Projecting Poseidon's Trident: America's East Asia and the Shifting Contours of 1950s Postwar Naval Policy

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While the US obtained control of the seas in maritime East Asia after the dissolution of the Japanese empire in 1945, the Truman administration did not link its international security with maritime space in the immediate postwar. The outbreak of the Korean War and the First Taiwan Strait Crisis drove the US to rethink the significance of international waters and gradually adopt a sea-oriented strategic command. This development altered the defence structure in Cold War East Asia and such perimeters of maritime defence remained in place until the US ended official relations with Taiwan in 1979.

Keywords: Cold War; the US Navy; Maritime East Asia; the Korean War, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis

Introduction

On 22 May 2015, American Vice President Joe Biden delivered a commencement address at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He said 'President Xi of China, when I was meeting with him, asked me why do I continue to say America is a Pacific power? And I said because we are.'[1] Biden's retelling of his dialogue with Xi Jinping filled the hall with laughter. However, his words not only demonstrated his sense of humour but also reflected the increasingly severe tensions with China on the western Pacific rim. Biden underlined that the US should stand up for the freedom of navigation in order to commit itself to the mutual defence with its allies.[2] This principle did not change with party affiliation. In 2017, on the same occasion, Vice President Mike Pence

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[1] Commencement Address by the Vice President at the United States Naval Academy, refer to: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/05/22/commencement-address-vice-president-united-states-naval-academy (Accessed 18 March 2018).

[2] ibid

repeated this stance once again and added that the US Navy will remind 'the world what American leadership looks like.'[3] Both Biden's and Pence's commencement addresses indicated that for the United States maritime space not only serves as a geographical space to project its military power but also functions as a link tying its allies together in order to maintain its hegemony in maritime East Asia. However, the strong bond between maritime space and America's international security is not a recent phenomenon but the result of a historical evolution that can be traced back to the early Cold War era.

Two bombs code named 'Little Boy' and 'Fat Man' forever altered Hirohito's empire in 1945, but such victory came out of the blue for the decision makers in Washington. It was expected to happen for 1946. The sudden collapse of the Japanese empire did not allow the US enough time to craft a specific strategic plan for deployment to command maritime East Asia where it succeeded Japan.[4] The US Army argued that the offshore island chain would become a critical operational zone for immediate postwar East Asia rather than the Asian mainland.[5] Army leaders generally saw mainland China not as a geographical barrier but a powder keg that could entrap the US in the Chinese Civil War. Conversely, the threat perception of the Soviet Union in the immediate postwar period led the US Navy to believe that the US should develop a mainland-based

[3] Vice President Mike Pence at U.S. Naval Academy: It's Your Turn to Assume the Watch, refer to: http://time.com/4796186/vice-president-mike-pence-naval-academy-graduation-commencement/ (Accessed 18 March 2018).
[4] In terms of the sudden collapse of the Japanese empire, see: Marc Gallicchio, *The Cold War Begins in Asia: American East Asian Policy and the Fall of the Japanese Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu challenges Gallicchio's viewpoint by arguing that, prior to the end of WWII, the US had formulated the basic guideline for post-war Japan and its territories on land. However, her research marginalises the question of how the US crafted its maritime policy, see: Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, 'Japan, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945-1960,' in Melvyn Leffler and Odd Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 246.
[5] John Lewis Gaddis, 'The Strategic Perspective: The Rise of Fall of the "Defensive Perimeter" Concept, 1947-1951,' in Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs, eds., *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 67, 73.

strategy to contain Moscow's potential aggression and defend maritime East Asia.[6] The division between the Army and Navy over the strategic guideline resulted in the Pacific being divided into two unified commands in the American 1947 Unified Command Plan: the Army-led Far East Command and the Navy-led Pacific Command. The division of military leadership of the Pacific between the Army and the Navy demonstrated that the Unified Command Plan did not, as Washington expected, improve America's effectiveness of commanding the Pacific but deepened the chasm between the Army and Navy.

Meanwhile, following the end of WWII, the US Navy was experiencing unprecedented difficulties which did not originate from the threat of the Soviet Union but from the US itself: the Navy's decreasing significance in the Truman administration between 1945 and 1950. The Truman administration intended to balance the defence budget not only by reducing naval forces more drastically, but also by depriving the Navy of its role in an air atomic offensive that was a key weapon to maintain Washington's postwar hegemony.[7] The admirals were dissatisfied with this policy and even publicly opposed it in what became known as the 'revolt of the admirals.'[8] These developments indicate that the naval forces and maritime space were deemed secondary by decision makers in Washington when building American strategic deployment in East Asia in the

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[6] Accordingly, the US Navy built the headquarter of the Seventh Fleet at Qingdao in North China. In terms of the details and the Navy's relationship with China, see: Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945-1955* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 118-59; Kuan-Jen Chen, *U.S. Maritime Policy in Cold War East Asia, 1945-1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University PhD Dissertation, 2019), 27-85.

[7] Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 180.

[8] In terms of details of the 'revolt of admirals,' see: Paolo Enrico Coletta, *The United States Navy and Defense Unification, 1947-1953* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1979), 169-203; Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1994); Stephen Jurika, *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: the Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1980), 205-16; Paul B. Ryan, *First Line of Defense: The U.S. Navy since 1945* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 13-4.

immediate postwar period. This historical development pushes us to raise a crucial question: how, why, and when did decision makers in Washington rethink the geostrategic value of the sea and craft maritime space as a natural barrier in defence of East Asia in the following years?

While there is significant scholarship on the question of how the US built its hub-and-spoke alliance in the form of military and financial support, scholars have paid little attention to the geographic features of East Asia in the context of the Cold War.[9] In this article, I shift the historical lens from land to sea and argue that the relationship between maritime space and Washington's Cold War strategic deployment was inextricably connected. Drawing on archival documents from the US and Taiwan, this article first examines the change in Washington's maritime strategic deployment in 1950. I discuss how the outbreak of the Korean War was a turning point that drove the US to rethink the Navy's significance and the geostrategic value of maritime space as well as adopt a sea-oriented strategic thinking.

Second, this article turns to Eisenhower's continued pursuit of Truman's concept of regarding the sea as a geostrategic and inseparable body for the sea-oriented strategy in the defence of East Asia. My research shows that Eisenhower's New-Look strategy crafted in 1953 further guided the US military deployment in the Pacific by reforming the organisational structure in the western Pacific rim in 1957. I detail how the US incorporated the Army-led Far East Command into the Navy-led Pacific Command. My research suggests that Washington gradually embraced the standpoint that open water, as

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9   In terms of hub-and-spoke alliance, see: Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia* (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016); Gilford John Ikenberry, 'American hegemony and East Asian order,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58:3 (2004): 353-67.

a natural barrier, should be regarded as an indispensable geostrategic space to secure its sea routes to any corner of the Pacific area under the US Navy's direction.

Finally, this article reevaluates the current understanding of the 1950s crises in East Asia, particularly the Korean War and the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. I demonstrate how the US reappraised the western Pacific as the most strategically valued area in the Pacific because this area was the frontier of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its Chinese comrades. For the US, the maritime area from Japan to Taiwan served as an invisible wall to deter its enemies from controlling the route to approach the continental United States via the central Pacific. Accordingly, decision makers in Washington reshuffled the organisational structure of the Pacific Command once again to strengthen the naval connection with its hub-and-spoke allies by establishing three subordinate commands in the western Pacific rim – Japan, Korea, and Taiwan – which were choke points on the front lines of the Cold War. The sea arguably served as a geographical space to link America's control over its hub-and-spoke alliance system in the western Pacific and to maintain its regional security.

