacArthur was guilty of any legal insubordination. However, Bradley sought to discuss the matter with the other members of the Joint Chiefs. Bradley and the Joint Chiefs agreed MacArthur should leave command because he often planned operations without consultation with Washington.

official communication with the JCS “indicated that he was not in sympathy with the decision to try and limit the conflict in Korea.” This made it difficult for MacArthur to carry out Bradley’s JCS directives, and Bradley stated “it was necessary to have a commander more responsive to the control of Washington.” In the second reason, Bradley stated “General MacArthur had failed to comply with the Presidential directives to clear statements on policy before making such statements public.” For the final reason, Bradley stated “the military must be controlled by the civilian authority” of the United States, and “General MacArthur’s actions were continuing to jeopardize the civilian control over the military authorities.”<sup>103</sup> Bradley’s memorandum represented the official stance for his recommendation to President Truman, and it summarized the difficulty Bradley encountered with MacArthur during the Korean War.

After Truman made his final decision to remove MacArthur, Bradley prepared the relief order to send to MacArthur.<sup>104</sup> Bradley wrote to MacArthur that President Truman decided to replace him as the United Nations Commander with Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway, and this action was to take place at once. President Truman’s basis for this decision was to be made public following this order.<sup>105</sup> This became the last official Bradley JCS directive sent to MacArthur. As Chairman, Bradley did not initiate the discussion to remove MacArthur from command, yet he had sound reasons for making the recommendation. Ultimately, President Truman made the final decision. Even though there were plenty of situations to warrant replacing MacArthur at an earlier time, Bradley exercised patience and trust with MacArthur. In early July 1950, Truman gave serious thought of replacing MacArthur as the Far East Commander with

---

<sup>103</sup> Bradley and Blair, *General’s Life*, 634-635. Collins, *War in Peacetime*, 284.

<sup>104</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 448.

<sup>105</sup> JCS message 88180 to MacArthur, 11 April 1951, page 425, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Korean War Files Box 13, Truman Presidential Library.

Bradley, yet Truman did not because he “had no desire to hurt General MacArthur personally.”<sup>106</sup>

Like Bradley, President Truman himself exercised patience with MacArthur.

## Conclusions

In the beginning of the Korean War, Bradley granted MacArthur wide latitude as the field commander as evident during the Inchon Landing, yet he restricted his actions leading up to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950. Bradley intervened in MacArthur’s role as the field commander because MacArthur continued to disregard JCS directives over the duration of the war, and MacArthur’s actions threatened war with China which contradicted policy. As Chairman, Bradley had a more international and global view of the Korean War unlike MacArthur as the field commander, and he served as the most trusted senior military advisor to President Truman.

Overall, literature does not adequately address the critical role between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the field commander. With regard to his role in the Korean War, there is very little attention dedicated to General Bradley’s participation and role. Most literature emphasizes the roles of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman. The three works from Sandler, Pearlman, and Millett generally claim Bradley had a passive role in the Korean War, yet they provide limited examples. In some cases, the authors provide a somewhat positive view of Bradley.

General of the Army Omar Bradley played a critical role in the policy and strategy development for the Korean War, and this set the stage for how MacArthur used operational art as the field commander. Bradley’s example also demonstrated how policy and strategy bounded MacArthur’s implementation of operational art in the conduct of war. Policy represents the guiding principles established by the civil authorities such as the President. Strategy is “a prudent

---

<sup>106</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, 355-356.

idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and / or multinational objectives.”<sup>107</sup> Finally, operational art is the “application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces,” and it “integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war.”<sup>108</sup> Even though the term operational art did not exist during the Korean War, its presence was still evident.

Bradley provided President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson input for U.S. foreign policy found in NSC-68, and he eventually established a military policy in support of NSC-68. There were two significant aspects of the military policy. The first significant aspect was the United States was not to appease communist aggression. In other words, the U.S. was not to give into the enemy’s demands like Germany in World War II. The second significant aspect was the U.S. was not to provoke war, and this particularly applied to communist Russia and China. Even though Bradley clearly stated and communicated the military policy, it was not as simple for Bradley to enforce this policy because the first real test of it came during the Korean War. As Bradley attempted to enforce this policy, he developed strategy in support of it, and the strategy focused primarily on the military instrument of national power.

