

Concrete Actions



There is a very definite pattern, and these are not hit and miss tactics.

—an infantry captain,
U.S. Eighth Army, Korea, 1967

Kim Il-sung's new military line began to take shape as early as the autumn of 1964. Greater numbers of agents attempted to enter the Republic of Korea. Most of these infiltrators came from the propagandists of the Korean Workers' Party Liaison Department and the KPA General Political Bureau. They intended to size up their ROK opponents much like previous intelligence operatives had done. But they also hoped to start laying the groundwork for insurrection.

By October 1966, these stepped-up irregular operations had run afoul of ROK Army patrols and uncooperative southern villagers. ROK regulars suffered almost three dozen fatalities in a series of clashes; some two dozen civilians also died in cross fires and terrorist attacks. The number of DMZ incidents climbed noticeably in the ROK sectors. Hostile probes also increased along South Korea's coastlines. ROK sailors flushed a KPN midget submarine in the Imjin River estuary, chased North Korean spy boats among the east coast shallows, and exchanged gunfire with pugnacious KPN patrol craft.¹

Throughout these two tense years, the American sector remained ominously quiet. It almost appeared that, whatever their motives, the Korean Communists had chosen to avoid U.S. units. That comforting situation was about to change.

A Call to Arms

The scale and intensity of unconventional warfare had grown since the December 1962 proclamation of a new military line, yet these efforts had not really had much impact on the ROK. The DPRK operations lacked focus and hence showed few measurable results.

Kim Il-sung decided to change that. In a lengthy speech to the Second Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Conference on 5 October, the northern premier outlined his refurbished campaign plan.² He stated his goal,

explained a sequence of events to bring about that goal, and described the means to be employed (see figure 4). Kim left no doubt as to his priority: “Comrades,” he said, “the greatest national task confronting the KWP and the Korean people at the present stage is to accomplish the country’s unification and the victory of the revolution on a nationwide scale.”

Strategic objective: Unification of Korea under the DPRK.

Operational objectives (in sequence):

- Create military-industrial base for revolution in DPRK.
- Neutralize United States in Korea; break U.S.-ROK alliance.
- Subvert/liberate ROK.

Means: Combination of methods (conventional/unconventional).

Sources: Compiled from Kim Il-song, “The International Situation and Problems of the World Communist Movement,” in his *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 113—15; and Bermudez, *North Korean Special Forces*, 30.

Figure 4. DPRK campaign plan (new military line), announced 5—12 October 1966



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Even as early as 1963, Communist infiltrators directed their violence on U.S. and ROK troops, as witnessed by this ambushed jeep

How would this be done? Kim Il-sung laid out a three-phase course of action. First, he exhorted his party faithful to “push ahead vigorously with the revolution” in the north, thereby building “a powerful base for revolution.” While Kim judged this work to be well advanced, he insisted upon “acceleration” of the ongoing military and industrial modernization. Second, the Communist chief believed that in order to destroy the “puppet government” in Seoul, he had to neutralize its puppet master. Why? Because according to Kim, “the US occupation and its colonial rule over South Korea is the root cause of all misfortunes and sufferings the South Korean people are undergoing and the main obstacle to unification of our country.” Such ranting against Yankee “imperialism” was hardly novel. Kim’s prescription, however, struck a new chord that went beyond simple rhetoric. “It is also wrong merely to shout against US imperialism without taking concrete actions to stop its aggression,” he said. Unable to defeat America outright, Kim hoped to strain and break its ties to the Republic of Korea.

The time to split the two looked ripe. The United States had many interests aside from Korea, most obviously the war in Vietnam. The United States should wish to avoid another land war in Asia. Kim wanted to increase the price of the United States staying in Korea beyond what it would be willing to pay. He could use bloody, direct attacks or, through provocations, induce the ROKs to demand a much heavier U.S. commitment. Either way, the Americans might lose heart. Kim argued thusly: “In the present situation the US imperialist should be dealt blows and their forces dispersed to the maximum in all parts of the world and on every front—in Asia and Europe, Africa and Latin America, and in all countries, big and small. They should be bound hand and foot everywhere they set foot so that they may not act arbitrarily.”

Once America began to doubt itself or relinquish its role in Korea, then the DPRK could shift to phase three: the incitement of a broad-based insurgency designed to topple the Park government. This would be marked by “a rapid expansion of the revolutionary forces and an acceleration of the democratic revolution for national liberation in every way.” Kim implied that the preparations for phase three would coincide with the phase two struggle against United States forces in Korea. Whether the final takeover would come by ground invasion or popular revolution remained unresolved and depended upon the success of the insurgents.

Either way, the DPRK must be ready. Having announced his aim and discussed his concept of operations, the northern leader threw the full weight of his state’s resources behind the undertaking. He directed the use of “a combination of methods involving all kinds of struggle in correspondence to the objective and subjective situations: political struggle and economic struggle, violent struggle and nonviolent struggle, and legal and illegal struggle.” By stressing “methods” rather than types of forces, Kim sent an important message to his own armed services. Conventional or unconventional, all North Korean components would contribute.

The DPRK premier did not specify a timetable for his campaign, but he did stress that "unification of the fatherland is the supreme national task of our people and an urgent question which brooks no further delay."³ The public record contains nothing more definite. Kim Il-sung, however, implied a possible completion date in another statement at the same party conference. He pointedly extended the fulfillment of the Seven Year Plan from October 1967 until October 1970.⁴ The course of later developments seems to confirm this possible schedule. In any event, Kim left no doubt that he expected swift progress.

Kim backed up his words with deeds. He fired the leaders of the KWP Liaison Department, its subordinate Guerrilla Guidance Section, and the associated KPA Propaganda and Instigation Bureau. These unfortunates went off to penal camps. They had been judged too disorganized, too slow, and altogether too soft.

In their stead, Kim turned to military hard-liners who promised quick, dramatic results. To underscore this change of policy, he promoted a group of generals drawn mainly from his old Kapsan band, veterans of the guerrilla fight against Japan from 1936—45. Six of eleven new Politburo members came from this military faction.

The North Korean dictator also emphasized a new primacy for the KPA Reconnaissance Bureau in running unconventional missions. Party propagandists and activists took backseats to army terrorists and commandos. The KPA commenced a crash program to create elite special warfare contingents, which eventually became famous as the all-officer 124th and 283d Army Units. But these superb outfits would not be ready until 1968.⁵ Until then, the Reconnaissance Bureau had to use what it had and could borrow, to include party cadres, security formations, and regular military units. Spurred by their supreme leader's vision and pressed by their newly promoted generals, North Korean special operators went to work. This time, as Kim Il-sung warned, the unwitting Americans were "target No. 1."⁶

First Blood

President Lyndon B. Johnson could not have chosen a worse time to visit Seoul. General Bonesteel had been in command only about two months. He spent most of that time trying to separate fact from fiction along the DMZ. In the meantime, deadly incidents and rumors of future incidents proliferated. The ROK First Army, for instance, reported numerous skirmishes on its eastern part of the DMZ. The UNC took no action beyond ordering defensive precautions. But the ROKs had put up with enough. Late in October, frustrated South Koreans conducted a cross-border retaliatory raid without seeking Bonesteel's approval. As a result, American KMAG advisers argued with their ROK counterparts. The U.S. officers wanted to prevent another armistice violation; Korean officers countered that the Americans paid too little attention to ROK casualties. Tempers flared. Mean-

while, probably tipped off by their own intelligence, the North Koreans struck again and again in the ROK Army areas, fanning dissension between the allies.

