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Borderland Intimacies:  
GIs, Koreans, and American Military Landscapes in Cold War Korea

by

Whitney Taejin Hwang

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Kerwin Klein, Chair

Professor Andrew Barshay

Professor John Lie

Fall 2010

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## Abstract

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As the largest contingent of Americans in Korea, the US military played an essential role in the cold war objectives of both containment and integration. The GIs represented more than “hard power” expressions of the American military might, as they became “soft power” ambassadors of the US. For many young American GIs, Korea was the “first strange place” they encountered outside of the United States and their experiences in this cold war frontier transformed Korea, the United States, and themselves. This study focuses on the “soft power” wielded by the GIs in their interactions with Koreans on a distinctly militarized cultural landscape in Korea. The American military installations and their camptown communities constituted an “intimate” cold war borderland between the United States and South Korea. Camps occupied hearts of cities and bordered farm communities. New cities and towns grew around foreign installations, and the guests and the hosts constantly negotiated over the impacts of the built environments. Camptowns served as extensions of the military camps as well as literal and symbolic buffers between the foreign military and the greater Korea. Although located on the peripheral-edge of Korean society, marginalized as a place of “dispensable” people, violent clashes, and sexual exploitations, camptowns also represented an indispensable-edge for postwar Korea. Camps and camptowns presented opportunities of employment and foreign currency earnings for the economic development, as well as important locus of desired American culture. Moreover, these spaces came to be an important “origin” place for transpacific migration for many Koreans. The ways in which the GIs interacted with Koreans in this intimate borderland, therefore, produced both cold war integration as well as an “imperfect” imperialism. This study from the “ground-up” of Koreans and GIs, and of the ramifications and living legacies of these landscapes, brings together a social and policy history of the greater US-Korea relations.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
List of Figures	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
I. Introduction: Borderland Intimacies in America's Cold War Frontier	1
II. From Postwar Periphery to Cold War Center: American Military Transpacific Migration to Korea, 1945-1953	17
III. "What We Are Doing Here": The American Military in Cold War Korea, 1954-1971	49
IV. An Indispensable Edge: American Military Camptowns in Postwar Korea, 1954-1971	87
V. "Homecoming": Amerasian Migration from Korea to America, 1970s-1980s	120
VI. Conclusion: Living Legacies of the Intimate Cold War	147
Bibliography	168

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Spring in Daechuri	13-14
Figure 2: “Anjeong Shopping Mall” and Camp Humphreys	15-16
Figure 3: Building 2552	46
Figure 4: Japanese Colonial Foundation	47
Figure 5: Memorial Circle	48
Figure 6: Korean Base Employees	79
Figure 7: Beyond the Barbed Wire	80
Figure 8: Peoples and Scenes of Korea, 1958 and 1968	81
Figure 9: The Greater Yongsan, 1958-59	82
Figure 10: Quonset Barracks of the 83 <sup>rd</sup> Ordinance Battalion, 1968	83
Figure 11: Constructing Little America	84
Figure 12: Hybrid Structure	85
Figure 13: “What We Are Doing Here”	86
Figure 14: Camptown Scenes: Osan City, 1968	114-15
Figure 15: Camptown Signs: Seoku Village, 1968	116-17
Figure 16: “After the Hair-shaving Incident”	118
Figure 17: “Peculiar Disease”	118
Figure 18: “Latest Gossip on the Women’s Head Shaven Incident”	119
Figure 19: “Truck Full of PX Articles Stolen”	119
Figure 20: Horizontal Yongsan, Vertical Seoul	165
Figure 21: Camptown Closings	166
Figure 22: Camptowns Continued	167

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## I. Introduction

### Borderland Intimacies in America's Cold War Frontier

#### Spring in Daechuri

The spring of 2007 in Daechuri<sup>1</sup> was eerily quiet. Withered peppers hung from yellowed vines in small garden plots near abandoned homes. In what should have been a bustling planting season in this agricultural village in South Korea (hereafter Korea), the fields stood unreachable behind razor wire and guards. A pile of broken cement debris and twisted steel, the remains of the village elementary school, served as a backdrop to the closing ceremony being held in the former schoolyard. The roar of bulldozers and wrecking balls only accentuated the desolation of the empty streets. The silence of this spring contrasted sharply with the previous year's explosions. In the spring of 2006, villagers of Daechuri and nearby Doduri defied the Korean government directed relocation. Supporters of the farmers from civil organizations, labor unions, and student groups also descended on these small villages to protest against the planned expansion of a foreign military base.<sup>2</sup> During the violent height of the confrontation, Daechuri and Doduri became infamous for images of bloodied farmers and activists clashing with Korean policemen in riot gear and then razor wire being driven into the planting fields to keep the farmers from the land.<sup>3</sup> Daechuri and Doduri held national attention during the spring of 2006, yet a year later on April 7, 2007, only about 150 villagers and their supporters quietly marked the end of these villages as places on the map (Figure 1).

These two farming villages shared the misfortune of being near Camp Humphreys, a United States military installation designated to become the new headquarters of the United States Forces in Korea (USFK). Daechuri and Doduri also shared a historical precedent with other farming villages that bordered this foreign garrison. During the American military occupation that began in 1945, the US usurped this former Japanese fighter base built in 1939.<sup>4</sup> During the Korean War, the 417<sup>th</sup> Squadron constructed a new runway in what eventually became Camp Humphreys, the main helicopter facility for the USFK, located in Pyeongtaek. This 1951 expansion, much like in 2007, displaced one thousand farmers.<sup>5</sup> The most recent conflict over the land

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<sup>1</sup> The transliteration of Korean terms and personal or place names follows the Revised Romanization System standardized by the National Institute of Korean Language (*Guknip Gugeowon*), except in the case of quoted material. Many of the works cited in this text use the older McCune-Reischauer system. I follow the Korean naming convention of surname followed by given name whenever the person referred is Korean. The transliteration of previously published Korean names, however, has been retained as they appear in English-language publications.

<sup>2</sup> Military installations, garrisons, reservations, posts, camps, and bases are used interchangeably throughout the study to refer to a military establishment that stations troops on its physical premise. Although there are official distinctions in how each branch of the United States military refers to their installations – such as Army “Camps,” Air “Bases,” and Naval “Stations” – camps, bases, and stations are more generally used interchangeably to indicate a military installation.

<sup>3</sup> “Koreans protest U.S. base plans,” *New York Times*, 4 May 2006; “Thousands stage anti-U.S. base protest,” *Korea Herald*, 15 May 2006.

<sup>4</sup> D. Colt Denfeld, *American Military Camps in the Republic of Korea, 1866-1996* (Anchorage: Pacific Bases Research, 1997), 122.

<sup>5</sup> Katharine H.S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York:



between the Korean government and the residents of Daechuri and Doduri actually began in May of 2003, when the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States governments agreed to consolidate American installations in Korea into two super-hubs in the Pyeongtaek and Daegu areas, both located south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and the nation's capital, Seoul. According to this Land Partnership Plan, 59 bases and training sites used by the USFK will be returned to Korea in exchange for new land for the two strategic-hubs.<sup>6</sup> In order to triple the size of current Camp Humphreys, the Korean government agreed to compensate the residents for the land and to share the cost of constructing the new American military headquarters in Korea.