The first significant aspect in the military policy of not appeasing communist aggression was evident in the operations conducted in response to the original North Korean invasion in June 1950. Bradley recommended to President Truman that a line had to be drawn against communist aggression on the Korean peninsula. He developed the first strategy to support the policy when he instructed MacArthur to engage and remove the North Koreans by all necessary means, and MacArthur’s Inchon Landing for Operation Chromite reflected this implementation. The first

---

<sup>107</sup> United States, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Staff, 2006), GL-26.

<sup>108</sup> JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, IV-2 to IV-3.

aspect of the policy and Bradley's strategy allowed MacArthur to apply operational art with all his available resources to achieve the desired end-state of eliminating the North Korean forces from South Korea. As Chairman, Bradley granted MacArthur wide latitude to achieve the desired end-state, and he essentially did not bound MacArthur in the application of operational art.

After the success from the Inchon Landing in September 1950, Bradley recommended to President Truman that MacArthur's new mission was now the destruction of the North Korean forces, yet MacArthur was not to engage against Chinese forces north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel without gaining approval from Washington first. Essentially, this was a new strategy established by Bradley, and it supported the second significant aspect of the original military policy of not provoking a war with communist China. Truman approved the recommendation, and Bradley issued an order to MacArthur. Unlike the conditions of the Inchon Landing, MacArthur did not have as much latitude to apply operational art at this point in the war. For example, MacArthur was not able to use non-Korean forces to engage the Chinese because this was part of Bradley's new strategic decision in support of policy. This limitation basically hindered MacArthur's ability to organize and employ U.S forces across the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and in this sense, it bounded his application of operational art.

From November to December 1950, Chinese Communist forces invaded into North Korea, and military policy clearly stated not to provoke war with Communist China. MacArthur's forces became surprised, and Bradley ordered the evacuation of MacArthur's forces from North Korea to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. For example, Bradley instructed MacArthur to unite the forces from X Corps under Eighth Army. These directives from Bradley represented strategic decisions consistent with and in support of policy. However, MacArthur did not agree with these actions. At this point in the war, military policy and strategy essentially removed MacArthur's latitude in applying operational art because Chinese forces invaded the Korean peninsula. Bradley had to specifically dictate where MacArthur was to employ his forces, and he essentially removed MacArthur's authority to exercise operational art as the field commander.

The historical example of the Korean War demonstrated how changing conditions in war influence the necessary development of new strategies in order to remain consistent with military policy. As Chairman, Bradley recognized the changing conditions, and he established the new and necessary strategies. MacArthur's application of operational art for military operations required a consistency with these necessary strategies. Military policy informs the strategy, and strategy likewise informs the application of operational art. Through this process, operational art reflects policy.

Even though Bradley never exercised operational art as Chairman, his role in establishing military policy and strategy influenced the latitude the field commander had to exercise operational art. As Chairman, Bradley had to ensure the conduct of operations in Korea did not violate U.S. foreign policy found in NSC-68 and military policy that would create greater political and diplomatic problems for the nation. He had a significant role in the strategic decisions on the conduct of military operations from the North Korean Invasion in June 1950 leading up to the Chinese Invasion in December 1950. In this timeframe, Bradley granted MacArthur certain freedom of action and restrictions as the Far East Commander. The real challenge became to what degree Bradley exercised authority over MacArthur, and when was it necessary to intervene in MacArthur's role as the field commander to determine the conduct of military operations.