Alarmed by the steady increase in violent incidents, the UNC raised the alert status of all forces in the weeks prior to Johnson's arrival. Bonesteel ordered especially stringent measures in the combined U.S.-ROK I Corps (Group)—the "shield of Seoul"—which defended the western segment of the DMZ. The U.S. 2d Infantry Division braced for trouble along the DMZ.⁷ More patrols went out, and each night, tanks rolled forward to play their brilliant xenon searchlights across suspected infiltration lanes.

Unfazed by the rising wave of North Korean belligerence, President Johnson came to Korea on 31 October, trailed by a bustling entourage of more than 500 people. He met with President Park, U.S. Ambassador Winthrop G. Brown, General Bonesteel, and American troops at Camp Stanley—all in a frenzied forty-four hours.⁸ United Nations Command forces remained ready, but the DPRK made no move against Johnson.

Instead, the North Koreans took action against Johnson's men. In the predawn darkness on 2 November, while the American president slept near Seoul under heavy guard, a KPA squad tracked an eight-man patrol from Company A, 1-23 Infantry. The northerners, probably from the 17th Foot Reconnaissance Brigade, paralleled the oblivious American soldiers. Once the U.S. element reached a point about a kilometer south of the DMZ

President Lyndon B. Johnson



proper, the North Koreans estimated that the Americans had relaxed their vigilance. The Communist soldiers swung in ahead of the plodding American file, assumed hasty ambush positions, and engaged the Americans with hand grenades and submachine guns.

The U.S. squad disintegrated under a hail of bullets and grenade fragments. Despite later wishful stories of heroics, six Americans and a KATUSA went down almost instantly. A seventh American survived by playing dead. The KPA troops pumped a few more bursts into some of the corpses, plunged in a bayonet here and there, and disappeared into the



South Koreans welcoming President Lyndon Johnson to Korea

night. One northerner might have been wounded in the one-sided fight. The sole American survivor ran for his life as soon as the attackers pulled out.

Almost simultaneously, another KPA squad surprised a patrol in ROK First Army. Two South Koreans died before the northerners withdrew.⁹ That ended the shooting, but it was enough for one night. The twin strikes had been well timed, well executed, and very effective.

If the North Koreans expected to make a political statement by these terrorist attacks, they must have been gratified by the next day's news headlines in the United States. The nearby presidential press corps, no doubt bored by the routine diplomatic meetings and photo opportunities, pounced on the bloody story of the lost U.S. patrol (almost wholly ignoring the coincident ROK Army losses, not to mention previous southern battle deaths). For one day, Korea displaced Vietnam from the front pages of American newspapers.¹⁰ Then Johnson left for home and interest waned.

Bonesteel's interest did not subside, nor did that of his men and his ROK allies. The general observed that these "vicious, provocative raids" looked "considerably different from actions in previous years." Now, KPA "hunter-killer" squads sought Americans.¹¹ But why? And what should be done about it?

Bonesteel's Assessment

The general took it upon himself to address the problem. Had he been less sure of his abilities, he might have turned to Ambassador Brown and the rest of the "country team" in Korea. In compliance with the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, the ambassador coordinated the diverse U.S. organizations in Korea. He directed his own foreign service personnel and supervised the local offices of the Central Intelligence Agency, Agency for International Development, and U.S. Information Service. Anywhere else, Brown would have also controlled the activities of the U.S. military advisers in country, although this was not the case in Korea thanks to the persistence of the wartime military command structure.

With its round table of competing bureaucracies chaired by a diplomat, the country team model amounted to leadership by committee. It promised little, however, in the face of the new northern aggression. In this instance (because he could), Bonesteel chose to avoid the entire country team mess.

Unlike Westmoreland in Vietnam, Bonesteel did not have to report to the ambassador with regard to operational matters. Under his hat as commander in chief of UNC, he dealt directly with the secretary of defense and, by extension, the president. His military status also helped him exert influence on retired General Park Chung Hee and his administration of former ROK Army men; after all, Bonesteel wielded operational control of Park's South Korean military. While President Johnson required that Bonesteel and his ambassador maintain "close relations," the general interpreted this requirement liberally. While he coordinated closely with

Ambassador Brown, an old acquaintance, Bonesteel made his own decisions.¹²

Thanks to his acute analytical powers, Bonesteel went beyond the simple recognition that something unprecedented had occurred. By taking the time to ask the right questions rather than rushing to act or blithely resorting to usual responses, Bonesteel acknowledged the complexities of his situation. He determined to find out why things had changed before ordering countermeasures. Characteristically, he initiated measures himself and ensured that his subordinates worked quickly once he issued his guidance.

Bonesteel asked his intelligence officers for their judgments. "So," he recalled, "I got the G-2 people together, all of them, and learned not too damned much about what had been going on up north." The intelligence staff regurgitated hard data on KPA organizations, weapons, training, locations, and recent DMZ activities. They also listed countless political, economic, and social indicators. But none of the staff officers could find any coherent pattern in the mass of detail.

Bonesteel could and did. He immersed himself in the issue in the days following the 2 November attacks. Determined to understand the larger purposes of the enemy's scheme, he ignored the mountain of sightings and radio interceptions and went to the only source that really mattered: "I personally read all the speeches that Kim Il-sung made the previous two years," he said, "those that were overt and some that were semi-classified that we had obtained in some way or another. This was pretty interesting because he had developed a regular *Mein Kampf*."

Bonesteel's exhaustive research allowed him to trace the genesis and content of Kim's October 1966 campaign plan. "He laid out his strategy for the coming years," explained Bonesteel; "Reading it in the communist dialectic lexicon, it was pretty plain what they were going to do or at least try to do."¹³ Thus, within days of the DPRK double strike, Bonesteel accurately discerned Kim Il-sung's intentions, to include the probable sequence of major operational phases.¹⁴ But how could the Communists be stopped without starting a midintensity war?

Bonesteel had his own ideas, but he also had time. The days after 2 November were devoid of action as winter blew in throughout Korea. With the parameters of the threat now clear, Bonesteel wanted to make use of this lull to bring in other minds and other perspectives and to develop solutions.

As early as 6 November, the general formed his brightest staff men into a Special Working Group. Although the group enjoyed a broad charter to scrutinize the entire Korean situation, Bonesteel did not just turn them loose. The general gave specific guidance and suggestions and checked frequently on the group's progress. To a great extent, the group's findings and recommendations simply implemented Bonesteel's own original thinking. There would be other studies, commanders' calls, visits, and fact-finding

conferences to study the Korean situation, most notably the definitive Counterinfiltration-Guerrilla Concept Requirements Plan of late 1967. Even so, the Special Working Group's report gave the first clear explanation of Bonesteel's vision of how to fight and win this unexpected Second Korean Conflict.

Bonesteel placed only one ironclad constraint on his Special Working Group: he insisted on Korean participation in planning its country's defense. The general made it clear to his key subordinates that he "wanted to put the responsibility on the ROKs."¹⁵ Given the rudimentary Korean representation in the American-dominated higher headquarters, this was a bold move. From a counterinsurgency perspective, it proved essential.