While the expansion of Camp Humphreys meant the loss of land and home for the villagers of Daechuri and Doduri, it produced an economic boon for the town of Anjeongri. Situated directly across from the main gate of Camp Humphreys, Anjeongri provides service economy to the Americans. Historically referred to as the “Ville” by those stationed in Humphreys, this shopping and entertainment district that caters to and depends on the foreigners of the American camp – a “camptown” or *gijichon* – is now called the “Anjeong Shopping Mall.” Establishments, similar to those in other camptowns of the past, advertise tailor suits, trinkets, international phone cards, burgers, marriage and immigration consulting, alcohol, motel rooms, and women. Store signs also indicate the “globalization” that has taken place in recent years. A handful of signs, such as Pinoy Restaurant and Mabuhay Canteen, advertise a taste of the Philippines. Although weather-worn posters that announce “Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Report it! Don't Support It!” adorn the front door of many clubs and prostitution is officially illegal in Korea, Filipino women continue to get recruited for “entertainment” jobs in these American camptowns. And at a small distance from the main strip is a sign for Sunlit Sister's Place, a home for Korean women who used to work in these clubs and now, in their 50s and 60s, have nowhere to go (Figure 2).

Negotiations over power and space, and of both loss and gain – such as this case of Daechuri, Doduri, and Anjeongri – characterize the history of the United States military camps in Korea and their relations with the host nation and its people. This military camp-camptown interaction informed and has been informed by the shifting bilateral relations between the two nations, connecting the personal and the local to national and global changes. For instance, the 2003 agreement that dictated the fate of places like Daechuri mattered to Korea's “reclaiming” of its national pride, the renegotiating of US-Korea bilateral agreements, and America's global military reconfiguring. This agreement, besides returning a number of bases to Korea and relocating all US forces to south of the capital, also reduced the overall number of American troops in Korea as well as decided on the transfer of wartime operational control to the ROK military in 2015.<sup>7</sup> The ROK government contended that base relocations would mean a greater assertion of Korean independence in its own security matters.<sup>8</sup> The closing of the Yongsan Garrison in particular would also mean

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Columbia University Press, 1997), 28.

<sup>6</sup> “Although regrettable, a national project that must be furthered,” *Gukjeong Briefing* (National Briefing), 7 April 2006; “9 U.S. bases returned amid contamination,” *Korea Herald*, 2 June 2007.

<sup>7</sup> The initial agreement set the transfer of wartime operational control to the ROK military to April 2012, but the date has since been delayed to 2015. US Department of State, “Background Note: South Korea.” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2800.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Both sides acknowledged, however, that despite the reduced numbers, the American military presence

opportunities for both economic development of the vacated real estate located in the heart of Seoul as well as for “reclaiming” the nation’s pride by moving foreign troops out of the capital.<sup>9</sup>

The United States had its own motives for finally agreeing to relocate out of Seoul in 2003. With American military forces engaged in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001 and 2003 respectively, the Department of Defense (DOD), under then Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, began a reconfiguration process and announced the Global Posture Review in 2004. As part of this overhaul designed to increase the mobility and flexibility of the US forces worldwide, Washington sought to shift American military role in the Korean peninsula from that of a leading to a supporting role by moving the US forces away from the DMZ. The US military forces deployed in Korea also has been capped at 28,500 since 2008, and thousands have been redeployed to the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> The conflicts over Daechuri and Doduri, thus, were situated within these greater contexts of bilateral renegotiations as well as America’s global military reconfigurations. Conversely, the protest against the displacement of Daechuri and Doduri residents was in a greater sense a “rejection of U.S. intervention on the Korean peninsula and U.S. imperialism in Northeast Asia,” according to an opponent of the expansion of Camp Humphreys.<sup>11</sup> The resistance witnessed in Daechuri not only spoke of the local losses, but also challenged the continued garrisoning of the United States military in Asia.<sup>12</sup>

In the twentieth century, the United States built a worldwide network of military installations. Although the number of overseas bases rapidly contracted from the wartime high of 30,000 to 2,000 by 1948, the postwar disarmament reversed with the outbreak of the Korea War in 1950. In the Pacific alone, the United States occupied 291 bases by the war’s end in 1953; even after the war, the number of these Pacific garrisons stayed consistent with 256 in 1957, and then increased again with the American war in Vietnam.<sup>13</sup> By 1969, an estimated 1.5 million Americans in uniform served overseas in 70 to 80 countries, spread out over 429 major and 2,972 minor military bases.<sup>14</sup> During

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carried far more symbolic weight of American promise of security defense of Korea. The ROK military strength number over 600,000 active troops and over 3 million reserve while the number of American troops in Korea only number 28,500,

<sup>9</sup> Korea had asked the USFK since 1987 to vacate Yongsan in order to close the base that various foreign and colonizing forces had occupied from 1882, and which the American occupation forces took over from Japan in 1945. “The end to 120 year history of foreign military stationing in the heart of Seoul,” *Gukjeong Briefing* (National Briefing), 09 April 2006; “Yongsan to Become Park When U.S. Moves,” *Seoul Times*, 24 September 2004; “New USFK Hub,” *Korea Herald*, 23 March 2007.

<sup>10</sup> In 2000, there were 36,754 Americans deployed in Korea. More than 7,000 American military troops stationed in Japan and South Korea have also been redeployed to the Middle East. “2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division Soldiers leave South Korea for staging area in Kuwait,” *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 4 August 2004; “Strike forces eager to get to Iraq,” *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 26 August 2004; Sheila A. Smith, *Shifting Terrain: The Domestic Politics of the U.S. Military Presence in Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii East-West Center Special Report, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> “Art of Daechuri Village,” *Korea Herald*, 21 March 2007.

<sup>12</sup> “The real truth to American forces base relocation project” (*Migun giji ijun saeop, jinjja sasileun ireotseupnida*) *Minjungui Sori Site* (Voice of People), 12 May 2006. <http://www.vop.co.kr>; “57.6% of citizens oppose Pyeongtaek American base relocation settlement,” *OhmyNews International*, 19 May 2006.

<sup>13</sup> James R. Blaker, *United States Overseas Basings: An Anatomy of the Dilemma* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 9-20, 29-34, 43; Melvin P. Leffler, “AHR Forum: The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1948,” *American Historical Review* 89 (April 1984): 372, 379.

<sup>14</sup> Harry Magdoff, “Militarism and Imperialism,” *The American Economic Review* 60, no. 2 (May 1970):

this postwar global military primacy, the United States established security alliances with multiple states within Europe (NATO), the Middle East and South Asia (CENTO), and Southeast Asia (SEATO), as well as bilateral Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) with individual states, such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.<sup>15</sup> The late 1960s marked both the peak and the beginning of the decline of the postwar American overseas garrisoning, however. The war in Vietnam eroded the assumption that US bases served local security interests against communism, and with the beginning of détente and the consequent relaxation of direct threats, the security interests of hosts and guests began to diverge.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the combination of rapid local economic growths that depreciated the supremacy of the American dollar and rising nationalisms in host nations further challenged the American military presence.<sup>17</sup> Despite having outlived the cold war, this American global security system, now propelled by the “war on terror,” still expands across seven US territories and 39 nations, with 823 listed overseas sites as of 2007.<sup>18</sup> In the Republic of Korea, this “footprint,” according to the US Department of Defense 2007 Baseline report, constituted 106 sites sitting on 54,036 acres (219 million square meters) of land, with 8,550 buildings and structures, used by 55,715 military, civilian, and other related personnel.<sup>19</sup>

### **The American Military in Cold War Korea: Historiographic Considerations**

The cold war, and especially the doctrine of containment, combined strategic aims with economic and ideological purpose that gave both direction and justification for the United States-led postwar world order. Defense concerns led to extending American security goals beyond its borders and to sustaining overseas “frontiers” in a context of opposing Soviet imperial ambitions. And Germany and Korea in particular constituted America’s cold war frontiers, prime symbols of the “East-West” conflict of the era.<sup>20</sup> Beyond protecting its security interests through military fortification, integrating nations

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240.

<sup>15</sup> Catherine Lutz, “Introduction: Bases, Empire, and Global Response” in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 10-13.

<sup>16</sup> C.T. Sanders, *America’s Overseas Garrisons: The Leasehold Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16-7.