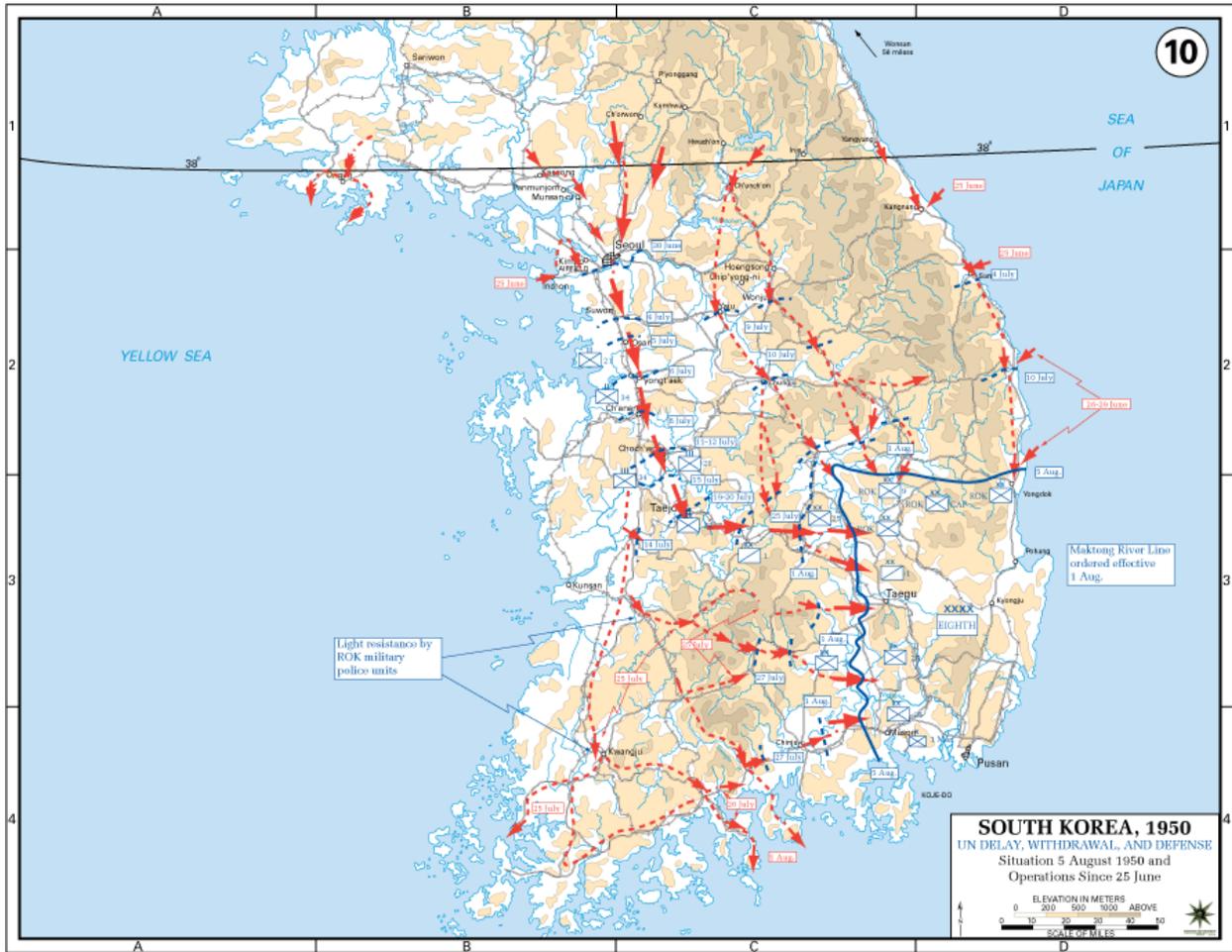
General of the Army Omar Bradley established certain and historical precedents as Chairman and the significant roles this job requires. In his relationship with Truman, he gained trust as the senior military advisor to the President, and this trust became critical when Truman leveraged the Chairman's recommendations for important decisions. Prior to any making any recommendations to the President, Bradley as Chairman lead the discussions with the JCS, and he provided their overall stance on a particular issue. If a dissenting opinion existed, Bradley explained this to the President, yet it rarely occurred. As Chairman, Bradley had the critical role

to view the Korean War in its connection to global issues with communism, and he clearly established this view in military policy.