The Doctrinal Void

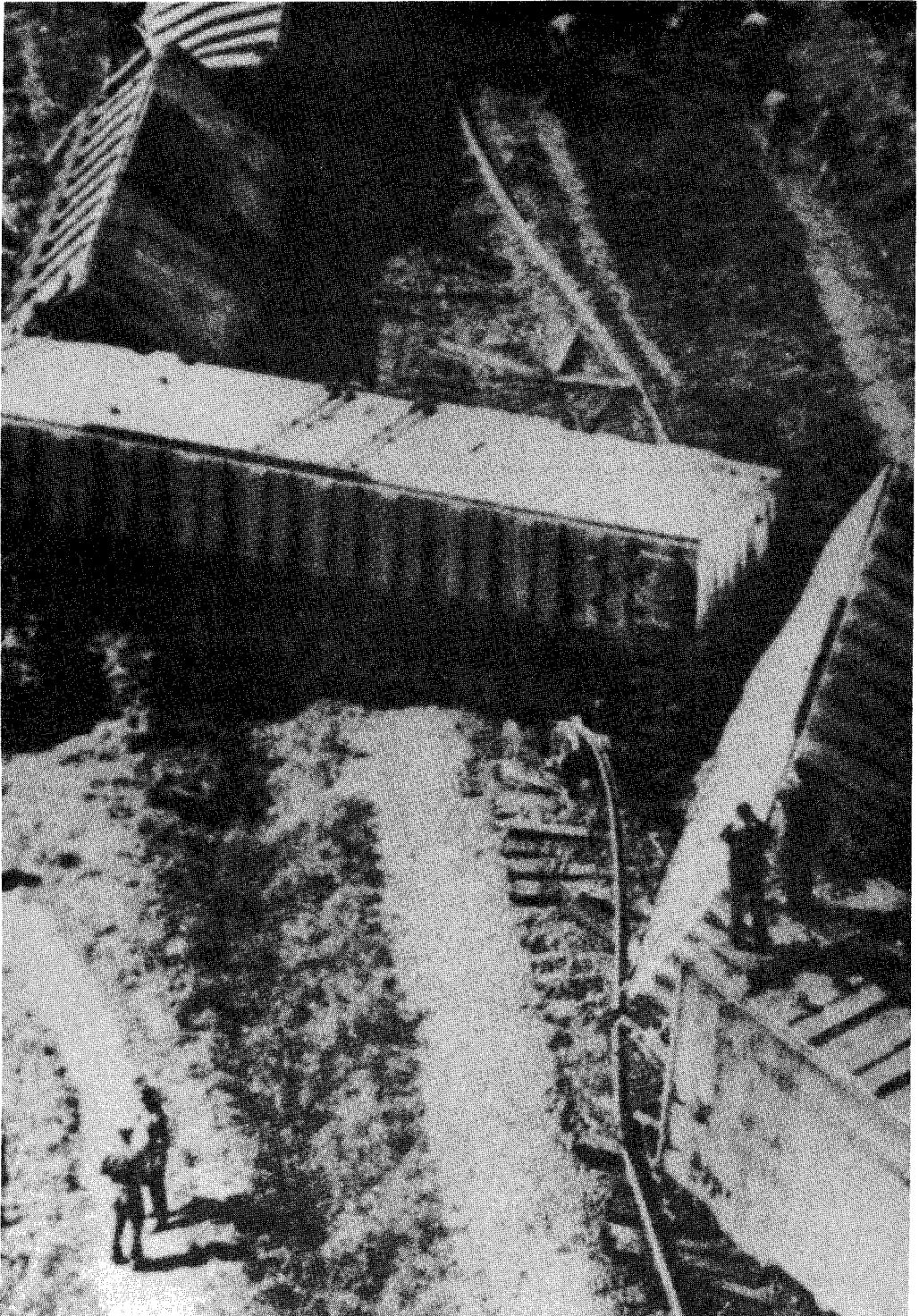
American and Korean officers searching for countermeasures to the new KPA threat relied on the same body of printed and schooled doctrine. Unfortunately, that material described conventional solutions inappropriate to unconventional problems. U.S. Army doctrine did not really allow for the nature of the war under way in Korea and thus could only offer a few half-baked practical hints.

Army doctrine at that time proposed a spectrum of conflict roughly similar to that currently envisioned—but one described and analyzed hazily at the lower end of the continuum. A command of Bonesteel's size would refer to FM 100-15, *Field Service Regulations Larger Units* (corps to theater), for doctrinal guidance. The 1966 edition identified the extremes of the spectrum as cold war and general war ("unrestricted application of military force," i.e., nuclear combat), with limited war in the gray area between.

Korea in 1966 certainly fell short of general war. Was it a cold war or a limited war? The manual's authors defined cold war this way: "a state of international tension wherein political, economic, technological, sociological, psychological, paramilitary, and military measures, short of overt armed conflict involving regular military forces, are employed to achieve national objectives." That sounded like Korea, except there, regular forces had joined the fray on both sides, and there had been overt armed conflict, with more impending.

The Army described limited war as an "overt engagement" for limited ends with limited means. These examples were provided: "local aggression," "conventional war," and "limited nuclear war."¹⁶ Did Korea constitute "local aggression," whatever that meant? There had certainly been overt engagement.

This theoretical ambiguity characterized most of the U.S. Army doctrine of that period. Contemporary doctrine visualizes a more fully developed view of low-intensity conflict under the broad categories of peacekeeping,



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A U.S. Army freight train falls victim to saboteurs north of Seoul, Korea, 13 September 1967

Low-Intensity Conflict (Cold War): U.S.-ROK Versus DPRK

Peacekeeping:

- U.S. membership in Military Armistice Commission, Panmunjom.
- U.S.-ROK DMZ duties under the Korean Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953.

Combating Terrorism:

- U.S.-ROK DMZ and coast anti-infiltration operations.
- ROK police/military counterterrorist operations.
- U.S.-ROK military antiterrorism operations.

Counterinsurgency:

- U.S.-ROK intelligence operations.
- U.S.-ROK combined joint-service exercises.
- U.S.-ROK civil-military infrastructure development.
- U.S.-ROK humanitarian and civic assistance (U.S. Eighth Army Cold War Program).
- U.S.-ROK logistics operations.
- ROK populace and resources control operations.
- U.S.-ROK DMZ coast anti-infiltration operations.

Contingencies:

- U.S. shows of force (USS *Pueblo*, EC-121M incidents).

Midintensity Conflict (Limited War): U.S.-ROK versus DPRK (with PRC*/USSR Support)

U.S.-ROK conventional defense of the Republic of Korea.

High-Intensity Conflict (General War): U.S.-ROK versus DPRK and/or PRC and/or USSR

U.S.-ROK nuclear defense of the Republic of Korea.

U.S.-nuclear strikes on DPRK and/or PRC and/or USSR.

*People's Republic of China

Figure 5. The spectrum of conflict in Korea, 1966—69

combating terrorism, counterinsurgency, and contingencies.¹⁷ Each of these types of operations occurred during the Second Korean Conflict (see figure 5).

Today, U.S. Army field manuals (still too few, but some) explain how to approach such operations. But doctrinal writers of the 1960s, because they never really came to grips with the distinctive natures of limited versus cold wars, mainly avoided the whole mess. A reader poring over FM 100-15 would find no further references to cold or limited wars beyond the definitions noted above. If he dug around, a diligent man might unearth a single, bland paragraph on counterinsurgency or a short paragraph on unconventional warfare that explained the utility of pro-American partisans in enemy rear areas.¹⁸ The rest of the manual discussed what today would be called midintensity conflict. Basically, FM 100-15, like its many relatives, told soldiers how to refight World War II.

If one delved into the lower echelon division manual, FM 61-100 (1965 edition), one would find some practical, generic advice about small wars. The divisional doctrine devoted almost two whole pages to "Cold War Situations." It was a mixed bag, but at least it was something.

The doctrine writers had given the issue some thought. They warned of the need to consider political implications and restrictions on tactical methods and missions and warned a cold war commander to expect non-military, "unpredictable factors" to influence his traditional battlefield ways. In order to meet these demanding situations, the manual mentioned useful training subjects for a cold war force: civil-military relations, local language and customs, rules of engagement, patrolling, and counterinfiltration. Rotation of committed units was suggested to allow continued training of troops on these difficult subjects. The eventual UNC approach took heed of this information.