<sup>17</sup> Anni P. Baker, *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2004), 65-76.

<sup>18</sup> US Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, “Base Structure Report (BSR) FY 2007 Baseline,” 6. [http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/BSR\\_2007\\_Baseline.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/BSR_2007_Baseline.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-94.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Maier defines a frontier as a barrier that marks insiders and outsiders, a contested and violent fault line that along with ideas and capital, a military strength is needed to enforce. At the same time, these frontiers are not meant as absolute barriers, as the “edges” mesh and the walls are osmotic membranes establishing a flow of influence and interaction. Frontier contests provoked a major armament effort and territorial security ambitions tied together seemingly disparate places like Germany, Korea, and Vietnam; bases provided an opportunity for the projection of power into the territory held by others and establishing boundaries presented an obligation to defend a territory. Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 9, 81-6, 107, 153-8. Reflecting this legacy of cold war contestation of “frontiers,” the majority of American “worldwide facility footprint” could be found in Germany (287 sites), Japan (130 sites), and South Korea (106 sites) as of fiscal year 2007. US Department of Defense, “Base Structure Report (BSR) FY 2007 Baseline,” 6.

and regions – especially the decolonizing Third World – into liberal-democratic spheres comprised just as integral a cold war objective. Winning “hearts and minds” in the Third World, as Melvyn Leffler contends, presented opportunities for the superpowers to compete “for the soul of mankind.”<sup>21</sup> Within American objectives in the Asia Pacific region, Korea’s place, although initially not significant, evolved from that of a “temporary outpost” in 1945 to a “semi-permanent” partner by the late 1960s. American intent in Korea was certainly not of a territorial domination, but the United States sought to influence the outcome of postwar Korea, in order to protect American economic and security interests in Japan and the Asia Pacific.<sup>22</sup> In the course of the early two decades of the cold war, the southern half of the peninsula came to constitute both a “frontline” of containment as well as a “success story” of American liberal-democratic integration.<sup>23</sup> As an ally that “invited” the American military presence and also economically and politically benefited from this relation, Korea is often cited along with Japan and Germany as a cold war “success story.” At the same time, unlike Germany and Japan, Korea was a former colony of Japan and a so-called Third World country to be modernized under the tutelage of the United States. In some ways, Korea came to represent an American protégé among the Third World nations. In occupying this ambivalent position as a partner and a pupil, Korea complicates the discussion of the US and its relations with its cold war allies as well as with the postcolonial Third World.

Scholars seeking to define US hegemony have offered a range of terms, from “invited” empire to “empire in denial” and “empire of bases.” Niall Ferguson argues that although “the United States has always been, functionally if not self-consciously, an

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<sup>21</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, The Soviet Union, and The Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> In the Asia Pacific, by bolstering the Japanese economy through state-engineered reindustrialization, the Truman State Department strategists intended to transform Japan “into a pro-American center of regional power from which the spread of Soviet influence in Asia could be checked,” according to Takemae Eiji. In early march 1948, Policy Planning Chief George Kennan visited Tokyo, with a mission “to engineer a shift away from such ‘destabilising reforms’ as the purge, reparations, the dismantling of the Home Ministry, police decentralization, *zaibatsu* dissolution and liberal trade unionism.” In concert with the Pentagon and the US business interests, Kennan engineered “a change of pace and orientation that some would later become known as the ‘reverse course.’” Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), 458-9. According to Bruce Cumings, in conjunction with this “reverse course” in Japan, American purpose in Korean economic development turned toward “build up” and also to “connect up” the southern half of the peninsula to Japan. Secretary of State Marshall asked Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson to draft a policy “to organize a definite government of So. Korea and *connect up [sic]* its economy with that of Japan,” in January of 1947, before the announcement of the Truman Doctrine. Unlike Japan, slated to become the cornerstone of US security and economic interest in the Pacific, the US initially had little strategic interest in Korea. The United States applied containment to Korea nevertheless from two premises: “the prestige of American commitments, and the reverse course in Japan, making southern Korea a hinterland for Japanese industry and a frontyard of Japanese defense,” contends Cumings. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002), 50. After the Korean War, Korea’s place in East Asia as an economic appendage of Japan and as a buffer zone between Japan and China further solidified. Moreover, under the Kennedy Administration’s policy toward economic assistance of developing countries, the US regarded Korea not only as a buffer zone, but also as a showcase for the ideological war. Tae-Gyun Park, “U.S. Policy Change toward South Korea in the 1940s and the 1950s” *Journal of International and Area Studies* 7, no. 2 (2000): 103.

<sup>23</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 216.

empire,” it is somewhat of a dysfunctional “empire in denial” due to America’s self-conscious refusal to embrace this position.<sup>24</sup> Charles Maier, on the other hand, avoids claiming that the United States is an empire and instead contends that the “United States reveals many, but not all—at least not yet—of the traits that have distinguished empires.” For certain, according to Maier, is that America was an “empire of production” during the cold war and an “empire of consumption” in the post-cold war today. And as Ferguson also identified, the United States has possessed a trio of hegemonic assets of military, economic, and cultural powers that transcended its territorial limits. At the same time, Maier differentiates the US from past empires in that “far-flung military bases are a prerequisite for imperial influence but do not themselves constitute empire,” especially since the United States did not control the political course of countries despite the American military presence.<sup>25</sup> Geir Lundestad qualifies his usage of the “empire” by contending that the United States in Europe after 1945 was an “empire by invitation” that influenced rather than dictated events in Western Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Scholars more critical of America’s relations with the world in the twentieth century contend that the United States engaged in imperial practices and that overseas bases served as essential arms of its reach and goals. Although the United States did not annex territories to create an empire of colonies, its vast network of military bases constitutes a new form of empire, “an empire of bases,” according to Chalmers Johnson. Johnson argues that imperialism manifests itself in several different and evolving forms today, such as the neocolonialism of multinational corporations, or America’s militarism and its system of “satellites” based on mutual security alliances that stations American military forces in enclaves that resemble “micro-colonies.”<sup>27</sup> Catherine Lutz similarly contends that the United States is an empire because its policies aim to assert and

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<sup>24</sup> Not only does the United States possess vast wealth, peerless military, and astonishing cultural reach, America should recognize the *functional* resemblance to their British predecessors, according to Ferguson. He also advocates that the United States embrace its global position as a “liberal empire” and underwrite the free international exchange of commodities, labor and capital as well as create and uphold peace and order in order for the liberal market to flourish. *Ibid.*, viii, 286, 301-2, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Unlike Ferguson’s appeal for embracing its position as an empire, Maier cautions that “to choose empire” would confirm internal transformations, to accept the trends toward inequality and toward further emphases on the public status of elites and the increased power of the executive. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors*, 3, 66, 282, 294.