In short, by reintroducing maritime space in the context of Cold War history, this article aims to further our understanding of how the US gradually crafted the western Pacific as a natural barrier not only to link its hub-and-spoke alliance but also to contain its opponents in continental Asia and to enhance its international security.

Taiwan: A Vexing Problem

Chiang Kai-shek's retreat to Taiwan due to his defeat in the Chinese Civil War in 1949 not only meant the US lost access to China's long coastline but also forced the US into a dilemma: Should it assist Chiang to defend Taiwan or abandon him?

On the military side, the Pentagon could not risk handing over Taiwan to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) because, once the Communists seized Kuomintang

(Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT) aircraft based on Taiwan, they could threaten the US maritime route between Japan and the Philippines.[10] For this reason, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) argued that the Navy and Air Force units should visit Taiwan to provide and supervise a military assistance programme. The JCS accordingly proposed to send a survey team directed by Douglas MacArthur to Taiwan to gather first-hand information on the military requirements of Chiang Kai-shek who led the Nationalist government on Taiwan to resist an attack from the CCP.[11] However, the JCS also specifically indicated that these naval units should be responsible for the security of Taiwan but should not be employed in Taiwan's territorial waters because the military leaders would not agree on an overt military commitment to Taiwan. [12]

The JCS's attempt at compromise proved to be in vain, because Secretary of State Dean Acheson disagreed with the JCS's proposal. Acheson argued that the best step to prevent Communist expansion in Asia did not rely on the holding of strategically valued islands, but on taking advantage of the hidden contradiction between Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong as well as simultaneously strengthening the defence capability of countries around China.[13] The National Security Council (NSC) accepted Acheson's views on 29 December. For the NSC, Acheson's suggestion would reduce the risk that the US itself would be dragged into conflicts with Moscow and Beijing. The NSC thereupon made a decision that no further action would be taken to assist the KMT in defence of Taiwan.[14]

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[10] 'Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, US Army for the Joint Chiefs Staff on Possibility of Communist Acquisition of Chinese Air Force Aircraft Presently on Taiwan,' 12 December 1949, box 23, Geographic File (GF) 1948-50, RG 218, National Archives and Records Administration, Maryland (NARA).

[11] 'JCS 1966/24,' 19 December 1949, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[12] 'Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on possible United States military action toward Taiwan not involving major military forces,' 19 December 1949, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[13] 'Memorandum of conversation, by the Secretary of State,' 29 December 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*), 1949*, Volume IX* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), 465-6.

[14] 'No title,' No date, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

While Secretary of Defence Louis Johnson strongly opposed Acheson's opinion on the grounds of strategic necessity, Truman was still persuaded by the NSC.[15] On 5 January 1950, Truman explicitly stated that the US would not establish military bases on Taiwan.[16]

Acheson further frustrated the Pentagon's strategic concerns about Taiwan in what became a famous speech at the National Press Club on 12 January. He pointed out the US defence perimeter in maritime East Asia: 'This defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus [Okinawa]. We hold important defence positions in the Ryukyu islands and those we will continue to hold,' he also added 'The defensive perimeter runs from the Ryukyus to the Philippine islands.'[17] It was noticeable that he excluded Taiwan and South Korea from the US defence perimeter. What explained the reasoning of policy makers and military leaders was their disparate positions on the role of maritime space in US security interests in East Asia. For the military, establishing a hold over Taiwan could help maintain seas lanes of communication in East Asia in order to project America's military power in emergent and contingent events. If Taiwan was under control of Beijing or Moscow, this worst scenario would allow the Kremlin to interdict America's supply lines between Japan and the Philippines and further challenge US maritime domination in the central Pacific. By contrast, some officials in the Truman

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[15] Shu-ya Chang, *Hanzhan jiu Taiwan? Jiedu Meiguo dui Tai zhengce* [The Korean War Rescued Taiwan? Decoding of American Policy towards Taiwan] (Taipei: Acropolis, 2011), 58.

[16] 'The President News Conference,' 5 January 1950, from: https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=574 (Accessed 11 December 2017).

[17] 'The text of the extemporaneous remarks made by the Hon. Dean Acheson, Secretary of State before the National Press Club, Washington D.C. on 12 January 1950,' from: https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/kr-3-13.pdf (Accessed 11 December 2017).

administration still optimistically expected Mao to follow Josip Tito's path to distance himself from Moscow. [18]

Washington was soon disillusioned. Moscow's assistance to Beijing and Pyongyang and its efforts to build medium and small short-range submarines led the US to realise the potential threat from the Soviet Union across the ocean.[19] The Soviets' uncertain extension into maritime East Asia prompted a rethink of the Truman administration's Taiwan policy.[20] On the day Kim Il-sung launched his attack on the Republic of Korea (ROK) on 25 June 1950, Washington quickly realised that political measures alone could not solve the vexing problem of Taiwan. A viable resolution would depend on military means.

The Neutralisation of the Taiwan Strait

Following the outbreak of the Korean War, decision makers in Washington comprehended that political measures could only deter Communist expansion in East Asia to a limited extent. Acheson immediately suggested to Truman that the US should include Taiwan and the Korean peninsula in a reformatted defensive perimeter.[21] After two days, Truman formally agreed with the aforementioned military analysis that the occupation of Taiwan by the CCP would threaten Washington's security in the Pacific. He subsequently announced that:

I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa [Taiwan]. As

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[18] John Gaddis beautifully illustrates the different opinions on Taiwan between the Department of Statement, General Douglas MacArthur, and Joint Chiefs, see: John Gaddis, *Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 76-89.

[19] Rohwer and Mikhail Monakov, *Stalin's Ocean-going Fleet: Soviet Naval Strategy and Shipbuilding Programme, 1935-1953* (London: Routledge, 2001), 204; 'Memorandum on Formosa,' 14 June 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[20] Chiang Kai-shek, Introspection on June 1950, *Chiang Kai-shek Diaries*; Shu-ya Chang, *Hanzhan jiu Taiwan? Jiedu Meiguo dui Tai zhengce*, 69-79.

[21] 'Memorandum of conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup),' 25 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Volume VII*, 157-8.

a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese government [KMT

government] on Formosa to cease all air and sea operation against the mainland.

The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done. [22]

Both Truman and Acheson regarded the deployment of the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan

Strait as an expedient response to the outbreak of the Korean War. The Seventh Fleet

served as an invisible great wall to prevent the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese

Communists from attacking each other.[23]

Essentially, the US was little concerned about potential attacks from the People's

Republic of China (PRC) at this moment. According to the estimates from the Joint

Intelligence Committee, it suggested that the possibility of a Chinese Communist attack

on Taiwan was extremely low because China was incapable of challenging US maritime

dominance. Beijing's Navy was formally established on 23 February 1949 with outdated

units of naval forces from capitulated Nationalist vessels and leftovers from the Qing

dynasty. This was no match for Washington's Navy.[24] While Washington estimated that

Beijing was capable of transporting 200,000 troops using junks, sampans, and ships

captured from the Nationalists, US experience gained in World War II showed that no

large-scale amphibious invasion could be successful without a marked naval and air

superiority against the defender. US military planners confidently estimated that the

Chinese Communists could not gather such a superior force at this time. In addition, the

'Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance,' signed in February

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[22] 'Memorandum by the Chief of Naval Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on defense of Formosa,' 27 July 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[23] 'General policy of the United States concerning Formosa,' 27 July 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA. In terms of the activities of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait, see: Bruce Elleman, *High Seas Buffer: The Taiwan Patrol Force* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

[24] People's Liberation Army History Series Committee, *Haijunshi* [The History of Navy] (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Press, 1989), p. 15, 25.