The rest of the material consisted of well-meaning drivel. One paragraph called infantry battalions "well suited for the control of mobs and for the suppression of riots and civil disorders." Another noted that armored cavalry and tanks could be "effective in quelling riots." Aviation might serve for reconnaissance, supply, liaison, and loudspeaker work; air assaults received little consideration. A concluding paragraph recommended the use of riot control chemicals as necessary. To read this, one might get the impression that cold war operations equaled urban riot suppression.

The divisional doctrine had two other subjects of interest, under separate headings. A half-page commentary on "counterinsurgency" called the division "particularly well suited" to such missions—although no particular proof supported this claim. In the "unconventional warfare" section, the authors offered a contrast to illustrate their points about guerrilla fighting. Whereas Special Forces (Green Berets) work in the enemy rear, "the conventional forces are most generally concerned with guerrilla warfare" in friendly areas.¹⁹ There was no discussion of how to conduct such operations, leading to the logical conclusion that they were to be handled in traditional ways by conventional units "well suited" to such actions.

With little to gain from the most common doctrinal sources, what of the more specialized manuals? The U.S. Army's "31-series" purported to address small wars, but by the 1960s, these works generally offered guidance written by and for Special Forces. While theoretically interesting, they all presumed the availability of Special Forces elements in theater. Bonesteel had no Green Berets in Korea. He did, however, have a low-intensity conflict.

Only one "31-series" manual directly addressed conventional forces in unconventional wars: FM 31-16, *Counter guerrilla Operations*. This work encouraged the U.S. commander to employ his superior mobility and fire-power to find, fix, fight, and finish guerrillas. Local forces were only useful as trackers, interpreters, and in some static security jobs. Killing guerrillas

equaled victory. Standard U.S. Army tactics and powerful U.S. Army units would suffice for that. Since American forces were to carry the brunt of the fight to kill guerrillas, it made sense that they should be used as mobile reserves, not tied down in defense of fixed locations, such as at borders.

The authors of FM 31-16 recommended that frontier security operations "be conducted by indigenous forces to economize on the available (U.S.) military combat power which can be better utilized against the guerrilla force." To handle a trace like the DMZ against an unconventional threat, FM 31-16 would turn the whole thing over to the South Koreans in order to free up stronger U.S. units to pounce on guerrillas in the interior.²⁰ That concept, described in four pages, was about the only printed U.S. Army doctrine that specifically applied to Bonesteel's predicament in Korea. And it was wrong.

Obviously, perfect hindsight enables one to find much fault with U.S. Army LIC doctrine of the 1960s. But at the time, most of it had yet to be called into question—nor would it be until much later, well after the end of the Vietnam War.²¹ Nothing written or taught as U.S. Army doctrine discussed peacekeeping, actions against terrorists, or contingency operations under any heading, even though U.S. forces, including those in Korea, did such missions throughout the 1960s. Doctrinal authors of that era also appeared blissfully unaware of the political dangers of a "go it alone" Americanized approach to small wars.

So not much applicable doctrine existed, and what did might well be considered counterproductive. Given that Bonesteel's U.S. and ROK forces had been steeped in this inadequate doctrine, two alternatives existed. First, the United Nations Command could fight a conventional war against the North Korean infiltrators, modifying standard U.S. Army tactics as necessary to adjust to local conditions. This reflected the choice eventually adopted in Vietnam, where, under this approach, General Westmoreland best expressed the preferred means for defeating insurgents and intruders: "Firepower."²² Of course, in Korea, that probably meant a major war—and hence failure to achieve one of Bonesteel's principal strategic objectives. With war raging in Vietnam, Bonesteel knew that he had to stop the DPRK in the low-intensity arena—not escalate to the midintensity realm. One Asian war was enough. "I was trying to maintain the peace," he said, "so we wouldn't have to fight another one in Korea."²³

A second path beckoned. It would involve junking the approved doctrinal framework and inventing unique tactics suited to Korea. Although appealing to Bonesteel's unorthodox streak, this course of action entailed a huge risk. Could the Americans and ROKs, trained for conventional combat, play their required parts in such an effort? True, the general could retrain his own U.S. Army units, subject to the debilitations of inadequate strength and short tours. The real challenges involved dealing with the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marines, and especially the ROKs, who enshrined U.S. doctrine as near holy writ. Bonesteel did not control their

internal structures, training, or doctrine—save by whatever suasion he could milk from his powers of operational control.

Faced with a doctrinal void and the desire to keep things at a low intensity, Bonesteel trusted his instincts. He cut the umbilical cord. The United Nations Command began to invent its own doctrine to meet its needs. “So,” recounted Bonesteel, “we developed these tactics and efforts to get ahead, especially in the DMZ, and I was looking for any kind of idea.”²⁴

Bonesteel’s Special Working Group issued a preliminary report in January 1967. By February, the UNC had started to implement the key recommendations. Based on this study and his personal investigations, Bonesteel recognized that his troops had to conduct three types of operations to beat back the North Korean surge. The first involved “developing a guard against infiltration across the DMZ.” The second comprised a similar naval effort along the seacoasts. The third type of operation conceived of counter guerrilla operations in the interior—“an entirely different concept” from the first two tasks.²⁵ All three types of operations had to be accomplished without jeopardizing the conventional defense of the ROK.

Anti-Infiltration: The DMZ

Of the three tasks, the land anti-infiltration role most resembled a conventional mission. A manual prepared from the U.S. Eighth Army experience of the late 1960s said: “Border security/anti-infiltration operations follow all the normal doctrinal principles found in the traditional concepts of defense.”²⁶ If a force knew how to conduct an area defense, it could guard the DMZ against both conventional and unconventional threats.

In light of the real dangers of a northern invasion, it only made sense to employ the bulk of the conventionally trained U.S.-ROK forces doing the sorts of things that they would do in a midintensity war. They would not necessarily maintain those skills chasing guerrillas through the hinterlands of South Korea. Bonesteel explained that “the front-line US and ROK divisions are responsible for both the DMZ security mission and the defense mission.”²⁷

That sounded like the same old approach along the DMZ, and in a sense, it was. There was nothing inherently wrong in *what* the UNC forces were doing; *how* they were doing it created the trouble. Traditional doctrine alone guaranteed more casualties at the hands of KPA elite forces.

Bonesteel could not sit back and let his subordinates resolve these issues. American officers already had their hands full simply running their understrength, underofficered units. The Koreans, for their part, equated most kinds of improvisation to disobedience. With Kim Il-sung’s special forces promising a rapid expansion of the campaign in the spring, Bonesteel needed a comprehensive approach, not just a spotty amalgam of random experimentation. After soliciting other views, Bonesteel decided how to fight on the DMZ. As part of his plan, he directed and, more often, encouraged

and disseminated others' good ideas. His most important initiatives affected tactics along the DMZ, but he made sure to enhance these new procedures by looser rules of engagement and an integrated DMZ rotation and training plan.

Bonesteel addressed anti-infiltration tactics that detected, delayed, and neutralized intruders.²⁸ Though fairly capable at neutralization, both the Americans and the South Koreans needed work at detecting and delaying infiltrators. Prior to 1967, most detection occurred by chance, and delay was bought by bloody meeting engagements. Throughout 1967, the UNC evolved a four-layer defense against infiltration. Not only did the defense have to work, but it had to comply with the armistice agreement and do so without draining troops needed for ground defense against conventional invasion. The UNC tested its concepts in the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and the ROK 21st Infantry Division. In a bureaucratic maneuver worthy of the experienced Washington insider that he was, Bonesteel cajoled the U.S. Army Combat Developments Command into giving him some \$30 million to create a "DMZ/Barrier testbed" based on his two experimental divisions.²⁹ In these two divisions, and eventually across the peninsula, four anti-infiltration tiers fell into place. Patrols in the DMZ; guard posts in the DMZ; a new barrier defense system; and new, mobile quick-reaction forces cooperated to find infiltrators, fix them, and destroy them (see figure 6).³⁰

Patrols had been going out into the DMZ since the armistice, but for the Americans, these had degenerated into rather pro forma affairs in the long, dull decade after 1953. The 2 November ambush changed that: "The days are gone," mused a U.S. sergeant, "when you could ride out to the DMZ with just a driver, wearing a soft cap."³¹ By mid-1967, U.S. patrolling became a very serious business. An American colonel explained that these patrols endeavored "by their presence to deny the area to the north Koreans and to search for signs of enemy activity, hiding places, and infiltration routes."