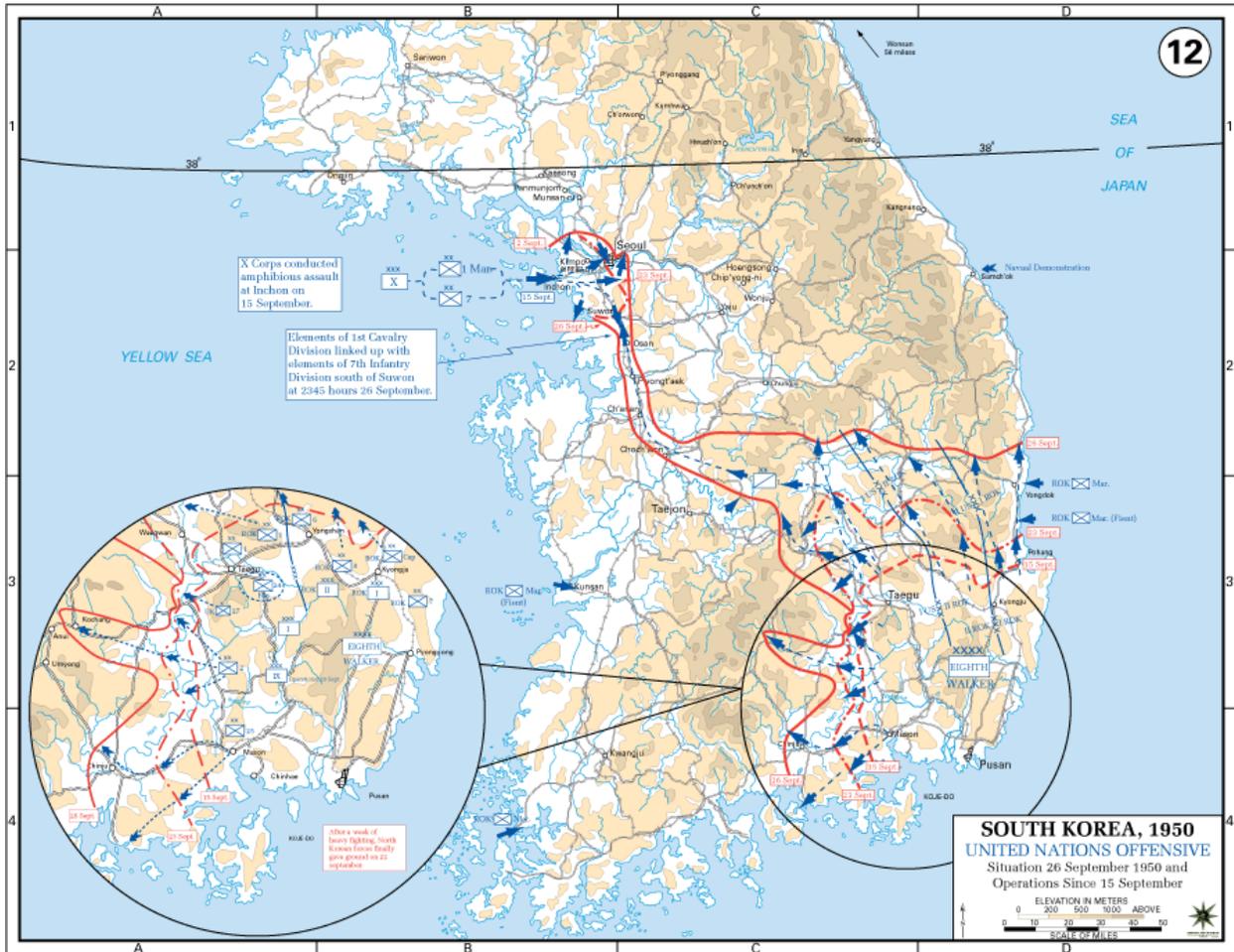
In another critical role, Bradley also served as the key link between the field commander and the President. When MacArthur relayed significant information on the Korean War front, Bradley had the responsibility to analyze it and recommend any necessary options to the President for decision. In addition, Bradley filled the critical role to support MacArthur as the field commander, and he gave him the necessary latitude to conduct operations. However, Bradley also had the responsibility to ensure military operations did not violate policy, and he had the authority from President Truman to enforce it accordingly. In many cases, this involved the development of new strategies that were consistent with and supported military policy. Bradley balanced the need to support the field commander in military operations and to support the policies approved by the President.