<sup>26</sup> Western Europeans welcomed American involvement in their affairs in the early years after 1945 and “invited in” American economic assistance for the reconstruction of their countries, then political support against the Communists and their supporters, and soon even military guarantees against the Soviet Union, contends Lundestad. He argues that America’s dominating position in the world after 1945 depended in considerable part on its unique relationship with Western Europe and with Japan. Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-3, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson describes these overseas bases as “micro-colonies” in that they are governed under American jurisdiction and these bases have helped turn America “into a new kind of military empire—a consumerist Sparta, a warrior culture that flaunts” its consumption. These bases are manifestations of militarism and imperialism, according to Johnson, and locates the beginning of militarism with the onset of the cold war and the rise of a professional military class, preponderance of military officers or representatives of the arms industry in high government positions, and a devotion to policies in which military preparedness becomes the highest priority of the state. The American network of bases is a sign not of military preparedness but of militarism, the inescapable companion of imperialism. Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 7, 23-4, 30-5, 55-63.

maintain dominance over other regions; and because US military bases facilitate “the wealth and welfare of the powerful center,” these bases can be seen as “expressions of a nation’s will to status and power.”<sup>28</sup> Mark Gillem also offers a study of American empire through an innovative fusion of militarism and consumption in his study of the spatial ramifications of “exporting” American military bases abroad. Although past empires also transported sociospatial practices to diverse settings to regulate and achieve order, Pax Americana differs from Pax Romana or Pax Britannica in that the new empire does not require vast territories, dependent colonies, or puppet governments, but rather just military installations. Gillem describes America’s empire today as an “entangled empire.”<sup>29</sup>

This study of the US military in cold war Korea argues that although America’s stated purpose was not imperial and Korea “invited” the military presence, what manifested on the ground reveal certain traits of an “imperfect” imperialism.<sup>30</sup> The United States sought to influence the direction of postwar Korea, even though the US did not aim to gain territorial or political-economic control over the peninsula. And the US military presence – representing both the actual and symbolic American power and benevolence – helped to sustain Korea’s particular modernity of rapid industrialization at the expense of political freedom. As Odd Arne Westad suggests, the cold war in the developing world was inherently a continuation of the West’s colonial interventions, the final stages of European imperialism that sought control and influence over the Third World.<sup>31</sup> The US fully participated in this “interventions” in Korea by positioning itself as a father, guardian, or big brother. Patronage and hierarchy, therefore, inherently underlined the bilateral relations of Korea and the US throughout the cold war. Moreover, the ground-level interactions of American GIs and the local Koreans engendered a landscape that was both racially stratified and economically exploitative as well as culturally persuasive and materially alluring. Although different from past empires, the United States nevertheless wielded its influential power through the might of the military bases and the magnetic appeal of its culture that flowed from these places. Finally, these cold war soldiers brought back the women and children of the “periphery” to the “core”; and at the empire’s metropolis, the United States followed a liberal practice of citizenship, as did the Romans, to integrate these new “Americans.”

In examining transpacific exchanges, this study also contributes to the discussions of racial and national identity formations in host countries as well as in the United States. The significance of millions of GIs abroad and their encounters in “exotic” lands conditioned America’s own sense of its national identity, especially in juxtaposition to

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<sup>28</sup> Lutz, “Introduction: Bases, Empire, and Global Response,” 1-8.

<sup>29</sup> Gillem describes overseas installations as “America Town,” replicas of American suburbs to provide “slices of the American Dream” to the expatriates abroad, which subsequently require sprawl and land consumption in often dense locations. The process of making the unfamiliar territory into familiar home replicates “conformity and consumption” throughout the world regardless of difference in local conditions and concerns. Mark Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xv-xvi, 17, 264-9.

<sup>30</sup> Bruce Cumings argues that the American brand of imperialism was imperfect, “compared to the old Japanese style, because our imperial foundation was filled out and justified by its opposite, the doctrine of liberalism.” Bruce Cumings, “Silent but deadly: Sexual subordination in the U.S.-Korean relationship,” in *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*, ed. Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus (New York: The New Press, 1993) 174-5.

<sup>31</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

those they encountered. According to Beth Bailey and David Farber, Hawaii was “the first strange place” for almost a million soldiers and defense workers during the Second World War. Although at the margin of American life prior to 1941, Hawaii became the “border of war, an ultimate frontier, the edge of our world... a liminal place,” where Americans directly confronted the complex meanings of cultural differences, “place of extremes” that revealed the tensions of the time and the possibilities for the future and ultimately, embodied the watershed moment when the “American identity” and the role of the federal government fundamentally changed.<sup>32</sup> And in the immediate postwar period, “strange” encounters continued, especially in American military occupied nations, such as Germany, Japan, and Korea. For instance, Petra Goedde argues that the personal interactions between American soldiers and German civilians in postwar Germany bridged the divide between the two countries. And this interaction was based on feminized Germany; culturally and politically, Germans were cast as dependent women to masculine Americans. Employment opportunities for Germans on American bases to earning an income through prostitution and also marrying American men highlighted this feminization of Germany. The high number of marriages between Germans and Americans led to the passages of the War Brides Act in December 1945 and the “Sweetheart bill” in June 1946, allowing foreign spouses, children, and fiancés to enter the US outside of the regular immigration quota.<sup>33</sup> Soldiers exported new cultural practices that changed local geographies, and they also reshaped the contours of immigration laws and ethnic makeup of the United States with international unions.

Beyond feminization, racialization of the locals also shaped the relations of Americans and Asians in places like Okinawa and Korea. As Geir Lundestad emphasizes, common ideology and culture – that both the United States and Western Europe were dominated by white, Christian males and that they shared a common democratic heritage and the influence of American popular culture in Europe – made understanding and cooperating relatively easy.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, the lack of racial and cultural affinity with their Asian allies shaped a more racialized and imperial relationship. Donah Alvah’s study of military families living overseas during the cold war and participating in America’s soft power as “unofficial ambassadors” reveal reinforced hierarchies between Americans and local peoples. Even if it was largely unintentional, these “unofficial ambassadors” nevertheless “attempted to demonstrate the alleged superiority of the American way of life” while American notions of racial, class, and cultural differences bolstered views of Asians generally as inferior. “Assumptions about commonalities among white peoples, as in West Germany, and the inferiority of Asians, as in Okinawa, shaped not only interpersonal but also international relations and, to Americans, helped to justify the presence of their military,” contends Alvah.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 17-9, 29, 215.

<sup>33</sup> By casting postwar Germany in feminine terms, postwar Germany “shed its aggressive masculine identity and took on the new, if temporary, identity of a feminized, victimized, and most importantly pacific, client state.” Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), xxi-xxiii, 88-96.

<sup>34</sup> Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, 12-3.

<sup>35</sup> Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1945-1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 4-5, 83, 174, 228.

Among Americans encountering these “strange places” on the edges of the cold war, such as in Korea, the “unstable negotiation of identity and power” helped shape the “self” in juxtaposition to the other.<sup>36</sup> Racialized superiority over their Asian allies, more so than racially and culturally familiar Europeans, manifested on the ground in Korea. Moreover, because the cold war garrisoning in the Asia Pacific propelled the movement of Asians to the US, the migration of these new “Americans” shaped the US immigration patterns and the makeup of the nation’s citizenry. The literature on immigration in general has not extensively explored the dialectical relationship between the overseas migration of the US military and its impact on immigration policies. For example and as discussed in chapter four, pressures stemming from the “problem” of “Amerasian” children in Asian countries with large American military presence helped to alter the US immigration law through the Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982 and the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987. This research thus emphasizes not only the multidirectional migration of peoples and institutions, but also how these transpacific exchanges shaped both Korea and the US.

Finally, this study brings to the fore the ways in which the American military presence transformed domestic social arrangements and cultural topographies in postwar Korea. The strategic importance of the US military has been well studied in modern Korean history. The literature is less developed, however, when analyzing social and cultural impacts of the military presence. Recent works by Katharine Moon, Ji-Yeon Yuh, and Grace Cho are some exceptions to the limited scholarly attention paid to the ramification of the US military in Korea.<sup>37</sup> Although implications of their studies are extensive, they do not concentrate greatly on the “foundation” years as well as the actual physical sites of military camps and camptowns as significant shaping forces. Understanding the evolution of the bases and surrounding communities – important sites of contact and interaction between the locals and the foreigners – in the first two decades of the American military presence can help us understand the later developments.

The American military presence on the southern half of the peninsula has meant the development of a distinctly militarized cultural landscape in Korea. The American military culture built on top of the remnants of the Japanese colonial landscape involved far more than land, material, and labor. Although American cold war policy in Korea was conditioned by the shifting historical circumstances, the dialogues captured between local commanders and USFK headquarters, and between commanding generals and the legislators in Washington, reveal that ground-level actions of GIs also shaped the policy

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<sup>36</sup> Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (London: Routledge, 1996), xi.