Squads and platoons patrolled, sometimes as units, sometimes as ad hoc formations. Armistice rules prevented use of machine guns and recoilless rifles. Routes wove in front of, behind, and between the string of guard posts planted in the allied half of the DMZ. Typically, each company had one patrol out at all times, with more after dark and during periods of tension. Patrols tended to go out for twenty-four hours, reconnoitering by day and establishing ambushes at night. Compositions, routes, and timings changed in attempts to confuse the KPA.

Patrolling received command emphasis, but U.S. units never achieved the proficiency of their ROK allies, let alone that of the stealthy North Korean recon troops. A brigade commander conceded that U.S. units "took the most casualties while on patrol."³² Some of these losses could be attributed to skilled enemies, but many U.S. deaths and wounds arose from inexperienced, inept, or inattentive leadership. Concerned senior commanders tried to reach down and provide the leadership absent from U.S. units. One

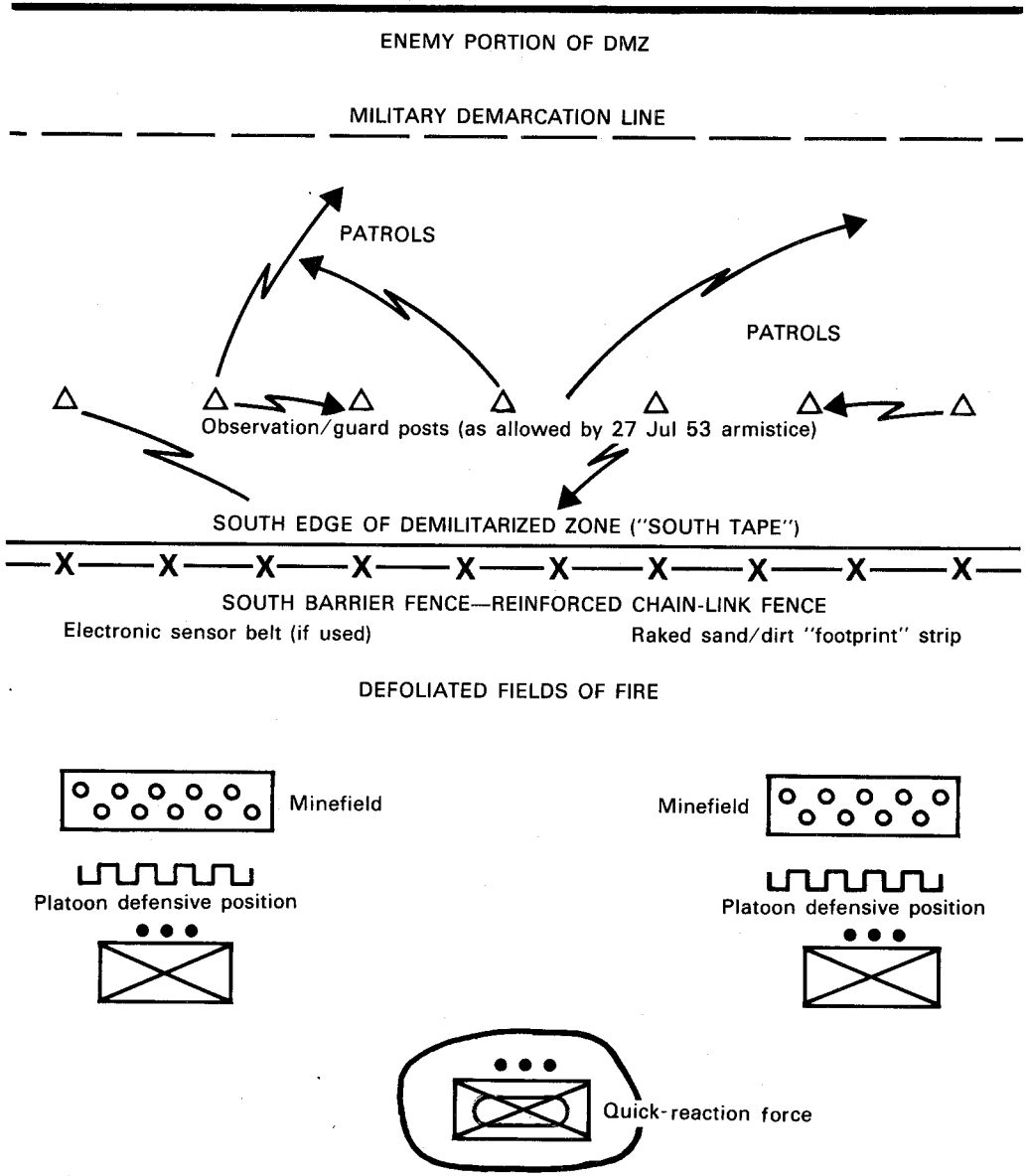


Figure 6. UNC anti-infiltration dispositions (idealized example)

brigade commander required an officer from each company to be on patrol in the DMZ at all times and supplemented this order with "frequent officers' calls, continuous supervision, on-the-spot corrections, and some wholesale butt-chewings."³³ Unnecessary casualties occurred anyway, right down to the end. Bonesteel acknowledged this sloppy U.S. patrolling by caustically granting that "the best counterinfiltration devices were the eyes, ears, and brains of the GI, if you could keep him awake."³⁴

The ROKs took casualties, too, despite their better discipline. Proportionate to their strength, though—and even with their many other roles—the ROK Army maintained a lower casualty rate than the American troops.³⁵ The U.S. forces' proximity to Seoul and the main infiltration routes accounted for part of this. On the whole, though, the ROK Army's more cohesive and rigorously trained units patrolled more effectively than their American allies. Did all of these patrols catch many North Koreans? Statistically speaking, they did not. But their constant presence, like policemen on neighborhood beats, complicated and delayed KPA intrusion plans.

In a similar way, the small squad and platoon guard posts in the Demilitarized Zone served as static surveillance sites and bases of fire for beleaguered patrols. Americans stretched the armistice provisions by sand-bagging and entrenching these positions. Despite armistice prohibitions against such weapons in the zone, troops often kept machine guns and recoilless rifles hidden but ready for use if needed.³⁶

U.S. units rotated through these posts for stretches of seven to ten days. Except during relatively rare, direct KPA attacks, the troops followed a fairly standard routine. During the day, soldiers on guard post duty rested, trained on small-unit tactics, and rebuilt or extended their field fortifications. At night, they came to full alert. Thanks to Bonesteel's \$30 million windfall, the posts often had night-vision devices to watch the DMZ. Hand flares and searchlights also contributed to visibility.

As with patrols, the ROKs played the outpost game better than the Americans. Some U.S. soldiers, said one officer, treated the guard posts as rest areas. Some did not wash or maintain equipment unless closely supervised. Inspections revealed "dirty, bent, and generally unserviceable" ammunition. Part of this resulted from primitive conditions in the newer bunker complexes, especially during the brutal winter. Mostly, though, it was another symptom of weak junior leadership.³⁷

To support the guard posts, Bonesteel, employing his engineering skills, introduced a new barrier defense system incorporating common backyard chain-link fence. The barrier defense system ran along the south trace of the DMZ. Nagging armistice regulations did not apply here, so the UNC could turn its full panoply of assets to the problems of detecting, delaying, and neutralizing infiltrators.