1950, provided no guarantee that Moscow would openly support Beijing with Soviet military forces if the US was involved in the defence of Taiwan.[25] Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Forrest Sherman concluded accordingly that, in view of the low probability of Beijing's success under current conditions, he did not consider China's military posture as an indication of the imminence of an attack.[26] However, he further indicated that the US still needed a very flexible military force – the US Navy – to deter the Communists from expanding their influence over Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines.[27]

As the hostilities in the Taiwan Strait were not as intensive as those in Korea, the US planned to defend Taiwan while incurring the lowest possible risk in the form of military assistance. In order to appraise Chiang Kai-shek's military capabilities for defence, MacArthur himself visited Taiwan on 31 July 1950.[28] MacArthur's visit reflected that America's policy towards the defence of Taiwan had gradually changed. When he arrived in Taipei, MacArthur told the Taiwanese journalists that Washington had transferred the command of the Seventh Fleet from the Pacific Command to the Far East Command and he would shoulder the responsibility for defending Taiwan.[29] MacArthur's words undoubtedly bolstered the confidence of Chiang's regime. More concretely, MacArthur gave Chiang promises that he would not only establish a military liaison group in Taiwan to strengthen mutual communication between Taipei and Tokyo

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[25] 'Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on estimate on the Taiwan situation,' 31 July 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA; 'Defense of Formosa,' 28 July 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[26] 'Memorandum by the Chief of Naval Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on employment of the Joint Attache Group on Formosa,' 8 August 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA ('Memorandum by the CNO for JCS').

[27] George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The US Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 317-8.

[28] Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1965), 339.

[29] 'MacArthur visited Taipei yesterday for discussing the current situation of Far East,' 1 August 1950, *Zhonghua Daily*.

but also craft a plan to improve US-Taiwan naval cooperation.[30] In this fashion, the effective coordination between MacArthur and the Nationalist naval and air forces could maintain America's sea route which was a lifeline in the western Pacific.[31] MacArthur accordingly dispatched a Far East Command liaison group to Taipei for the purpose of both surveying the military needs of the Nationalists and improving the connection between the Nationalist government and the Seventh Fleet for the fulfillment of its mission in the Taiwan Strait.[32]

Following MacArthur's military survey, Commander of the Seventh Fleet Arthur Struble established the Formosa Patrol (shortly renamed the Formosa Strait Force, or Task Force 72 thereafter) in carrying out future naval operational plans crafted for the defence of Taiwan .[33] The JCS believed that 'presence of elements of the Seventh Fleet in Taiwan waters, even for a short time, would be effective demonstration of US intention and a deterrent to invasion.'[34] Additionally, this directive would enable the US carrier force to serve as a mobile force in any area, and Taiwan's ports would serve as logistic bases for US aircraft carriers.[35]

However, avoiding entrapment in the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists was still the highest priority for the Truman administration, so the US still excluded Taiwan – geographically speaking the area was located within the responsibility

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[30] Hong-tao Chou recorded MacArthur's visit in his diaries, see: Hong-tao Chou (dictation) and Shi-chun Wang (composition), *Jianggong yu wo: Jianzheng Zhonghua minguo guanjian bian ju* [Chiang Kai-shek and I: The Witness of Crucial Changing of the Republic of China] (Taipei: Commonwealth Publishing Company, 2003), 225-9.

[31] 'From CINCFE Tokyo Japan to DEPTAR,' 7 August 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[32] 'Memorandum by the CNO for JCS.'

[33] Bruce Elleman, *Taiwan Straits: Crisis in Asia and the Role of the U.S. Navy* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2014), 31.

[34] 'From JCS to CINCPAC and COMNAVFE,' 26 July 1950, box 22, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[35] 'US Seventh Fleet plan for conducting operations to prevent an invasion of Taiwan and the Pescadores (The 7th Fleet Plan),' 13 August 1950, 002-080106-00048-003, The Collection of President Chiang Kai-shek, Academia Historica, Taipei (AH).

area of the Far East Command – from either of the unified commands. This not only enabled Washington to maintain its supply line on the sea, but also prevented Chiang Kai-shek from jumping to the conclusion that the US intended to give his Nationalist government any defence commitment without reservation.[36]

Turning the Tables on the Sea

Unlike Korea, Taiwan was not at the top of Washington's list of strategic planning because the Taiwan Strait could serve as a geopolitical barrier to separate both parties in the unfinished Chinese Civil War. The officials at the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon largely paid attention to the Korean War, which was a turning point for the Navy's demonstration of its significance in maritime East Asia.

The outbreak of the Korean War led Truman to immediately direct US naval and air forces to confront this surprise attack from North Korea on 25 June by deploying the Seventh Fleet, whose units were dispersed at Sangley point, Subic Bay and Hong Kong, to support the Korean War.[37] In addition, after the United Nations Security Council denounced the North Korean invasion on 25 June, the United Kingdom also, two days later, deployed its naval forces in East Asia in support of US/UN operations. London placed all Royal Navy under Commander of Naval Forces Far East Turner Joy's disposal, such as the HMS *Triumph* with the *Belfast*, *Cossack*, and *Consort* acting as the escorts joining the US Seventh Fleet.[38] While these naval forces were deployed to slow down North Korea's southward attack by patrolling and establishing blockades with naval

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[36] 'Military Assistance to Nationalist China,' 3 August 1950, box 23, GF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

[37] 'Commander Naval Forces, Far East Command and historical report,' June-August 1950, box 314, records of United States Army Commands, 1942-, RG 338, NARA ('COMNAVFE Report').

[38] Eric Grove, *Vanguard to Trident: British naval policy since World War II* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 137-8.

gunfire in support of UN/US ground forces in July, Pyongyang's fierce attack forced South Korean President Syngman Rhee to flee from Seoul on 27 June.[39] Almost 95% of the Korean peninsula was occupied by Kim Il-sung in the first three months of the war. A communist Korea seemed inevitable.[40]

The Army's setbacks on the Korean peninsula provided the US Navy with an opportunity to demonstrate its crucial role in defending US international security in East Asia. While the US Navy experienced a considerable decrease in personnel and war reserves between 1946 and 1950 (the number of naval officers decreased by 96,520 and that of the enlisted went down by 505,340).[41]Commander of the US Pacific Fleet Arthur Radford was convinced that the postwar naval demobilisation would not influence US maritime dominance in East Asia because the US Seventh Fleet in the western Pacific consisted of Task Force 77 (Aircraft Carrier Strike Force), Task Force 70 (Fleet Air Wing One and Fleet Air Wing Six), Task Force 72 (Formosa Patrol), and Task Force 79 (Service Support Squadron). The Soviet Union had no aircraft carriers to compete with America's naval dominance. As for the increasing strength of submarines equipped for Moscow's Pacific Fleet, when the Taiwanese newspaper *Taiwan Shin sheng Daily News* interviewed Radford, he expressed that he did not regard them as a threat because US command of the seas would not allow Soviet submarines to operate freely.[42]

Radford's words were not exaggerated because the strength of the US Navy was essentially unmatched in Korean waters. The North Korean Navy only possessed 45

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[39] 'COMNAVFE Report'
[40] Stanley Sandler, *The Korean War: An Interpretative History* (London: Taylor &Francis, 1999), 47-84. Robert Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 397.
[41] George Hodermarsky, *Postwar Naval Force Reduction 1945-1950: Impact on the Next War* (Rhode Island: Naval War College, 1990), 31-2, 45, 52; US Bureau of the Census, *The Statistical History of the United States* (Stamford, Conn.: Fairfield, 1965), 1141.
[42] 'Taiwan plays an important role in defence of US security in Far East,' 6 June 1950, *Taiwan Shin sheng Daily News*.