<sup>37</sup> While Moon asserts that Korean women’s associations with foreign soldiers directly influenced diplomatic relations between the two governments, Yuh shows that Korean military brides have been on the frontline of Korea-US cultural contact and social change in their confrontation with both Korean gender ideology and American neo-imperialism and racism. Yuh sees these military brides as creators of a new culture and instigators of social change as they negotiated their places in both Korea and America. Katharine Moon’s *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (1997) and Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

Grace Cho’s study connects the trauma of Korea’s colonial past and the Korean War to the migration of camptown women and the “transgenerational haunting” of the diaspora “to challenge taken-for-granted narratives of the family, assimilation, and U.S.-Korea relations, all of which make up part of the larger fantasy of the American dream.” Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 25.



directives regarding the outposts in Korea. Moreover, along with this construction of the official military landscape, camptowns or *gijichon*, communities like Anjeongri, developed near US installations. Clustered around American military camps *within* the geopolitical borders of postwar Korea, camptowns were “borderlands.”<sup>38</sup> Camptowns served as an extension of the military camps and conversely, camps were the origin source of camptowns; they had inter-dependent coexistence. The ground-level interactions between American GIs and Korean locals created a militarized geography that was neither entirely American nor Korean. These borderlands, nevertheless, were significant in both the industrial economic development and in the dispersion of “American modern” culture in the long reconstruction decade. In this re-centering of the periphery, I argue that camptowns and their inhabitants occupy an indispensable place in Korea’s postwar history and its national imaginary.

### **Borderland Intimacies in America’s Cold War Frontier**

American military camps, their Korean camptowns, and the interaction of the inhabitants of these places, constitute the cultural landscapes of this study. The years encompassed in this research begins with the American military occupation (1945-1949) following the end of the Second World War, but focuses on the post-Korean War reconstruction decade from 1954 to troop reductions in 1971.<sup>39</sup> As the largest contingent of Americans in Korea, the US military played an essential role in the cold war objectives of both containment and integration. The GIs represented more than “hard power” expressions of the American military might, as they became “soft power”<sup>40</sup> ambassadors of the US. For many young American GIs, Korea was the “first strange place” they encountered outside of the United States and their experiences in this cold war frontier transformed Korea, the United States, and themselves. This study focuses on the “soft power” wielded by the GIs as “people-to-people” ambassadors in postwar Korea.<sup>41</sup> As Anni P. Baker contends, the non-combat experiences of American soldiers overseas

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<sup>38</sup> “Borderlands” and “frontier” as theoretical concepts and their significance in North American history have received extensive critical attention. See for instance, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “Forum Essay: From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History.” *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 816.

<sup>39</sup> The conclusion of the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 committed the two nations to a military alliance and formally granted the stationing of American troops on the peninsula. After the war, the American military population in Korea downsized to 60,000 and this figure stayed constant until reductions in 1971. The two sides did not conclude a Status of Forces Agreement until 1966, which entered into effect in 1967. This meant that the US wielded unilateral, wartime criminal jurisdiction over the United States Forces Korea (USFK) for fourteen years after the Korean War ended.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Nye defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.” Nye contends that a mixture of hard and soft power won the cold war. Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), x, 50.

<sup>41</sup> As Christina Klein contends, the Dwight Eisenhower administration sought to “warm up” the Cold War with positive “crusades” that enlisted “people-to-people” participation. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49-51, 105-6. As the largest group of official US personnel in foreign countries in the 1950s, Eisenhower claimed that the Armed Forces and their dependents stationed overseas had “the essential mission of building good will for our country.” “TI Pamphlets Record Set 1958,” 8<sup>th</sup> Army Information Section Publications, 1958-1960, National Archives and Records Administration.

during and immediately after the Second World War and the “friendly invasion” of American money “swept away traditional economies, bringing new jobs and new possibilities along with tensions and growing pains.”<sup>42</sup> The American military in Korea stood at the forefront of the “soft invasion” of American dollars, goods, and popular culture, changing the landscape of Korea. And the deeds of the GIs, for better or for worse, further influenced the construction of the American image for Koreans. Conversely, the GIs also brought Korea back home to the US through their photos and impressions of the poor, exotic, and little-known cold war frontier. Perhaps these GIs’ most significant actions as “integrators,” however, were their direct and inadvertent role in propelling a significant migration of Koreans to the United States as military wives, mixed-race progeny, and international adoptees.

The central contention of this study is that the American military installations and their camptown communities constituted an “intimate” cold war borderland between the United States and South Korea. Camps occupied hearts of cities and bordered farm communities. New cities and towns grew around foreign installations, and the guests and the hosts constantly negotiated over the impacts of the built environments. Camptowns served as extensions of the military camps as well as literal and symbolic buffers between the foreign military and the greater Korea. Although located on the peripheral-edge of Korean society, marginalized as a place of “dispensable” people, violent clashes, and sexual exploitations, camptowns also represented an indispensable-edge for postwar Korea. Camps and camptowns presented opportunities of employment and foreign currency earnings for the economic development, as well as important locus of desired American culture. Moreover, these spaces came to be an important “origin” place for transpacific migration for many Koreans. The ways in which the GIs interacted with Koreans in this intimate borderland, therefore, produced both cold war integration as well as an “imperfect” imperialism. This study from the “ground-up” of Koreans and GIs, and of the ramifications and living legacies of these landscapes, brings together a social and policy history of the greater US-Korea relations.

The first chapter focuses on the “foundation years” of the transpacific migration by the American military to postcolonial Korea. Although initially intended to be a temporary post in the settlement of the postwar peace, Korea soon became an actual and symbolic frontier of the cold war. And the various processes involved in demarcating American space, place, and power in the peninsula during these transitional years laid the groundwork for the patterns of American military in Korea after 1953. The second chapter explores the landscapes of American military camps in Korea during the long postwar reconstruction decade of 1954 to 1971. Besides ensuring the “hard power” of the American containment, GIs represented America as ambassadors abroad and conduits of its democratic “soft power.” What emerged was a complicated image of the American GI, and the United States by extension, as both benevolent and admired heroes as well as arrogant imperialists. These “ambassadors of democracy” participated in constructing a stratified cultural landscape of “imperfect” imperialism.

Chapter three explores American military camptowns in the long postwar decade. Clustered around American military camps *within* the geopolitical borders of postwar Korea, camptowns served as “borderlands” between two sovereign states. Although the dichotomous camptowns could neither be ignored nor celebrated, these borderlands were

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<sup>42</sup> Baker, *American Soldiers Overseas*, 25-6.

significant for economic development, dispersion of “modern” culture, and Korea’s postwar national imaginary. The fourth chapter discusses the “Amerasian issue,” which constituted a legacy of the cold war alliance and an unintended consequence of decades of garrisoning American troops in Korea. Although the children of US fathers and Korean mothers were often unwittingly symbolized as a “link” or “bridge” between the “East” and the “West,” the immigration of “Amerasians” did poignantly illustrate the “tense and tender ties” created by the multidirectional migration of institutions and peoples that took place during the cold war. This study concludes with a discussion of the living legacies of the intimate cold war and how these histories reverberate in the changing bilateral relations in the post-cold war era.