The system centered around a chain-link fence, ten feet tall, topped by triple strands of concertina wire and reinforced by interwoven saplings and steel engineer pickets. A narrow, raked-sand path paralleled the fence on the allied side to highlight footprints. Just past the sand strip lay a 120-meter-wide kill zone cleared with plows, chain saws, axes, and chemical defoliants. In that area, mines and tanglefoot wire fronted a line of conventional defensive positions. From there, defenders used a final protective line of interlocking machine guns and on-call mortar and artillery concentrations to dominate the kill zone. Observation towers stood at

intervals along the trace to permit clear view of the open areas. Local patrols checked the fence line and covered dead ground between positions.

It took a combined U.S.-Korean engineer force about two months to finish the test fence in the American sector. Along with the fence, engineers laid mines, built roads to allow quick movements laterally and forward, and cleared dozens of helicopter landing zones. Similar efforts went on in front of the ROK 21st Infantry Division.³⁸

Due to his agreement with Combat Developments Command, Bonesteel required his test units to try out a veritable toy store of futuristic Starlight Scope night-vision devices, helicopter-mounted "people sniffers," electrical fence proposals, and unattended ground sensors. It was, after all, the heyday of the "McNamara Line" in Vietnam and the supposed advent of the electronic battlefield. The night illuminating devices proved very useful, and one model of electrical fence functioned well, although it cost too much for widespread use.

The sensors posed special problems. Various types detected seismic vibrations, ground pressure changes, body odors, magnetic disturbances, infrared sources, and acoustic disruptions. Unfortunately, rain, wind, passing trucks, and wandering animals tripped the sensors so often that their indications proved meaningless. Moreover, soldiers detested emplacing, guarding, and maintaining the temperamental things. Scientists brought model after model for evaluation, but none really worked.

The fence and its ancillary devices came in for harsh criticisms. Whispers in the Pentagon spoke of "Bonesteel's Folly." Correspondent Wesley Pruden, Jr., remarked that "many Texas ranches have fences against frisky steers that are almost as effective." The notion of merely fencing off the ROK seemed simplistic, and the continual misadventures with the sensors only made the attempt seem more futile. Sneering mounted as the fence began to show triangular cuts six to ten inches above the ground. UNC intelligence officers estimated that it took about thirty to forty seconds for the North Koreans to cut through.³⁹



Troops patrolling the rugged terrain along the DMZ

These critiques missed the mark. Bonesteel had no special love for new technology—only for new ideas. By accepting the Combat Developments Command funding and designation as a test bed, Bonesteel had to tolerate the bad with the good. At the same time, the parade of scientists pumped badly needed money and equipment into the UNC's bargain-basement war effort.

In preference to a space-age cordon, the general promoted pragmatic answers. He particularly enjoyed an idea developed in the ROK 21st Infantry Division. The enterprising Korean commander planted a hybrid strain of very light-colored buckwheat all along the fence. "You could spot something in that white area at about three times the distance you could where you didn't have the white background," observed Bonesteel. It worked quite well with the night scopes too. Plus, the ROKs harvested and ate the wheat in the autumn. Bonesteel made it a point to show the buckwheat to visiting scientists. "I was not looking for a technological solution," summarized the general.⁴⁰

Bonesteel never expected the fence to block enemy infiltration. "It was never intended to be a barrier but was designed to hamper easy movement and provided clear observation on either side of it. . . . It was hard to get through one way or the other without leaving traces," said Bonesteel. These traces served to alert the other new markers on the board—the mobile quick-reaction forces (QRFs).⁴¹

All echelons, both U.S. and ROK, kept QRFs. They varied in size but often consisted of a reinforced squad in each forward company, a platoon at battalion level, a company at brigade, and a battalion/squadrons per division. Usually built around mechanized infantry, tanks, armored cavalry, or even the few available helicopters, these units waited—locked and loaded—to neutralize KPA intruders. The U.S. 2d Infantry Division supplemented its QRF with a five-platoon Counter Agent Company drawn from the division's KATUSAs.⁴² The QRFs went to many false alarms, but they also tracked down and eliminated quite a few infiltrators.

No one part of the DMZ defenses could stem infiltration, but the sum of the four layers produced a synergistic effect that surely made KPA efforts much more daunting. The KPA had found it challenging but quite possible to slip through the old network of DMZ patrols and posts. Reinforced patrols and guard posts made that passage less sure, and the barrier fence and associated quick-reaction forces threatened dangers going in or out. All of this had been done at little monetary cost and virtually no change in the UNC's readiness for midintensity war.

Good as the system might be, the crucial barrier fence that tied it together still spanned only two divisional fronts in 1967—pending more funding. Bonesteel could not guarantee added resources sufficient to finish the fence. He could and did take actions to make all of his DMZ forces more effective, with or without the new barrier.

In response to the strong recommendations of his Special Working Group, General Bonesteel loosened the rules of engagement in early 1967. "The north Koreans were using our half of the DMZ as a kind of sanctuary," noted the general. "They'd go in and camp there for three or four nights and scout out our guard posts and the little ROK posts at the southern end of the DMZ, then they would raid them. So, we changed the rules a bit."

The UN commander in chief gave the commanding generals of I Corps (Group) and ROK First Army the authority to employ artillery and mortar fires against known enemy elements in or south of the DMZ. He also permitted these subordinates to use artillery and mortars against KPA units shooting from hostile territory. In mid-April, ROK units made use of these modifications when they fired howitzer rounds across the DMZ in response to a large KPA probe. This was the first UN use of artillery since the armistice.⁴³

Bonesteel justified his changes in terms of his "overriding responsibility for taking care of the troops." When he sent a copy of his message back to Washington, he remembered: "I didn't ask for approval, but I gave them the opportunity to disapprove."⁴⁴ The Joint Chiefs and Secretary Robert S. McNamara let the new rules stand as issued.

American soldiers have always enjoyed the right of self-defense, especially on the troubled DMZ. Bonesteel's explicit new rules of engagement made it clear that U.S. troops need not wait to get shot at. Any infiltrator trying to cross the DMZ became fair game. The news made an immediate impression on the fighting front. Asked by a reporter if his men could fire on hostiles, a brigade staff officer retorted: "Yes, sir, we can and we do." Another officer explained that "we do not fire across the MDL unless fired upon. However, when North Korean troops cross the MDL, we attempt to capture or kill them."⁴⁵

If taken in isolation, these new rules might have led to the same massive use of firepower that often pummeled snipers and infiltrators in Vietnam. This did not happen in Korea. The ROKs used significant artillery and mortar fires along the DMZ only three times during the Second Korean Conflict; they used big guns sparingly in their later counterinsurgent sweeps farther to the south. The U.S. units never employed their mighty supporting fires.⁴⁶ A number of South Korean civilians lived within artillery range of the DMZ and in the vicinity of counterinsurgent operations. Certainly, many would have suffered had things been done differently.

Why did the allies forfeit their most responsive, devastating form of combat power? Partially, this reflected the nature of combat in this conflict. Possibly for fear of retaliation from the massed, capable UN artillery, North Korean gunners on the DMZ seldom fired their own tubes unless covering the withdrawal of an agent team in contact. Sea intruders could not move rapidly inland if forced to lug bulky cannons or even mortars ashore, and KPN watercraft did not loiter to deliver fire support at clandestine drop

sites. Armistice provisions also figured in, with neither side anxious to commit massive violations and provoke a midintensity war.