vessels, mainly torpedo boats and gunboats, which could not compete with the US Navy's fleet. Moreover, another potential threat in Korean waters – the Soviet Union – was not an issue at that time for decision makers in Washington. While the Soviet Navy had 261 submarines in 1950, some of which could be deployed from Vladivostok or south Sakhalin to support their Korean comrades, the US was not concerned for its communication lines at sea because these Soviet submarines were only for home-water control for defence against attackers and not equipped for offense.[43] Under these circumstances, America's overwhelming naval strength limited Moscow's naval support during the Korean War because the Kremlin thought that its naval strength in the Korean waters could not match Washington's, and its naval involvement in the Korean War would be in vain.[44]

Without a Soviet challenge at sea, this situation allowed the US Navy an opportunity to demonstrate its maritime dominance and salvage the situation in Korea particularly when the US/UN ground troops suffered great setbacks on the Korean peninsula. In August, as North Korea's forces hemmed US/UN ground troops to the Busan perimeter, the US began drafting a plan by directing its air strikes to cover the withdrawal of ground forces to Japan whenever necessary.[45] Unlike the defeat on land, naval operations in and around Korean waters obtained remarkable success. US naval forces, with the British Royal Navy, successfully prosecuted interdiction, blockade, and daily heavy bombardment. Pyongyang's assaults were accordingly repulsed along the

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[43] Central Intelligence Agency, *Soviet Navy: Intelligence and Analysis During the Cold War* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1992), 7; George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The US Navy, 1890-1990*, 321-2, 336; Donald W. Mitchell, *A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 510.
[44] Shimotomai Nobuo, *Mosukuwa to Kimu Iruson: Reisen no naka no Kitachōsen 1945-1961 nen* [Moscow and Kim Il-sung: North Korea in the Cold War, 1945-1961](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006), 86.
[45] 'COMNAVFE Report.'

entire coastline where Kim Il-sung amassed his troop concentrations and supplies.[46] The

mission report from Turner Joy showed little North Korean sea traffic along the east coast,

which indicated that US naval forces controlled the sea lanes and confined Pyongyang's

action on land.[47]

Following the bombardment by the overwhelming naval and air forces, on 15

September, MacArthur's successful landing at Incheon and quick mopping up of the

remnants of North Korean troops was the beginning of the reversal of the US/UN's

fortunes in the Korean War.[48] UN ground troops subsequently made a counterattack and

recaptured Seoul on 25 September. Regaining the lost territory following the Incheon

landing drove Washington to strengthen its maritime superiority in Korean waters,

particularly along both coasts of the Korean peninsula. By June 1951, all of the islands

off the Korean peninsula were under control of the US/UN Navy. [49]

Washington's complete control over the Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan approaches

to Korea not only strengthened its capability to operate close-in air and gunfire support

to advancing troops, it also allowed the Americans to carry out intensive patrol, anti-

mining, intelligence activities, naval blockades, interdiction, and service-and-support

operations to prevent North Korea from utilising coastal arteries and rail facilities as a

means of resupply.[50] The successful naval operations were crucial for the US to reverse

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[46] In terms of the details, refer to Thomas J. Cutler, "Sea Power and Defense of the Pusan Pocket," in Edward J. Marolda, ed., *The U.S. Navy in the Korean War* (Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 2007), 1-50. Eric Grove, *Vanguard to Trident: British naval policy since World War II*, 140-3.
[47] 'COMNAVFE Report.'
[48] ibid.
[49] 'Commander Naval Forces Far East Command and Historical Report,' June 1951, box 485, Army – AG Command Reports 1949-54, RG 319, NARA.
[50] The majority of railways on the Korean peninsula was completed during Japanese rule. In order to deliver materiel and connect industrial zones and harbours, railways were constructed along the Korean coastline. During the Korean War, these railways were utilised by Kim Il-sung to transport his troops and logistics, see: Seihō Kō, *Shokuminchi tetsudō to minshū seikatsu: Chōsen, Taiwan, Chūgoku Tōhoku* [The Railways in Colonies and People's Lives: Korea, Taiwan, and Northeast China](Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1999), 46-50; 'Commander

the situation during the Korean War. As Arleigh Burke, Deputy Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces (Far East), stated, 'We had absolute control of the sea around here. It was never contested in Korea. If our control of the sea had been contested just a little bit……Korea would have been lost very fast.'[51] Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy in the 1970s held the same viewpoint that 'Without the extensive active employment of the Navy, the interventionists [UN forces] would hardly have been able to avoid a military defeat in Korea. The Navy was the force which considerably influenced the course of the war as a whole.'[52]

On the Way to a Sea-oriented Defence Structure

The Korean War demonstrated the significance of sea control and led decision makers in Washington to realise that the relationship between international security and naval deployment was inextricably connected in the defence of East Asia. The US gradually adopted a sea-oriented strategic policy that regarded the sea as an integral geostrategic space vis-a-vis the US grand strategy in East Asia.[53] This change in the perception of maritime space was symbolised by the naval redeployment in the western Pacific. The military leadership of the Pacific divided by the competition between the Army and the Navy began to redeploy and the defence responsibility of East Asia led by the Army since 1947 gradually shifted to the Navy. On 9 April 1951 the maritime responsibility areas of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command (CINCFE), such as the Philippine and

Naval Forces Far East Command and Historical Report,' July 1952, box 718, Army – AG Command Reports 1949-54, RG 319, NARA.

[51] Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1998* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 491.

[52] James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1973), 273; Gorshkov: Kennedy, F. D., 'The Creation of the Cold War Navy,' in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., *In peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1978* (London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 305.

[53] George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The US Navy, 1890-1990*, 320.

Marianas-Bonin island Groups, were shifted to the Commander-in-Chief, the Pacific Command (CINCPAC).[54] As this change came into effect in 1952, the geographical limits of the responsibility of CINCFE had been confined to Japan, Korea, the Ryukyu islands, and the surrounding waters in support of US/UN military operations on the Korean peninsula (Figure 1).[55]

The transfer of most of the Far East Command's maritime responsibility area into the Pacific Command was a prelude to America's sea-oriented strategy in defence of East Asia. The Truman administration further transferred military responsibility for the Philippine-Taiwan area from CINCFE to CINCPAC on 15 March 1952.[56] Placing Taiwan under the authority of the Pacific Command indicated that Washington's strategic view of the sea had transformed. Taiwan, an island which had almost been abandoned between the end of 1949 and the beginning of 1950, became an indispensable fortress for the defence of America's maritime security in East Asia. This was not only because Taiwan is located at a juncture of communication lines between the East and South China seas, but also because Taiwan could guard naval access to the central Pacific area. Radford stressed that the motive for this deployment was to signal to Beijing that the US was not bluffing in terms of its determination to defend Taiwan, but decision makers in Washington reaffirmed that the defence plan should not be regarded as an indicator of supporting Chiang Kai-shek's offensive military actions against the Chinese Communists.[57] Accordingly, the US specifically stated that the area of responsibility of

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[54] 'The Far East Command,' 1 January 1947 - 30 June 1957, box 43, Central Decimal File (CDF) 1957, RG 218, NARA ('The Far East Command').

[55] Ronald H. Cole et al., *The History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946-1993* (Pennsylvania: Diane Publishing, 1996), 20-1.

[56] CINCFE Dispatch 140405Z, March 1952, box 314, Records of United States Army Commands, 1942-, RG 338, NARA.