Figure 1. Spring in Daechuri



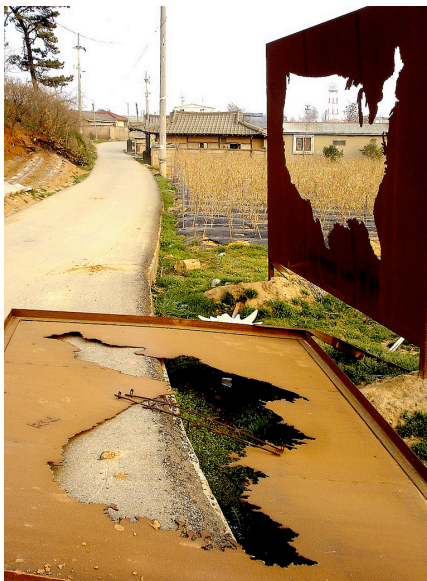
The houses in Daechuri in various stages of demolition.  
All photographs from April 7, 2007.



The peaceful April 7, 2007 ceremony marked the end of years of protest against relocation of Daechuri and Doduri residents. The mound of steel and cement debris, what remained of the demolished elementary school in Daechuri, served as a backdrop to the symbolic ceremony held in the former schoolyard, attended by the last of the remaining villagers, their supporters, and reporters.



Protest signs and art produced by activists and artists over the years remained in the abandoned streets of Daechuri.



Abandoned fields and withered plantings near peace/protest art and Camp Humphreys in the near distant, seen through the contours of the United States.

Figure 2. “Anjeong Shopping Mall” and Camp Humphreys



Gateway to “Anjeong Shopping Mall” located directly across from the front gate of Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek.  
All photographs from August 15, 2007.



Similar to other camptowns of the past, establishments advertise tailor suits and other apparel that cater to American shoppers of the nearby Camp Humphreys. Different from past camptowns are store signs that advertise food and products from the Philippines, catering to the Filipinos who work and live in Anjeongri.



Signs that announce “Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Report it! Don’t Support It!” adorn the front door of many clubs. At a small distance from the main strip and at the end of a narrow alley is a small sign for Sunlit Sister’s Place, a home for Korean women who used to work in these clubs and now, in their 50s and 60s, have nowhere to go.



The new construction on Camp Humphreys is visible from Anjeongri. A number of real estate agencies, anticipating a boom in rentals with troop relocations and increased family accompanied tours, advertise their services in English.

## II. From Postwar Periphery to Cold War Center: American Military Transpacific Migration to Korea, 1945-1953

*The vessels left their various moorings on the morning of the 5th and by mid-afternoon had formed into a convoy off the southern tip of Okinawa. In five close columns, the ships, guarded by destroyer escorts and escort carrier, were enroute to Korea by 1945. [...] Morning of [September] the 8th found the convoy threading its way along the complicated channel leading to Inch'on harbor. The weather was clear and warm. Save for one or two tiny fishing boats, no shipping was visible. The Americans crowding the decks of the transports faced their first day of the occupation of Korea.*

*-History of the United States Armed Forces in Korea, 1945<sup>1</sup>*

With limited prior knowledge of the land that they would govern, Americans crowding the ship decks on this September day faced their first days of the occupation. According to the United States Army's own account at that time, the *Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study of Korea*, published in April 1945, constituted the almost sole written source of intelligence available prior to engagement.<sup>2</sup> General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), radioed from the Philippines to Japan on August 12, 1945, and designated the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps as the occupation force of Korea, which had been hastily and unceremoniously divided at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel the night before.<sup>3</sup> The 24<sup>th</sup> Corps was selected due to its physical nearness to the peninsula, and not because of any obvious expertise on administering Korean affairs.<sup>4</sup> Japanese colonial rule ended in Korea on August 15<sup>th</sup> and the Pacific War drew to a close on September 2, 1945. Lieutenant General John Reed Hodge, appointed Commanding General United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), and the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps landed in Incheon from Okinawa on September 8, 1945.<sup>5</sup> The next day, General Hodge and the Japanese Governor General, Nobuyuki Abe, signed the formal surrender of the Japanese troops in Korea.

The often ad hoc policies under the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) characterized the occupation period (1945-1948), as Korea transitioned into its postcolonial liberation in the midst of the cold war beginnings. The unmooring from Japan as

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<sup>1</sup> US Army, *History of the United States Armed Forces in Korea* (hereafter *HUSAFIK*) unpublished history, Part I, Chapter 1, 73-5, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA) in Washington, DC, copies published in Korea in 1988. Accessed at the National Assembly Library in Seoul, Korea.

<sup>2</sup> US Army, *HUSAFIK*, Part I, Chapter 1, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10. During the late hours of August 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, two young American officers hastily divided Korea. In order to halt Soviet military occupation of the entire peninsula, yet unable to mobilize its troops for estimated six weeks, the US proposed a temporary military occupation of Korea in zones divided at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The Soviets, who had advanced into the peninsula upon their declaration of war against Japan in August 9, agreed. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), 1945, Vol. 6, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 1039.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 123.

<sup>5</sup> On September 1, 1945, shortly before the operation was launched, the major combat and service elements under the XXIV Corps consisted of: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Tenth Army AAA, 137<sup>th</sup> AAA Group, 101<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion, XXIV Corps Artillery, 71<sup>st</sup> Medical Battalion, 1140<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Group, and ASCOM 24, with total troop allocations of 62,724 combat and 29,076 service. US Army, *HUSAFIK*, Part I, Chapter 1, 26-7.



well as the ill preparedness to occupy Korea reflected America's "peripheral" postwar interest in the peninsula, in contrast to extensive policy planning for postwar Japan. Especially during its first year, the American military government ruled Korea largely through improvising and modifying Japanese colonial government infrastructure. The intensifying cold war tensions permeating the military government's policy objectives by early 1947 further exacerbated the uncertainty and confusion that suffused the military occupation. By the time the American military formally disengaged from the south in 1949, the "liberated" peninsula of 1945 had become physically divided and ideologically polarized. The composite tensions of Japanese colonial and American military occupation periods eventually culminated in the Korean War of 1950 and subsequently, American military reengagement with the peninsula. The war compelled the US to maintain substantial forces on the Asian mainland and South Korea became the "frontline" of the "free world" against communism. By the war's end in 1953, what had begun as a temporary migration of the United States military to Korea had become a semi-permanent garrisoning. Following a war that put this postwar peripheral interest at the core of the cold war in 1950, Korea would occupy a "frontier" of America's strategic and economic interests in the Asia Pacific.

The transformation of the Yongsan Military Reservation from Japanese colonial into American military headquarters serves as the material and symbolic focal place of this chapter. Yongsan, situated in the capital, Seoul, has had a long history of stationing foreign troops, beginning with the Chinese forces in 1882. Japanese troops entered the city in 1884 and again for the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War, during the turmoil of the late Chosun period. For the duration of the Japanese colonial period, from 1910 to 1945, the Japanese Imperial Army in Korea headquartered in Yongsan. Then from September 1945 to 1949, initially named Camp Sobinggo, it housed the US 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The American military formally acquired the compound on September 11, 1948, as a result of an agreement signed with the new Republic of Korea, which allowed the United States to retain certain areas under free leasehold.<sup>6</sup> During the war, Yongsan changed hands several times between the North Korean and United Nations forces. And along with most of the American camps obtained during the Korean War, Yongsan was officially acquired in the Treaty of Mutual Defense that went into effect in 1954.<sup>7</sup> After the Korean War, both the Eighth US Army (EUSA) and the US Forces Korea (USFK) made their headquarters in Yongsan, and it remains so to the present day. Yongsan Garrison today is an eclectic mixture of Japanese-built brick-structures, interiors which have been repeatedly renovated and "Americanized," as well as American military constructions that range from temporary Quonsets dating to the 1950s to semi-permanent and permanent buildings from the later decades. The layered history of the initial years of American military migration and its growth in Korea over the subsequent decades, therefore, is written in the landscape of Yongsan.