Formally, Bradley's position as Chairman had no command authority based on the National Military Establishment from 1947. For this reason, Bradley essentially established the Chairman position as more of a staff role to the President because he was advising the President who was the last member in the chain of command and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Overall, General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley faithfully fulfilled and executed his duties as the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

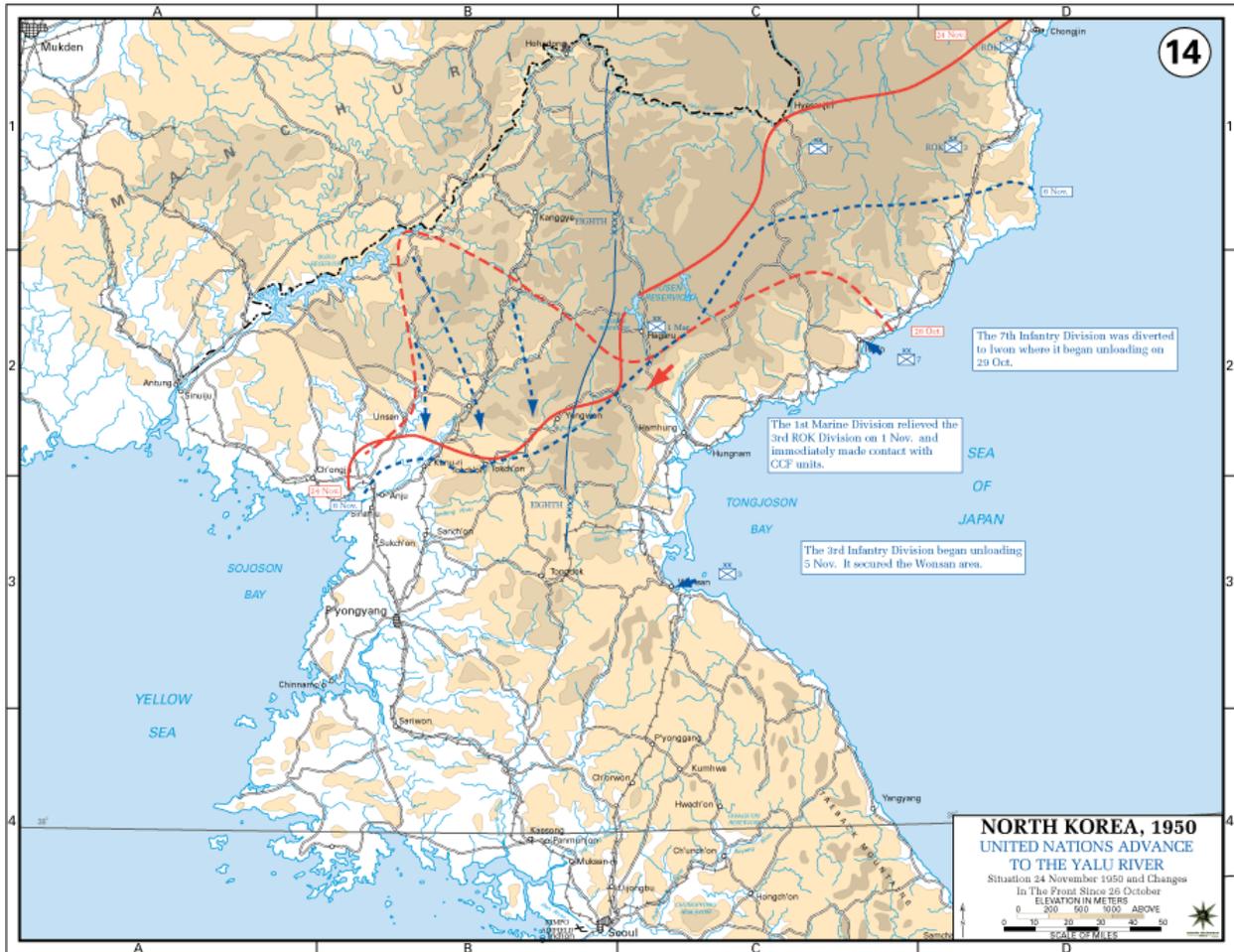
Initial North Korean invasion.