[57] 'The Record of the Discussion between Chiang Kai-Shek and Radford about the negotiation of Armistice of the Korean War and US assistance to Nationalist Army for attack against Hainan island,' 9 May 1952, 002-080106-00033-005, The Diplomatic Relations with the US, Vol. 11, The Collection of President Chiang Kai-shek, AH.

the Pacific Command was limited to Taiwan and the Pescadores but did not include offshore islands (Quemoy and Matsu) near mainland China in order to remain removed from the conflict between Chiang and Mao.[58]

In addition, the US also strengthened Taiwan's naval capabilities for the purpose of self-defence. In July 1953, the United States Congress passed Public Law 188, which authorised President Dwight Eisenhower to lease or give a friendly East Asian country naval vessels, not larger than destroyers, with supporting surface crafts.[59] The following January, Admiral Arthur Radford, now chairman of the JCS, revealed that the US was planning to give Chiang Kai-shek's regime 25 naval ships of various types to make the Nationalist Navy more than a match numerically for the sea-going arm of the Chinese Communist forces.[60] Equipped with American vessels, the Nationalist Navy was now sufficiently capable of defending its own sovereignty and America's defence burden in the Taiwan Strait could be eased in turn.

This new strategic deployment and the changed structure of unified command symbolised the fact that the US began regarding the Pacific as an indivisible geostrategic body. For the decision makers in Washington, maritime space could tie its allies in East Asia together in order to contain Moscow and Beijing.

A New Maritime Defence System

The transformation of US maritime defence in East Asia marked a gradual shift in the Truman administration's perception of the seas. The transfer of much of maritime East Asia from the Far East Command's area of responsibility to that of the Pacific Command

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[58] ibid.

[59] 'Telegramme from the Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,' 27 July 1953, 472.3/0007, The US passed a bill with regard to lending crafts to Taiwan, Diplomatic Archives (DA), Archive of Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei (AIMH).

[60] 'N'lst Navy to get largest share of 25 US warships, no date; Radford: US sending naval ships here,' no date, 472.3/0007, DA, AIMH.

showed that, for the US, the sea had been already viewed as a geo-strategically inseparable region of defence. In 1953, Eisenhower not only succeeded Truman, he also inherited Truman's maritime strategic thinking, even after signing the Korean Armistice Agreement.

The costs of the military commitment in East Asia had become a heavy burden for the US. As Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor's statement indicated 'The experience of the events in Korea was far too clear in the minds of leaders of the services which had paid the preponderant price in lives and resources in the frustrating operations of that war.'[61] Eisenhower himself also stated that 'during the Korean War the Army had expanded far beyond its necessary peacetime size.'[62] However, as the US could not afford to dramatically cut military spending due to the security threat from the Soviet Union, the Eisenhower administration had to keep a balance between a minimum requirement for potential war conduct and the health of the US economy.[63] The NSC thus crafted a proposal (NSC 162/2) to simultaneously meet the Soviet threat and avoid seriously weakening the US economy. Eisenhower approved NSC 162/2 as a foundation of his Cold War policy – the 'New Look Strategy' – on 30 October 1953.

The New Look Strategy aimed to produce security at the lowest cost and make America's defence more efficient and economical.[64] To achieve this goal, the Eisenhower administration first incorporated nuclear weapons and technology in his national defence

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[61] Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1960), 23.

[62] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years Vol.2: Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (New York: Garden City, 1963), 451.

[63] Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 225; John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131-2; Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 130.

[64] Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower, 171-2; Steven L. Rearden, *Council of War: A History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1991* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), 142. In terms of details, also refer to: John Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 125-61; Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 131.

policy both in terms of the size of the arsenal and its advanced capability in delivering the weapons. This was based on the belief that overwhelming nuclear power would allow the US to increase its "capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power" but also because the nuclear weapons were cheaper than maintaining the conventional Army and Navy.[65] The policy to downplay the significance of the ground forces provoked the Army's fierce opposition, but the Navy did not voice as strong as the Army did. In effect, Eisenhower's New Look Strategy stressed the necessity to secure America's dominion over the seas in events of an emergency, such as what occurred in Korea, particularly in the Pacific and the Atlantic.[66] The Eisenhower administration strengthened America's capability of maintaining sea routes with the support of the carrier-based air power equipped with nuclear weapons. This move was regarded as a cheap and effective tool to secure national security but one that could also "determine the global balance."[67]

Another measure to reduce the defence expenditure was to simplify the unified command structure in the Pacific by incorporating the Far East Command into the Pacific Command. The JCS evaluated the existing unified command structure and proposed that the US required a new unified command for properly exploiting the capabilities of existing military forces.[68] On 28 December 1956, the JCS approved a plan for 'Disestablishment of Far East Command' and to integrate the Far East Command into the Pacific Command.[69] According to this plan, the Department of the Navy acted as an

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[65] Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To Win a Nuclear War: The Pentagon's Secret War Plans* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 89.

[66] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years Vol.2: Mandate for Change: 1953-1956*, 450.

[67] Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To Win a Nuclear War: The Pentagon's Secret War Plans*, 89..

[68] 'Outline Plan: Disestablishment of Far East Command and the movement of the United Nations Command to Korea,' 31 December 1956, box 072, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA (Outline Plan).

[69] 'From CINCPAC to CNO,' 25 April 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA ('From CINCPAC to CNO').

executive agency furnished by the US Pacific Fleet for the new Pacific Command after the abolishment of the Far East Command on 1 July 1957.[70] A new and expanded Pacific Command under the Navy's authority eventually ended the lasting competition between the Navy and the Army for military leadership in the western Pacific rim.

In addition, the US also reshuffled the subordinate organisations within the Pacific Command by downgrading the level of the Philippines and the Marianas Commands.[71] However, the JCS did not abolish all subordinate commands. The tension in the western Pacific with the development of Soviet and Chinese naval forces led the US to strengthen its control of this area. The Soviet Navy began to emphasise the importance and value of guided-missile submarines which were regarded as the future of the Soviet Navy by Nikita Khrushchev from 1955 onwards.[72] This guided-missile submarine is the Whiskey-class known as the W-type submarine. The Soviet Union built over 200 W-type submarines during the Cold War.[73] Similarly, Beijing's naval strength was gradually increasing with Soviet assistance from 1954. Moscow gave Beijing several destroyers, more than dozen submarines, submarine chasers, some auxiliaries, and old motor torpedo boats along with 1,500 to 2,000 Soviet advisers who instructed the Chinese communists how to operate these vessels and weapons. With Soviet assistance, China was thus able to build Riga-class destroyer escorts, W-type submarines, submarines, minesweepers, and motor torpedo boats.[74] Soviet and Chinese naval development would threaten the US

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[70] 'Simplification of command structure on Taiwan,' 3 February 1958, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA. 'Outline Plan.'
[71] 'From CINCPAC to CNO.'
[72] Central Intelligence Agency, *Soviet Navy: Intelligence and Analysis During the Cold War*, 11-2.
[73] Anthony Tucker-Jones, *Soviet Cold War Weaponry: Aircraft, Warships and Missiles* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2016), 73.
[74] Donald W. Mitchell, *A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power*, 509.

Navy's command of the sea because they could not only attack warships but also interdict America's transportation.

Facing the potential challenge from the Soviet Union and China on the seas, Arleigh Burke who succeeded Robert Carney as CNO on 17 August 1955 reemphasised the need for US control of the sea.[75] His strategic thinking was, in maritime East Asia, symbolised by the establishment of subordinate commands under the control of the Pacific Command to strengthen the links between the US and its allies. In addition to the maintenance of the Navy-led Taiwan Defence Command set up in 1955 (the Commander of the US Seventh Fleet was simultaneously designated the Commander of the US Taiwan Defence Command), the US established the United States Forces Japan on the one hand, and United States Forces Korea on the other, as two subordinate commands under the control of the Pacific Command. This indicated that the western Pacific had become the most valued area in Washington's strategic thinking in relation to its security in the Pacific area (Figure 2).[76]

The three subordinate commands in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan enabled the US to maintain the sea lanes in support of its logistic and strategic plans for major operations in East Asia, both on land and at sea. Specifically, these subordinate commands not only determined the requirement for sea-lift capabilities in supporting each CINCPAC operation plan, but also coordinated joint planning and other matters of shared

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[75] George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The US Navy, 1890-1990*, 348.