This chapter focuses on the "foundation years" of the migration west by the American military to Korea. To examine the process through which the US military came to set root in the

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<sup>6</sup> Besides Sobinggo, this accord also included ASCOM and a few other camps. Since the February 1967 Status of Forces Agreement, real estate transactions have been handled by the SOFA Facilities Subcommittee. James P. Finley, *The U.S. Military Experience in Korea, 1871-1982: In the Vanguard of ROK-US Relations* (Korea: United States Forces Korea Headquarters, 1983), 51.

<sup>7</sup> Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty gave "the right to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement." James P. Finley, "Historical Origins of USFK Real Estate: Memorandum for MG Palastra, 18 August 1981," Folder: US Army Garrison Yongsan, Eighth United States Army (EUSA) and United States Forces Korea (USFK) History Office in Yongsan Military Reservation, Seoul, Korea (hereafter Yongsan Archives).

southern half of the peninsula, I trace the garrisoning of America's soldiers from the occupation period (1945-1949), and following a brief hiatus, through the Korean War (1950-1953). The initial years of the American military base system heavily relied on modifying Japanese colonial structures, followed by constructing wartime temporary tent-camps. During the years in which Korea transitioned from a postwar periphery to a cold war frontier for the United States, both the official as well as the vernacular landscapes reflected the haphazard stopgap policy measures. Moreover, although America initially disembarked in Korea as colonial "liberators," instead of fostering democracy, the military occupation ushered in and sustained an autocratic regime that professed pro-American alliance and aligned with American cold war fears and objectives. And the various processes involved in demarcating American space, place, and power in the peninsula during these transition years of 1945 to 1953 laid the groundwork for the patterns – the official spatial garrisoning development as well as the cultural landscapes – of the American military presence in postwar Korea.

This chapter is divided into two sections – the occupation period followed by the wartime years. The spatial appropriation and transformation involved in the garrisoning of America's soldiers from 1945 to 1949 is chronicled in the first section. This ground-level change in the physical presence of the American military is interwoven with the greater political and economic developments. The third thematic thread looks at the encounters and interactions between the occupiers and Koreans on military camps and their surrounding areas. The intersection of these three themes – the spatial transformation, geopolitical developments, and cultural landscapes – are continued and elaborated in the Korean War section. In addition, the final section addresses the Korean War and its postwar consequences for not only Korea, but also for the US, and the Asia Pacific region.

### **Temporary Places of Military Occupiers in Peripheral Korea: 1945-1949**

Like those who preceded him the previous year, Technical Sergeant James E. Hodges also looked out from the deck of a ship and embarked on his Korean tour from Incheon harbor. When he awoke on the morning of December 22, 1946, and went up on deck, bitter cold, snow, and several miles of mud flats of the Incheon harbor greeted him. Hodges, who served in the US Army Corps of Engineers on occupation duty from December 1946 to February 1948, spent his first night in Korea in a former Japanese silk warehouse. In order to keep warm in the barren shelter, Hodges "put down two mattresses on the floor and piled two more on top." Eventually assigned to the 35<sup>th</sup> Transportation Car Company, he then lived in the heart of Seoul in an "old abandoned constabulary barracks."<sup>8</sup> The "temporary" nature of T/Sgt. Hodges' housing characterized the American military garrisoning policies in Korea.

Uncertain of the length of the occupation period, the USAMGIK relied on rudimentary and temporary structures. Upon landing in the fall of 1945, the USAMGIK usurped all property and enterprises owned by the Japanese government, which, besides Japanese military installations and other property, amounted to as much as 50 percent of the cultivated land.<sup>9</sup> General Hodge also temporarily closed hotels, factories, and all schools above the primary level to accommodate the 85,000 occupation troops and to meet the Military Government's

<sup>8</sup> Military Journal of T/Sgt James E. Hodges, US Army Corps of Engineers, 25 November 1946–6 December 1948, James E. Hodges Papers 1939-1990, US Army Military History Institute, Pennsylvania (hereafter USAMHI).

<sup>9</sup> US Army, *HUSAFIK*, Part 1, Ch. 4, 23.

administrative purposes.<sup>10</sup> One of the first to go through this alteration was “Ascom City” (Army Service Command) in the town of Bupyong, not far from Inchon harbor and on the road to Seoul. On September 16, ASCOM 24 and many of the principal subordinate units moved into this former Japanese main arsenal and supply depot, well suited as a supply center with its unoccupied buildings, rail transportation, road networks, and proximity to the Port of Inchon.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, the USFIK command set up its headquarters in downtown Seoul’s eight-story Bando Hotel. Such temporary measures characterized the initial year of troop housing policies. In March 1947, 24<sup>th</sup> Corps headquarters assessed the first year’s troop facility policies and concluded the period as when “this headquarters [had] to approve construction on the basis that it was of an emergency measure rather than on the basis that such construction was a result of sound planning and forethought.”<sup>12</sup>

Improvised adaptations that characterized American military installations and living quarters reflected the nature of the overall American policy in Korea. By the time the US military occupation began, only a vague trusteeship idea existed. In part, the forty-year suspension of diplomatic relations between the two nations, begun in 1905 when the US acquiesced to Japanese domination of Korea and terminated the Treaty of 1882, accounted for American unfamiliarity with the Korean situation in 1945.<sup>13</sup> American political re-engagement with the peninsula began in 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt first proposed in Cairo a postwar multilateral trusteeship of Korea.<sup>14</sup> Although Korea mattered as a part of the postcolonial territorial question as well as a place of postwar Pacific security, the peninsula was of a peripheral importance for the United States. Consequently, little planning took place after Cairo and the US policymakers in both Washington and Seoul lacked knowledge and a clearly formulated policy for the occupied land. E. Grant Meade, who served in Korea from 1945 to 1946 as a naval officer in both intelligence and public relations roles, concluded that “Ignorance was a common denominator” and the “Korean experiment was well named ‘Operation Trial and Error.’”<sup>15</sup> Limited prior knowledge of Korea, compounded by a lack of preparation and clear directives, meant that the resident military government policy consisted of reactive, stopgap

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<sup>10</sup> D. Colt Denfeld, *American Military Camps in the Republic of Korea, 1866-1996* (Anchorage: Pacific Bases Research, 1997), 6; *HUSAFIK*, Part 1, Ch. 4, 24-7.

<sup>11</sup> “Historical Background: United States Army Ascom Depot, 10 February 1967,” Folder: EUSA Headquarters Department of the Army, Yongsan Archive.

<sup>12</sup> “Projects and Programs to Project Directive, Dependent Housing Construction,” United States Forces in Korea (USAFIK) Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1 1378/Box113), National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

<sup>13</sup> The United States acquiesced to Japanese domination in Korea in the Taft-Katsura Memorandum on July 29, 1905, which gave the US “approval to Japan’s suzerainty over Korea in return for Japanese disavowal of any aggressive intentions toward the Philippines.” After 23 years of official ties, the US terminated the treaty of 1882 and ordered Edwin Morgan, the last American minister to Korea, to close up the legation in Seoul when Korea became Japan’s protectorate in November of 1905. The 1910 treaty of annexation officially made Korea a part of the Japanese empire. Finley, *The U.S. Military Experience in Korea*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> The ambiguous phrase “in due course” was the focus of dissension between Koreans and the ally powers. Korea interpreted “due course” as matter of months while the allies deemed it in terms of years. *FRUS 1945, Vol. 6*, 1,098; *FRUS, The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1955), 770. The majority of Koreans had deeply disliked FDR’s trusteeship plan from the beginning. The announcement of the four-party trusteeship plan in December of 1945 provoked indignant protest by Koreans. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1946 that last September’s “banners, flags, flowers, and shouts of ‘Thanks Yanks!’” had been replaced by “anti-American demonstration, walkout of Koreans working with the American military government, and even of Koreans stoning U.S. soldiers.” “Riots in Korea, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 January 1946.