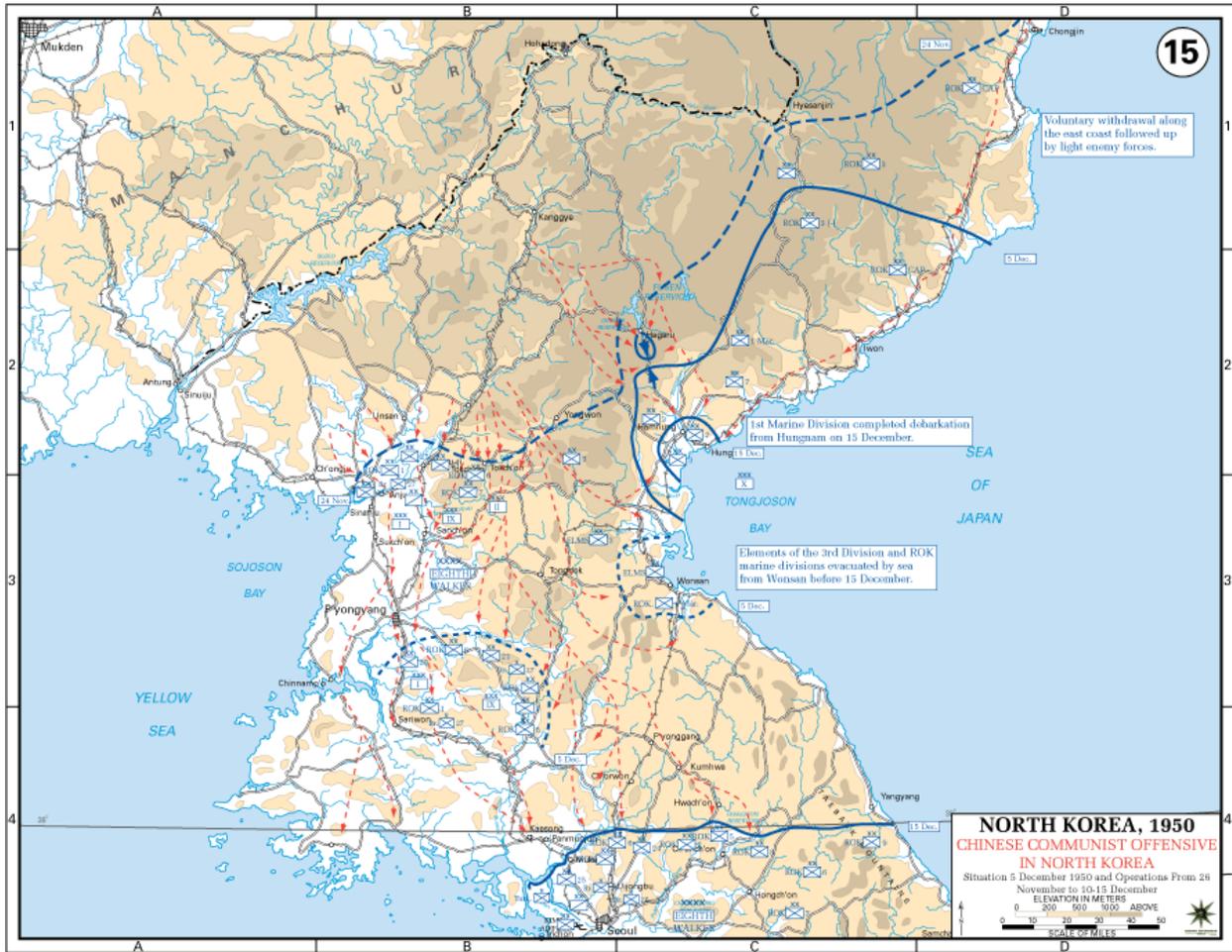
### Inchon Landing.