[76] The Taiwan Defence Command was established in 1955 in the light of the Sino (ROC)-US Mutual Defence Treaty signed in 1954. Its initial name was 'Formosa Liaison Centre' before being changed, see: 'Vice Admiral Pride announced that the establishment of a liaison centre for Sino-US Military Cooperation,' 27 April 1955, *Central Daily*; 'Formosa Liaison Centre will be renamed to Taiwan Defence Command,' 23 October 1955, *United Daily News*; 'From CINCPAC to CNO,' 5 June 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA ('From CINCPAC to CNO'); 'Report of progress made in reduction, simplification and consolidation of command structures in the Pacific Command,' 8 January 1958, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA ('Report of progress'); 'Simplification of command structure on Taiwan-phase II,' 23 December 1958, box 71, CDF 1959, RG 218, NARA ('Simplification of command structure on Taiwan').

interests to the services. They also represented CINCPAC in the discharge of US military responsibilities in their respective areas. [77] With the assistance of subordinate commanders, once an emergency occurred in the Pacific area, CINCPAC would be able to make an initial allocation of the ocean shipping capacity for the first 60 days as well as airlift capacity for the first 30 days.[78]

In the course of the merging of the Far East and the Pacific Commands, the Army's influence fell considerably. Following the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953, the US reduced its ground forces deployed on the Korean peninsula to six divisions. By June 1957, the US had transferred military responsibilities on land to South Korean forces, and US ground forces were only comprised of three Army divisions and one Marine division.[79] The reduction of ground forces on the Korean peninsula was aimed at lowering military expenses in accordance with Eisenhower's New Look Strategy.

The US Navy and its Air Force colleagues then took over the role that the Army played in defending US security and decision makers in Washington gradually regarded maritime space as a geographical barrier for keeping a distance from the enemy. The mobility of the naval and air forces not only enabled the US to maintain its logistic support lines with the minimum reliance on shore bases, but also allowed it to immediately project power at the lowest cost if an emergency arose.[80] In this fashion, the Navy no longer assumed a supplementary role but transformed itself into a dominant player in maritime East Asia.

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[77] 'Change 2 to CINCPAC Instructions 03020.2, Pacific Unified Command Plan,' 29 October 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA; From CINCPAC to CNO.
[78] 'Defence of Hawaii,' 10 April 1959, box 71, CDF 1959, RG 218, NARA.
[79] 'The Far East Command.'
[80] 'From CNO to CINCPAC,' 23 April 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA.

Structural Change in the Decision-Making Core

These changes in organisational structure also marked the Army's considerably decreased influence in the decision-making core of the Pacific Command. The organisational structure of the Pacific Command drafted by Felix Stump, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Command, on 6 June 1957 (Figure 3) did not designate the senior Army general as a Chief of Staff and removed the Army from positions of operational and mission planning.[81] The billets designated to the Army were only those dealing with the logistic, foreign, civil, and military affairs for US hub-and-spoke allies in accordance with the 'Pacific Mutual Defence Assistance Program.'[82] The planning-related and operation-concerned positions delegated to the Navy showed that the organisational structure in the Pacific was gradually changing.[83] On 7 June, Secretary of Defence Charles Wilson approved this distribution for the staff of the Pacific Command.[84]

The evolving situation along the western Pacific explains the motive of decision makers in Washington for this redeployment. At the end of the 1950s, tensions across the Taiwan Strait gradually eased because Beijing virtually downgraded the liberation of Taiwan from an operation plan to a propaganda campaign which boosted its legitimacy and served its domestic need for the 'Overall Line of Socialism Construction' and the 'Great Leap Forward.' Washington also realised that the likelihood of an all-out conflict in the Taiwan Strait would not be higher than it had been at the beginning of the 1950s. Even in the worst-case scenario, the US Navy and its Air Force colleagues could play crucial roles in the long and narrow Taiwan Strait. Consequently, Navy officers were

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[81] 'Headquarters Pacific Command proposed table of distribution,' 6 June 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA ('Proposed Table of Distribution').
[82] ibid.
[83] ibid.
[84] 'Memorandum by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Headquarters Pacific Command proposed table of distribution (U),' 12 June 1957, box 073, CDF 1958, RG 218, NARA.

appointed to the most important positions in the decision-making core, such as Commander, Chief of Staff, and J-5 (position of Assistance Chief of Staff for Plans).[85] A sea-oriented strategic command under the control of the Navy, by geographically connecting Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, enabled the US to effectively project its influence through the maritime space against the Soviet Union and China in East Asia.

Strengthening the Naval Cooperation with Taiwan

In addition to the changes in the decision-making structure in the Pacific, experiences from the first Taiwan Strait Crisis led the US to augment naval cooperation with Taiwan by enhancing the Navy's leadership on defence issues related to Taiwan. In September 1954, the spark of the Chinese Civil War was ignited once again. Beijing began launching surprise bombardments against Quemoy, an offshore island only two kilometers from the Communist-held Xiamen and Yijiangshan islands, located off the coast of Taizhou in Zhejiang province. Beijing's attacks became known as the 'First Taiwan Strait Crisis,' which pushed Beijing and Taipei to the edge of an all-out conflict.[86]

The 1954-1955 Taiwan Strait Crisis revealed that China's gradually developing Navy and Air Force, combined with the Soviet assistance, would pose a significant threat to Taiwan. The countermeasure Washington took was to closely strengthen its naval connection with Taiwan by enhancing the US Navy's position in the defence structure of Taiwan. Prior to 1958, two America's commands shouldered the defence of Taiwan: the Navy-led Taiwan Defense Command (USTDC) and the Army-led Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG, Taiwan), established on 1 May 1951 in accordance with the

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[85] ibid.

[86] Bruce Elleman, *Taiwan Straits: Crisis in Asia and the Role of the U.S. Navy* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2014), 59-73, 89-101.

1949 Draft of ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty.[87] In order to improve the overall effectiveness of defence coordination on Taiwan, the JCS reshuffled the command structure on Taiwan by integrating its channels of contact with the KMT. In 1956, the Commander of the Taiwan Defence Command served as the only liaison with Taiwan's Chief of General Staff with regard to the exchange of advice on military policy and operations.[88] Thereafter, the multi-oriented defence structure was further streamlined in 1958. Felix Stump, the Commander of the Pacific Command, proposed that the command on Taiwan should be merged into a single structure under the direct control of the Pacific Command. This was in line with Washington's strategy to maintain maximum security at minimum cost for the fulfilment of its national obligations and military commitments. The JCS approved his proposal in December 1958 and downgraded the Army's position to a subordinate component under the Navy.[89] To be concrete, this new command structure on Taiwan designated the Chief of MAAG (Army) as a Deputy Commander of the Navy-led Taiwan Defense Command for military assistance matters.[90] The reshuffling of command structure on Taiwan would, as Stump argued, 'have the immediate effects of simplification of US command relationships, establishment of a single point of contact for officials of the Government of the Republic of China [Taiwan], and reduction of requirement for facilities on Taiwan.'[91] More importantly, all matters related to Taiwan defence led by the US Navy allowed the US to strengthen its naval

[87] History Compilation Office, Ministry of Defence, ROC, *Meijun guwentuan zai Tai gongzuo koushu lishi* [US MAAG-Taiwan: An Oral History] (Taipei: History Compilation Office, Ministry of Defence, ROC, 2008), 10.

[88] 'Command relationship of American military organization is changed,' 1 March 1956, *China Post*.

[89] 'Command Structure on Taiwan (U),' 23 December 1958, box 71, Central Decimal File 1959, RG 218, NARA.