General Bonesteel's repeated emphasis upon stopping the northerners with manpower, not firepower, probably resulted in the UN resorting to less cannon gunnery along the DMZ and in the ROK interior. Detecting and slowing KPA agents could cause these lightly armed teams to be pin-pointed and exposed to the direct fires of allied small units, which were more than able to finish off the hostiles. Even the threat of running into such responses confounded KPA planners. By making infiltration harder and by not killing North Koreans, the UN regulated its response to aggression. When it got too hard to stay covert, Bonesteel thought that Kim Il-sung would have to turn off his shadow war or risk accelerating it into conventional combat.

Artillery fires might contribute a little to the neutralization stage of anti-infiltration tactics, but in general, barraging a squad or platoon amounted to overkill, with potentially crippling side effects. The UN commander in chief's reticence to use artillery flew in the face of the American custom of "send a bullet, not a man" and might have even cost a few allied lives and wounds. But Bonesteel single-mindedly pursued his overall objective. He knew that blowing up a friendly country and its friendly populace merited little in a guerrilla struggle, even if a few more infiltrators, or a few less friendlies, died. Keeping the allegiance of the South Koreans mattered more than kill ratios. "I wasn't much for body count," remarked Bonesteel.⁴⁷ The UN's big guns remained silent.



Army

Watchful members of Company C, 3d Battalion, 23d Infantry, survey the DMZ for infiltrators

In addition to tactical innovations and liberalized rules of engagement, Bonesteel also ensured that his DMZ divisions instituted a sensible DMZ training and rotation plan (see figure 7). Here again, the general followed the recommendations of his Special Working Group. The unique aspects of the DMZ required special, intensive training, especially in light of the Americans' usual problems with personnel turbulence and inexperienced leaders. Conversely, units stuck on the DMZ too long might lose their ability to maneuver on a midintensity battlefield. Saddled with both the low-intensity and midintensity missions, the U.S. and ROK armies compromised and went with an orderly rotation. Mandatory, exhaustive pre-DMZ training, to include orientation patrols in the zone for small-unit leaders, reduced the vulnerability of newly arrived battalions on the zone. Each battalion also was exposed to only its "fair share" of DMZ danger—an important morale consideration.

As they trained for the DMZ, units mounted local patrols in the vicinity of their camps. These were not just dull practice runs; a threat to the rear, though not as bad as on the zone, really existed. North Korean terrorist bombings, minings, and snipping—exemplified by the May 1967 demolition of an American barracks—helped make all patrols important. Units in depth, like the U.S. 7th Infantry Division, grew especially adept at conducting these security measures.

In the process, both U.S. and ROK forces sharpened their battle focus throughout their forward unit areas, keeping all battalions actively involved, not just the forward units and QRFs. Consequently, terrorist strikes dropped off in 1968, even though other types of incidents peaked in that violent

Training

Week	0	Battalion notified of upcoming DMZ duty.
Weeks	1—7	Squad/platoon training; weapons qualification; "Quick Kill" courses; patrolling techniques.
Weeks	8—13	Company/battalion exercises; Expert Infantryman's Badge Test; Battalion Operational Readiness Test (including 17- to 25-mile foot march).
Weeks	14—16	Barrier operations; DMZ reaction/orientation course; night firing; sniper marksmanship; division command inspection.

Rotation Rules

1. Each battalion served about four months.
2. One new battalion relieved the most "senior" DMZ battalion each full-moon phase (about once a month).
3. The brigade headquarters (3d Brigade, U.S. 2d Infantry Division and "4th Brigade" [actually 2d Brigade, U.S. 7th Infantry Division] did not rotate.
4. The U.S. 2d Infantry Division Quick-Reaction Force was often located in the area of operations of the DMZ brigades and usually operated under the operational control of a forward brigade.

Sources: United States Army, 2d Infantry Division, 3d Brigade, "Annual Historical Supplement 1968"; United States Army, 2d Infantry Division, 2d Brigade, "Annual Historical Supplement 1969"; and Colonel William R. Guthrie, United States Army, "Korea: The Other DMZ," *Infantry* 60 (March-April 1970):18.

Figure 7. U.S. maneuver battalion DMZ training and rotation plan (initiated October 1967)

year. The allies fully exploited training patrols to promote rear-area security and thus quelled the terrorist challenge while increasing proficiency for the primary DMZ task.

In the U.S. sector, these changes went into effect during the autumn. One more battalion, drawn from the U.S. 7th Infantry Division, joined the 3d Brigade, U.S. 2d Infantry Division, along the zone. This beefed up U.S. forces to four frontline battalions and one QRF.⁴⁸ ROK units took similar measures. Even allowing for this modest increase of strength in and along the DMZ, the vast majority of U.S. Eighth Army's subordinate I Corps (Group) and ROK First Army remained off the zone, ready to deal with a conventional ground invasion.

Anti-Infiltration: The Sea Approaches

Unlike the effort to contain infiltration along the DMZ, the fight against sea intruders portended nothing but headaches. The Republic of Korea's coruscated coasts stretched almost twenty-eight times the length of the DMZ—an incredible frontier to try to protect. Without any U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ships at his disposal, and with his U.S. Air Force squadrons busy watching for a North Korean air strike, General Bonesteel had to rely almost wholly on the ROKs to do the mission.

This sort of sea operation was not merely a variation on a conventional mission. It bore little resemblance to normal U.S. Navy tasks. In America, such duties devolve upon the Coast Guard and local police forces. U.S. sailors had their hands full trying to generate a coastal interdiction capability off Vietnamese shores. Few human or material resources could be spared for Korea.⁴⁹ Bonesteel's tiny U.S. Navy component could offer little in the way of relevant advice or equipment.

Bonesteel was no sailor, but he recognized the broad outlines of the problem. With the help of U.S. and ROK seamen, airmen, and soldiers, he went to work. Halting infiltration by water required a sea barrier, a land-based detection system to identify infiltrators, some means of local defense to fix the enemy, and on-call QRFs to finish the job.⁵⁰ Some parts of these systems existed, although not always in useful form.

The sea barrier sought to sort enemy craft from among the hundreds of South Korean fishing vessels that plied the ROK coasts. An ideal system would feature long-duration radar-equipped patrol planes (like the U.S. Navy's P-3 Orion) ranging out to 100 kilometers. Ground-based coastal radar, scanning out to twenty kilometers, backed up these aircraft. The planes and radars would handle initial detection and pass suspicious surface contacts on to patrol boats working twenty to sixty kilometers out. Heliborne boarding parties and fighter-bombers on strip alert waited, ready to join the fray if the patrol boats needed help. Such an integrated structure depended upon a lot of communications and reliable radars.⁵¹

In 1967, South Korea's sea barrier consisted mainly of the small ROK Navy. This force totaled a paltry seventy-two vessels—only about half in

any way suited for coastal duties. The ROK Air Force also stood ready to dispatch a few flights of jet fighter-bombers when called. Neither service had long-duration patrol planes, advanced radars, or adequate communications. Only a few coastal radar sites existed, mostly near ROK or U.S. Navy facilities.⁵²

The sea barrier provided a nuisance to infiltrators, but distinguishing friend from foe confounded the ROKs even in those cases where they thought they had targets. Pitched engagements with intruders rarely occurred. The only solid success of 1967 came in April, when navy (ROKN) patrol boats and air force (ROKAF) fighters cooperated to sink a North Korean espionage vessel.⁵³ In the main, though, the ROK sea barrier was an ambitious enterprise that could not directly suppress infiltration.