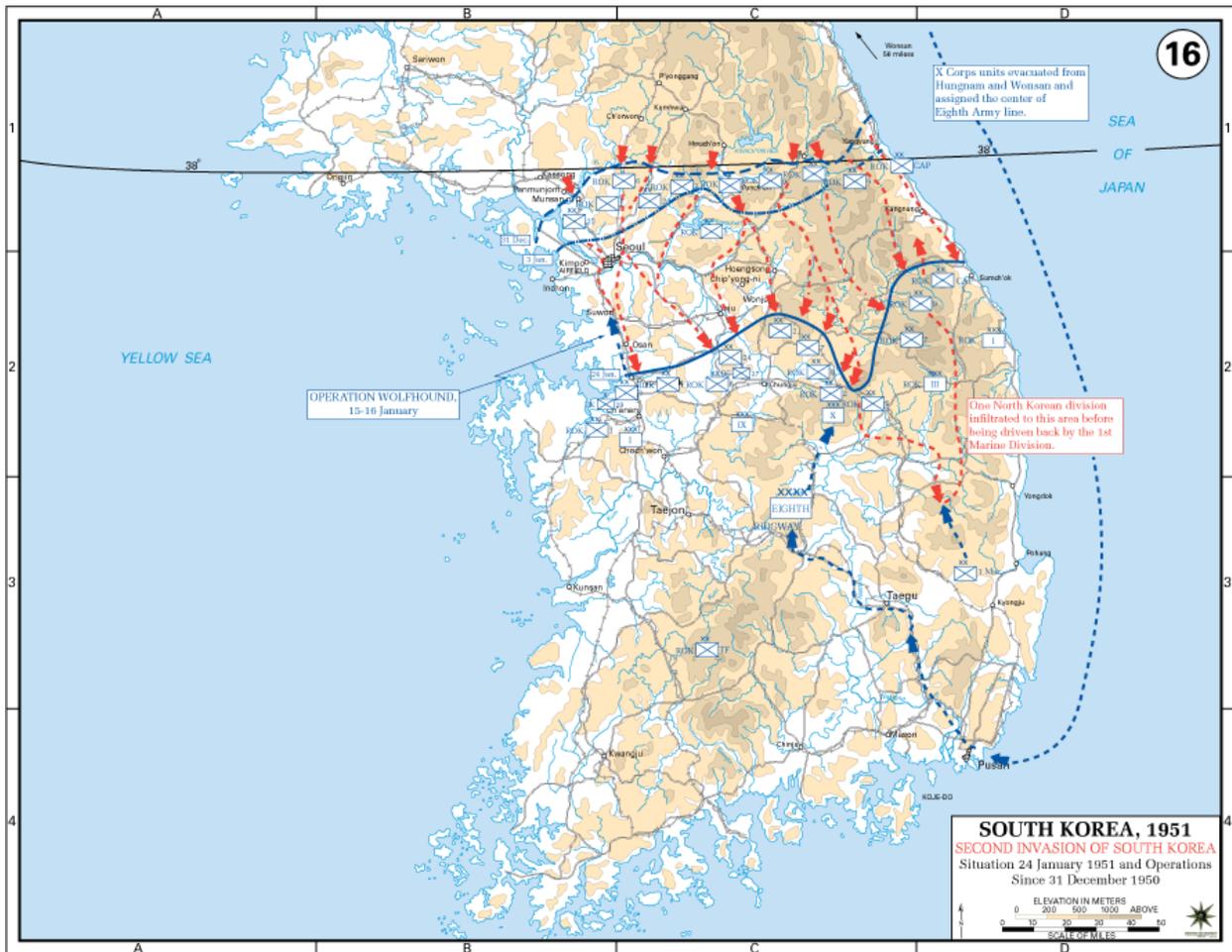
Advance to Yalu River and Manchurian Border.



Chinese Invasion of North Korea.



Second invasion of South Korea.