[90] 'Completion of USTDC/MAAG Taiwan Headquarters consolidation,' 1 December 1958, box 71, CDF 1959, RG 218, NARA.

[91] 'Organisation, responsibilities and assignment of the Taiwan Base Command,' 24 November 1958, box 71, CDF 1959, RG 218, NARA; 'Simplification of command structure on Taiwan. Report of progress.'

connection with Taiwan in the line with America's sea-oriented strategy in defence of East Asia.

The close naval cooperation between the US and Taiwan led China to take this issue seriously by announcing the extent of its territorial waters for the first time. In 1958, Beijing announced that its territorial waters extended for 12 miles, including the offshore islands near Chinese coasts and Taiwan. Without its permission, any foreign aircraft and military vessels would not be allowed to enter these territorial waters. In Beijing's mind, the main purpose of delineating its territorial waters was to show the illegitimacy of the naval connection between the US and Taiwan.[92] While the US Navy's strength was superior to China's, Beijing's announcement of the extent of its territorial waters led Washington to regard maritime space as a geographical barrier to keep distance from China because its intention was not to destroy China's naval forces in the Taiwan Strait but to stay away from the conflict between Beijing and Taipei. In this situation, notwithstanding the fact that the US Navy kept patrolling in the Taiwan Strait, such moves would not assist Chiang Kai-shek to defend his offshore islands such as Quemoy and Matsu. Additionally, the US Navy's patrol areas were outside the twelve-mile China's coastline.[93] This perimeter of maritime defence remained in place until the US ended official relations with Taiwan in 1979.

Conclusion

The kaleidoscope of 1950s maritime East Asia reveals a chaotic and dynamic stage during which Washington gradually adopted sea-oriented strategic thinking in defence of East Asia. While Truman was looking for an effective and efficient strategic deployment

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[92] 'The Republic of China's announcement concerning the breadth of the territorial waters,' 5 September 1958, *People's Daily*.
[93] 'ROC-US Navy Patrol Zone in the Taiwan Strait,' no date, 421/0007, Le-cheng Plan, DA, AIMH.

policy in defence of immediate postwar East Asia, he did not regard the sea as a geostrategic space. Taking Taiwanese defence following the 1949 Chinese Civil War as an example, prior to the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula, despite the strategic importance of Taiwan to US security in the western Pacific, decision makers in the White House nearly abandoned the Nationalist government. They ignored warnings from the Pentagon. The relationship between America's international security and maritime space had not yet been inextricably connected in the immediate postwar.

The outbreak of the Korean War led to a reevaluation of Taiwan's position and the belief that US policy towards East Asia needed an immediate revision through the neutralisation of the Taiwan Strait. Yet, it would be remiss to jump to the conclusion that the Truman administration began to link its East Asian defence to maritime space. While Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait to temporarily cease the military conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists, he took an ambiguous position to keep the US disentangled from the unfinished Chinese Civil War. Moreover, the fact that the exclusion of Taiwan from any unified command meant that Washington's uncertain policy towards Taiwan rendered its strategic space vulnerable to the threat of expansion by the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists in maritime East Asia.

But when we turn the historical spotlight from the Taiwan Strait to the Korean peninsula, we find a different situation. The Korean War not only gave the US an opportunity to re-examine its unified command system of 1947, it also provided the US Navy with a platform to demonstrate its significance in East Asia, particularly while the Army was experiencing great setbacks on land in the early stage of the Korean War.

Successful operations on the seas led decision makers in Washington to rethink the geostrategic significance of maritime space and to gradually adopt a sea-oriented strategic thinking in defence of East Asia. By dissecting the change in America's

perception of relationships between its international security and maritime space, it would not be difficult for us to understand Washington's motivation behind its 1950s strategic redeployments in the Pacific. The act to transfer most of the Far East Command's maritime responsibility area into the Pacific Command, particularly placing Taiwan under the authority of the Pacific Command, indicated that Washington gradually regarded the sea as a holistic dimension for strategic deliberation. In addition, the policy to make maritime space into a geostrategic and inseparable body for the sea-oriented strategic thinking also further came into effect following the armistice in Korea. Eisenhower's New Look Strategy, which aimed to ensure maximum security at minimum cost for the maintenance of sea routes, resulted in the incorporation of the Far East Command into the Pacific Command, which was also a sign of the end of the competition between the Navy and the Army for military leadership in the Pacific.

Furthermore, this research argues that the experience gained from the Korean War and the 1954-1955 Taiwan Strait Crisis led decision makers in Washington to believe that the western Pacific was strategically more important than the rest of the Pacific area. As a corollary, while Washington streamlined the organisational structure of the Pacific Command by downgrading the level of previous subordinate commands in the Philippines and Mariana-Bonin area, it established three subordinate commands in the western Pacific: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The change in the 1950s strategic redeployment in the Pacific not only seems to indicate that the US regarded these choke points on the frontier of the Cold War, but also demonstrated that decision makers in Washington shaped maritime space as a geostrategic platform to manage its hub-and-spoke alliance in East Asia by projecting its military influence.

In summary, by situating maritime space into the context of Cold War history, the 1950s crises of East Asia, such as the Korean War and the First Taiwan Strait Crisis,

should not merely be defined as the hot wars in the Cold War. They should be regarded as the turning points that made the US gradually link its maritime space to its strategic concerns in defence of East Asia. The creation of sea-oriented strategic thinking also laid the groundwork for maintenance of international security in the Asia-Pacific area during both the Cold War and the post-Cold War.
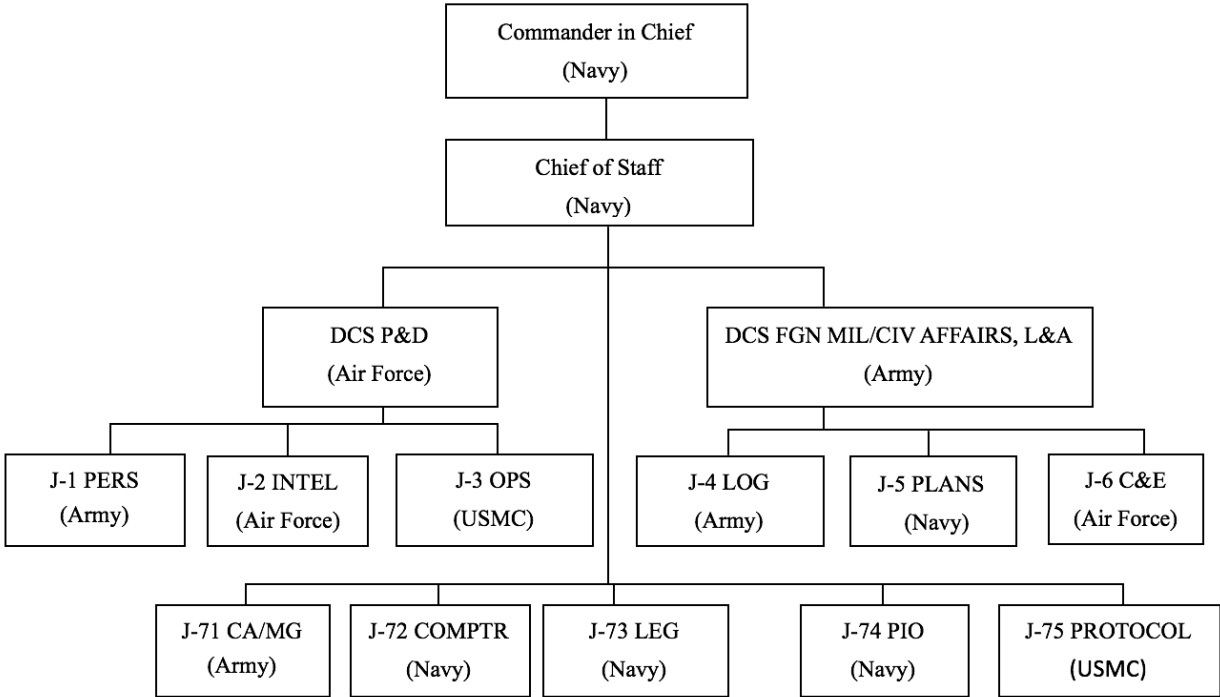
Figure 1. The Far East Command Geographical Area.[94]