Land-based detection relied mainly on about 200,000 unarmed coast watchers who reported to the National Police. These local people, occasionally supplemented by ROK Army reservists, patrolled the beach-fronts. They rarely detected any landings in progress but often found traces of landings that activated reaction forces and led to kills and captures. In June, coast watchers near Samchok found one of the KPN's specially designed agent boats stranded on the shore. Clues from this boat led to a massive search, unearthed a talkative prisoner, and unmasked other operatives.⁵⁴

The unarmed coast watchers could detect, but they could hardly hope to engage, armed special forces teams. In 1967, no armed local units were on hand to delay intruders until regulars arrived. Provincial police lacked the firepower, mobility, training, and numbers to do the job.⁵⁵ Many trails grew cold while diligent watchmen waited for help to arrive.

A village militia, like that in the DPRK, could have provided this missing piece to the anti-infiltration puzzle. But with demonstrations and rioting in Seoul during the May–June 1967 elections and clear indications of a northern guerrilla effort under way, President Park showed an understandable reluctance to issue arms to the general populace. Instead, the ROKs relied on military quick-reaction forces. By late 1967, these included ROK Army regulars, reservists, and men of the hundred-odd new Combat Police companies organized from the National Police ranks.⁵⁶

With few helicopters and few communications links (either radio or telephone) to the coast watchers or each other, these strong forces hardly ever arrived in time to catch KPA infiltration teams before they dispersed. The ROKs fragmented command between the disparate agencies involved, which discouraged speedy reactions. Kills and captures resulted—but only after prodigious expenditures of time and resources and often only with the loan of the few available American Huey helicopters.⁵⁷

Sea infiltration could not be stopped, but the interlopers could be tracked and eliminated—if the ROK properly coordinated its activities. The humble coast watchers exemplified the sort of solution that might make up

for missing radars and absent patrol planes. But in 1967, the Korean government was not yet ready to go that route.

Counterinsurgency: The Interior

The Samchok agent boat gave the first hard evidence that the northerners had begun earnest preparations for the third and decisive phase of Kim Il-sung's unconventional campaign. "They [Kim's agents] were targeted against a specific region or province of the south. They were developing, in effect, an infrastructure, the gauleiters, the pseudo-government officials," concluded Bonesteel.⁵⁸

The South Koreans immediately recognized the hazard. Alarmed, they turned to the Americans. Bonesteel remembered: "They pretty much wanted CINCUNC to be responsible for anti-agent activities all over the country." The general flatly rejected this. "I reminded them," he said, "they were a sovereign country, and I, as the UN commander, was only responsible for the DMZ and the sea approaches. However, internal security was their responsibility." With that statement, Bonesteel reaffirmed the U.S. policy in effect since 1950.⁵⁹

As tempting as full authority might have appeared, General Bonesteel knew it was an illusion. Most likely, once they saw the true magnitude of the measures necessary, the ROKs would not cede to an American the degree of domestic political power essential to meet an incipient insurgency. Bonesteel could end up with responsibility without authority, and the ROK government, thinking that the UNC was doing the job, might well become dangerously vulnerable to North Korea's unconventional campaign.

But what if the ROKs awarded Bonesteel unprecedented prerogatives? That might well provide an even better opening for the DPRK. Kim Il-sung, who regularly charged Bonesteel with such dictatorial powers anyway, would point to the situation as proof that Park's administration really was composed of nothing but puppets. Thus, Kim could declare himself the only true Korean nationalist, an assertion hard for Park to refute with an American general running much of his country. That might have been enough to sway sympathies in the ROK villages.

So Bonesteel stuck to material assistance and advice. He loaned his allies his precious helicopters and U.S. communications equipment. He even parceled out a few valuable A-Teams, coaxed during the summer from the 1st Special Forces on Okinawa; the Green Berets worked in the Taebaek and southern Chiri Mountain regions.⁶⁰ But the American general adamantly refused to run this internal war for the South Koreans.

ROK counterinsurgency operations, while not lacking in enthusiasm or scale, granted the initiative to the Communists. Throwing unit after unit of regulars and police at possible contacts made sense as long as the contacts remained few in number and uncoordinated with DPRK conventional threats. Both of those variables looked certain to change for the worse as

Kim Il-sung's forces shifted into the guerrilla uprising phase of their campaign plan. Confused command structures, lack of dedicated counterinsurgency units, and a purely reactive mind-set all conspired to render the vigorous ROK operations inefficient and, too often, ineffective. During his frequent meetings with President Park, Ministry of Defense officials, intelligence directors, and ROK armed forces chiefs, Bonesteel urged them to unify command of the counterinsurgency effort. The ROKs politely listened but continued in their own way. "They made some mistakes," admitted Bonesteel.

As it was, ROK Army commanders and National Police officials alternately took charge of ad hoc task forces, depending upon the initial estimate of the threat and who happened to be nearby. Army counterintelligence and the Korean CIA ran independent missions, only occasionally consulting with the army or police. While not the best way to do business against guerrillas, this diffused arrangement nicely balanced the key power brokers in Park's administration, allowing each a piece of the action.⁶¹

For the same reason, the ROKs chose not to establish any special counterinsurgency units. Which agency would get the new forces, and how would they affect that agency's influence in state affairs? These were important considerations. Besides, the current delicate balance seemed to be getting the job done. To date, the army-police lash-up had worked, just as it had from 1950—53.⁶²

Finally, the ROK government responded to North Korean insurgent threats as they arose. No concerted effort mobilized the South Korean people against the guerrilla organizers. Park and his lieutenants failed to link their military and police operations with an alternative mass movement to counter Kim Il-sung's *Juche* ideology (a Korean nationalist interpretation of Marx, Lenin, and Mao).

Park and his men expected their people to report irregularities. Still, Park chose not to trust his citizens to defend themselves. Unarmed and mostly uninformed, the people posed no threat to Park—but neither did they threaten outside agitators. Having created a coup and seen plenty of public unrest, Park played it safe. In doing so, however, he missed an early opportunity to harness the energies of what turned out to be a very loyal population.⁶³ He would correct this oversight under dire pressure early in 1968.

Yet the lessons learned in counterinsurgent warfare during 1967 did not go unrecorded or unanalyzed—far from it. Bonesteel and Park coordinated to produce two important documents near the end of 1967. Together, the UNC Counterinfiltration-Guerrilla Concept Requirements Plan and the ROK Presidential Instruction #18 charted the future course of combined operations against DPRK unconventional pressures.

The UNC plan codified all of the successful improvisations of the year. It addressed the DMZ, the coasts, and the interior. The core of the plan lay in its forecasts of necessary items: helicopters, radios, xenon search-

lights, night-vision devices, and the vital chain-link fencing. If someone asked, Bonesteel had his shopping list ready. In 1967, nobody was asking.

The ROK presidential instruction tied into the UNC plan. It showed that all of Bonesteel's arguments and suggestions had not fallen on deaf ears. When implemented in full, his instruction would remedy the command controversies and lack of dedicated counterinsurgency formations. Park directed the establishment of a national coordinating council to reduce command friction. Under this concept, even the previously unfettered intelligence people came to heel. The president spelled out clear chains of command for all classes of incidents ranging from individual agent sightings to province-level unrest. The ROK president also ordered the creation of eight (later ten) new ROK Army counterinfiltration battalions, as well as further expansion of the new Combat Police. He stopped short of authorizing a popular militia, however.

In the words of Bonesteel's aide, Lieutenant Colonel Walter B. Clark, "Presidential Instruction #18 was a total systems approach to the infiltration problem." This all required several months to fall completely into place, but important decisions had been made.

So the Americans needed money, and the South Koreans needed time. Despite painful casualties suffered in the learning process, the Republic of Korea remained intact and strong. Bonesteel thought they were on the right course. He would find out soon enough, as the Second Korean Conflict moved to its climax in the cold snows of a grim January.