## Key Leaders during the Korean War

### President of the United States

Harry S. Truman	12 April 1945 – 20 January 1953
Dwight D. Eisenhower	20 January 1953 – 20 January 1961

### Secretary of State

Dean G. Acheson	21 January 1949 – 20 January 1953
John F. Dulles	21 January 1953 – 22 April 1959

### Secretary of Defense

Louis A. Johnson	28 March 1949 – 19 September 1950
George C. Marshall	21 September 1950 – 12 September 1951
Robert A. Lovett	17 September 1951 – 20 January 1953
Charles E. Wilson	28 January 1953 – 8 October 1953

### Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

General of the Army Omar Bradley	16 August 1949 – 15 August 1953
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

### U.S. Army Chief of Staff

General J. Lawton Collins	16 August 1949 – 15 August 1953
---------------------------	---------------------------------

### Chief of Naval Operations

Admiral Forrest P. Sherman	2 November 1949 – 22 July 1951
Admiral William M. Fechteler	16 August 1951 – 16 August 1953

### U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff

General Hoyt S. Vandenberg	30 April 1948 – 30 June 1953
General Nathan Twining	30 June 1953 – 30 June 1957

### Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps

General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr.	28 June 1952 – 31 December 1953
---------------------------------	---------------------------------

## Appendix B (Key Leaders)

### Commander, Far East and United Nations (beginning 8 July 1950)

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur	1 January 1947 – 11 April 1951
General Matthew B. Ridgway	11 April 1951 – 9 May 1952
General Mark W. Clark	9 May 1952 – 5 October 1953

### Commander, Eighth U.S. Army

Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker	3 September 1948 – 23 December 1950
Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway	26 December 1950 – 14 April 1951
Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet	14 April 1951 – 11 February 1953
Lieutenant General Maxwell D. Taylor	11 February 1953 – 25 March 1955

Omar Bradley and J. Lawton Collins were the only two key leaders who held their duty positions during the entire time of the Korean War.<sup>109</sup> As Chairman, Omar Bradley provided the senior leader continuity during the Korean War among the other military leaders and civilian authorities.

---

<sup>109</sup>James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1950-1952: Vol. III of History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington: GPO, 1998), 1105-1106.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archives

Harry S. Truman Papers Staff Member and Korean War Files, Truman Presidential Library Boxes 13-14

### Primary Sources

Acheson, Dean. *The Korean War: An International History*. New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1971.

Acheson, Dean. *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*. New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1969.

Bradley, Omar N., and Clay Blair. *A General's Life: An Autobiography*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

Bradley, Omar N., *The Collected Writings of General Omar N. Bradley*, Volumes III-IV.

Collins, J. Lawton. *War in Peacetime*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969.

*The Challenge of Military Leadership*, edited by Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown. Washington, Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1989. *On Leadership*, by Omar Bradley, p 3-9.

MacArthur, Douglas and Vorin E. Whan. *A Soldier Speaks: public papers and speeches of General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur*. New York: Praeger, 1965.

MacArthur, Douglas. *Reminiscences*. New York: De Capo Press, 1964.

National Security Council 68. *United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, 14 April 1950. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-6.htm>.

Ridgway, Matthew B. *The Korean War*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967.

Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Vol. II Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956.

Truman, Harry S. *Public Papers of the Presidents: 1950*. Washington: GPO, 1965.

Whitney, Courtney. *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1956.

### Secondary Sources

Alexander, Bevin. *Korea: The First War We Lost*. New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, 1986.

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

Cole, Richard H, Lorna S. Jaffe, Walter S. Poole, and Williard J. Webb. *The Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*. Washington, GPO, 1995.

Condit, Doris M. *The Test of War 1950-1953*. Vol II of *History of the Office of the Secretary of the Defense*. Washington: GPO, 1988.

- Fehrenbach, T. R. *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History*. Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1963.
- Hastings, Max. *The Korean War*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
- Linn, Brian McAllister. *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- McCullough, David. *Truman*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.
- Melody, Paul E. *General Omar Bradley and the Korean War: A Study in Modern Strategic Leader Competence*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, 1998.
- Millett, Allan R. *The Korean War*. Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, 2007.
- Millett, Allan R. *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010.
- Pearlman, Michael D. *Truman and MacArthur: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008.
- Sandler, Stanley. *The Test of War 1950-1953*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.
- Schnabel, James F. and Robert J. Watson. *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1950-1952*. Vol. III of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*. Washington: GPO, 1979.
- United States, Joint Publication 3-0. *Joint Operations*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Staff, 2006.
- Watson, Robert J. *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1953-1954*. Vol. V of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*. Washington: GPO, 1986.