



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on April 11, 2013

## Korea: Looking Back — and Looking Ahead

In June 1950, communist-led North Korea invaded non-communist South Korea. World planners had arranged the splitting of the large Asian peninsula into two separate governments only a few years earlier. It didn't take looking into a crystal ball to predict trouble ahead.

The initial push of communist forces into South Korea almost succeeded. But U.S. troops under General Douglas MacArthur — always operating under overall United Nations command, as he was soon to realize — acted alone and conducted the astounding (some said impossible) amphibious landing at Inchon. (Forty foot tides had to be overcome.) They rapidly cut the North's supply lines and turned looming defeat into victory in a matter of days. U.S. forces then proceeded northward, where they liberated North Korea from its Red leaders and the war was essentially over. The communists had been routed and freedom could now be enjoyed by all Koreans.



But overwhelming numbers of Chinese troops then swooped across the Yalu River into North Korea and drove America's outnumbered forces back into the South. General MacArthur protested a series of incredible restrictions he was forced to obey and his frustration led to him being fired by President Truman. Back in the United States, he uttered his famous summation: "In war, there is no substitute for victory." Even more revealing was the statement of the Chinese Communist General Lin Piao, who stated:

I would never have made the attack and risked my men and military reputation if I had not been assured that Washington would restrain General MacArthur from taking adequate retaliatory measures against my lines of supply and communication.

Who gave Lin Piao that assurance? The United Nations gave it after dictating how America would conduct the war. And who sent U.S. forces into a war without the Constitution's requirement for a declaration of war? President Truman and his Secretary of State Dean Acheson did. From day one of the conflict, they placed our military under the command of the United Nations. Over 30,000 died, 130,000 suffered wounds, and the 8,000 missing were never returned. Since then, every member of the U.S. military serving in Korea has served under overall UN command. Not one was ever accorded the right to refuse such an arrangement.

In 1953, both sides agreed to an armistice (not a termination of the war) and the potential for once again ratcheting up military action at any time remained. Today's headlines about North Korea's threats



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are the inevitable result.

It can't be stressed too greatly that the UN, with Washington's continuing approval, is in charge. What we are seeing now, at the very least, is the use of a threat of war (maybe even war itself) to cement an even greater power grab. Such a tactic has been used throughout history and is duly noted by many.

Consider: In his play *Henry IV*, William Shakespeare had King Henry advise his son, Prince Hal, "Be it thy course to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels." Many centuries earlier, Plato warned that aspiring tyrants were "always stirring up some war" in order to build their own power. In the Federalist essays explaining the U.S. Constitution to the people, Alexander Hamilton cautioned about the misuse of military forces in "schemes to subvert the liberties of a great community." And Abraham Lincoln applauded the absence of presidential power alone to commit the nation to war because, he stated, "kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in war" for deceitful purposes. Would current leaders of our nation use war, or the threat of war, to build their power over the entire American people? If history is any guide, that possibility must be considered.

What then should our nation do in the face of Kim Jong-un's saber rattling? Acting independently, the United States should tell him that any war he starts would result in quick and decisive action that will terminate his rule. Don't wait for the United Nations to issue any mandates. A meaningful warning from the United States on behalf of its ally in South Korea would most surely deter the boyish North Korean dictator from committing suicide.

But even more, a study of U.S. willingness to allow the United Nations to dictate our nation's policies has to cease. Never again should U.S. forces be sent into war without a formal declaration of war required by the Constitution. Such a declaration would have led to victory in Korea, and in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other conflicts whose conduct was also dictated by the United Nations.

There are a host of reasons why many Americans call for U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations. What has transpired in Korea is reason enough. Our nation still possesses the right to leave the UN, but time is running out for retaining independence. Let's leave before doing so becomes impossible.



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