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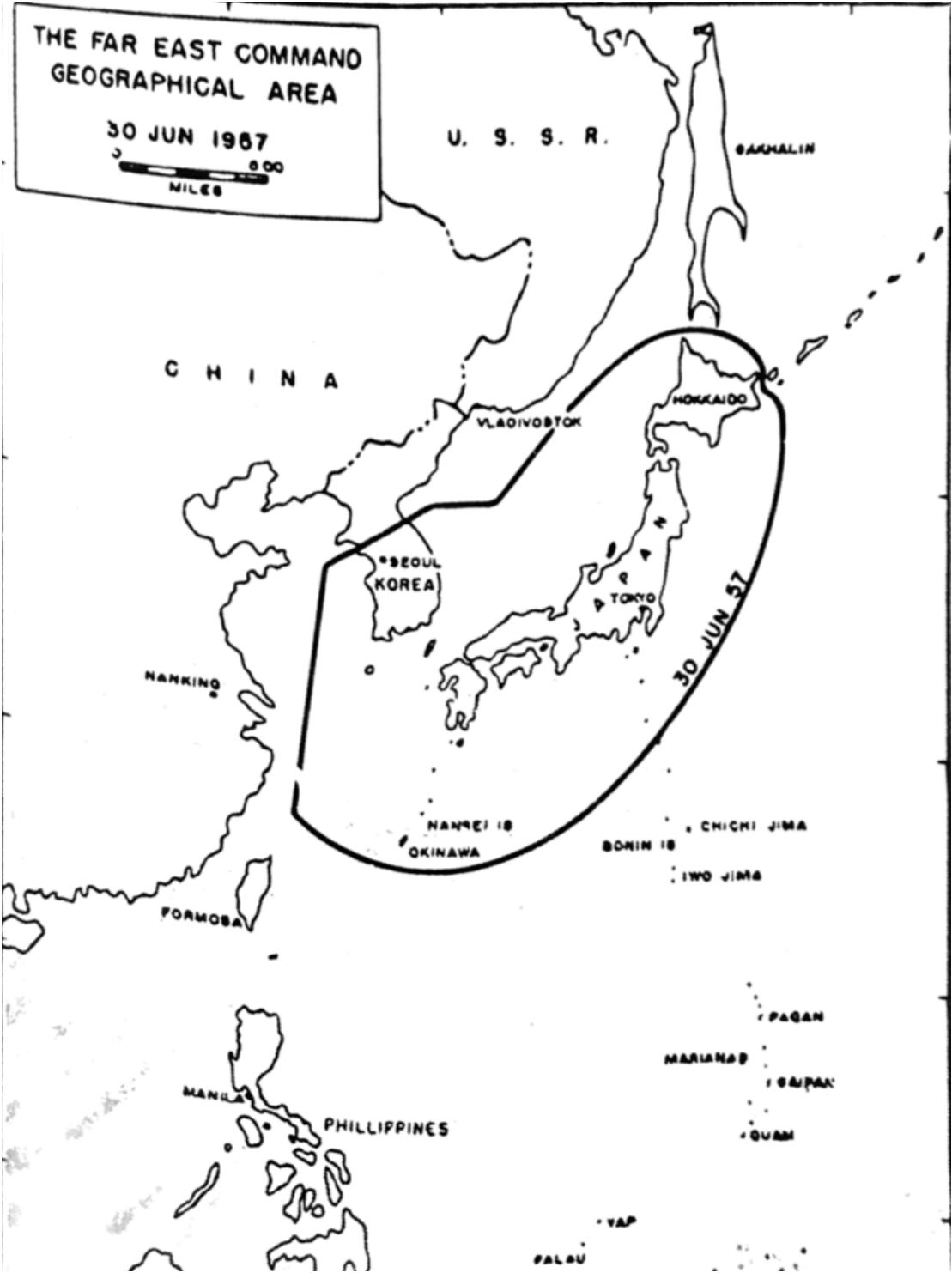
[94] 'The Far East Command.'

Figure 2. Pacific Command Structure.[95]

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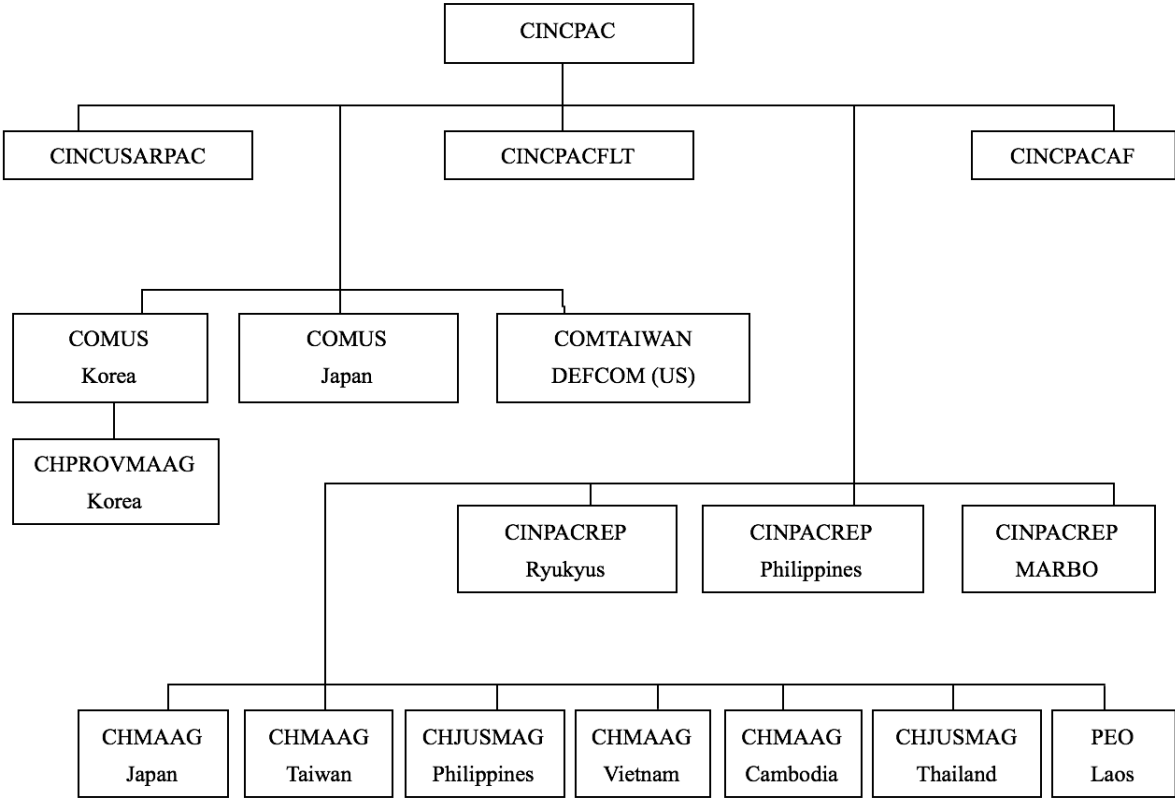
[95] 'Report of progress.'

Figure 3. Headquarters Pacific Command Proposed Table of Distribution. [96]

[96] 'Proposed Table of Distribution.'