<sup>15</sup> E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1951), 225.

measures.<sup>16</sup> For instance, General Hodge during his first days in Korea infamously decided to temporarily preserve the deeply resented colonial rule of the Japanese police and the Governor General Abe and subsequently elicited indignant Korean outcry. Although General Hodge hastily abandoned this ill-conceived plan, it did reveal to Koreans and outside observers the USAMGIK's unfamiliarity with the local conditions and American unpreparedness.<sup>17</sup>

The intensification of the US-Soviet rivalry, as well as the polarization within Korean politics between the left and the right, further exacerbated the "uncertainty and confusion" of the occupation.<sup>18</sup> Historian George M. McCune contended in the October 1947 *Foreign Policy Reports* that the consequences of the "violent ideological warfare" between the United States and the Soviet Union overshadowed all local problems of occupation.<sup>19</sup> Economist James Shoemaker reiterated a similar observation as McCune, stating also in 1947 that "Economically and politically Korea is the victim of American-Russian difference in policy."<sup>20</sup> The deepening Soviet-American ideological and policy rift further made implementing the trusteeship, and in turn working toward an independent and unified Korea, nearly impossible. The US-Soviet Joint Commission adjourned in May of 1946 for the last time without agreeing to an outline of a provisional government. This failure to reach a compromise came as little surprise; even during the Joint Commission talks, the two sponsors engaged in establishing two separate and dissimilar governing entities in their respective sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. When the Americans entered southern Korea in 1945, they found it politically polarized. The conservatives, comprised of the dominant landowners and business entrepreneurs, sought to retain the status quo, while the left advocated land reforms and dismantling of the remnants of the economic, social, and political structures of the Japanese rule. General Hodge soon began to rely on the conservative factions and backed the pro-American, anti-communist, Syngman Rhee.<sup>21</sup> The growing mistrust between

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<sup>16</sup> Bonnie B.C. Oh, "Introduction: The Setting," in *Korea under the American Military Government, 1945-1948*, ed. Bonnie B.C. Oh (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 2. Consequently, the "Official Washington attitudes toward the peninsula were shaped and modified largely by policies of resident Military Government," assessed Meade. Meade, *American Military Government*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Regarding this particular incident, *Time* reported that General Hodge, "retained the Japs, including the notorious General Nobuyuki Abe... whom he thanked publicly for making the U.S. occupation 'simple and easy.' Hodge also kept the Japanese police, holding that Koreans were 'too excited' to perform police duty and that they were 'the same breed of cat as the Japanese.'" The indignant Korean outcry forced hasty abandonment of this tactic and although General Hodge relieved Governor Abe from authority and appointed Maj. Gen. Archibald V. Arnold Military Governor of Korea on September 12<sup>th</sup>, the *New York Times* declared it a "major error of political strategy and principle." "The Korean Way," *Time*, 24 September 1945, 23-4.

<sup>18</sup> In retrospect, the occupation period has been "characterized by uncertainty and confusion," according to the 1992 US Federal Research Division's official handbook on South Korea. This uncertainty and confusion stemmed "largely from the absence of a clearly formulated United States policy for Korea, the intensification of the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the polarization of Korean politics between left and right." Andrea Matles Savada and William Shaw, eds., *South Korea: A Country Study*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> George M. McCune, "The Occupation of Korea," *Foreign Policy Reports* 23, no. 15 (October 15, 1947): 190-3.

<sup>20</sup> James Shoemaker, "Notes on Korea's Postwar Economic Position" (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1947), 19.

<sup>21</sup> As the US embraced Rhee, whom if left to his own power would create a Korea hostile to communism, the Soviets backed an anti-American leader in the north. The Soviets favored a divided Korea over the possibility of a hostile, unified peninsula, and acted accordingly from the commencement of its military rule. Once Soviet forces established their occupational zone in northern Korea, they closed off its half of the peninsula from the southern portion. Soviet troops halted communication lines, stopped shipments of coal to the south, and even obstructed the transmission of electrical power to the southern zone. Devastated by WWII and seeking war reparations, the Soviets sought to extricate natural resources of northern Korea. Soviet occupation authorities also actively encouraged

the Soviets and Americans meant that Korean aspirations for a unified and independent nation would not be realized. As Bonnie B.C. Oh suggests, “Since Korea’s liberation from Japan was a result of an Allied victory in World War II and not of Korean anti-Japanese resistance, Koreans had little say in the outcome of liberation... The price of this ‘easily’ gained freedom was high.”<sup>22</sup>

Unfamiliarity with local conditions and escalating global tensions coalesced to produce ad hoc and often contradictory economic policies as well during the first year. The American economic plan for the southern zone initially emphasized immediate and temporary measures, given the uncertainty of unification and length of occupation. The USAMGIK administered almost exclusively relief items, primarily food, clothing, fertilizer, and petroleum, while virtually ignoring manufacturing industries, which still only operated at 20 percent of their prewar level in the summer of 1947.<sup>23</sup> The postwar chaos, daunting impediments of the Japanese colonial legacy, and the national division also hindered the early economic approaches. A foremost problem was the mass repatriation of Koreans who had been mobilized to work in factories and mines in Manchuria, northern Korea, and Japan for the Japanese war effort. An estimated four million people, 16 percent of the Korean population, lived outside of Korea in 1944; fully 20 percent of all Koreans had been uprooted if including those moved internally, mostly rural southerners mobilized to work in the industrialized north.<sup>24</sup> For instance, the military government’s Bureau of Public Health and Welfare in the south Jeolla province estimated 276,125 Korean refugees from Japan and other areas in the first year alone.<sup>25</sup> The USAMGIK, thus, had to address the immediate relief needs of these millions of returning Koreans, who faced missing families, lost land, unemployment, and crowded conditions.

The asymmetrical industrial development, or the “structural deformation,”<sup>26</sup> under Japanese rule as well as the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel that divided the interdependent halves further impeded sound economic strategy. Following the seizure of Manchuria in 1931, Japan integrated northern Korea, with its abundant energy resources and its proximity to Manchuria, into Japan’s northeast Asian development plan.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, 86 percent of the heavy industries were concentrated in the northern region while the southern provinces had 74 percent of the light industries processing the energy and mineral sources from the north.<sup>28</sup> After the 1945 division, therefore, the light manufacturing industries in the south lost their access to the north’s raw material and power sources, with the northern region also having produced 92 percent of the hydroelectric energy.<sup>29</sup> Economist James Shoemaker in 1947 cautioned that “The erection of the barrier along the Thirty-eighth Parallel can be considered nothing less than the economic strangulation of the

Soviet-style social and political structures in northern Korea, paralleling the activities of their counterparts who, too, sought to establish a pro-American regime in the southern region. *FRUS 1945, Vol 6*, 1024-43, 1059-1144; Kathryn Weathersby, “Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives” (Washington, DC: Cold War International History Project, 1993), 5, 9, 13.

<sup>22</sup> Oh, “Introduction,” *Korea under the American Military Government, 1945-1948*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> William Adams Brown, Jr. and Redvers Opie, *American Foreign Assistance* (Washington, DC: The Bookings Institution, 1953), 371-3.

<sup>24</sup> Carter J. Eckert and others, eds., *Korea Old and New, A History* (Seoul, Korea: Harvard University Korea Institute, 1990), 322-3. Bruce Cumings, “The Legacy of Japanese Colonialism in Korea” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 490.

<sup>25</sup> Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 221-2.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen Brun and Jacques Hersh, *Socialist Korea: A Case Study in the Strategy of Economic Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 119.

<sup>27</sup> Eckert and others, *Korea Old and New*, 305-310.

<sup>28</sup> Brun and Hersh, *Socialist Korea*, 119.

<sup>29</sup> Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 8-9; Brun and Hersh, *Socialist Korea*, 119.

nation.”<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the exodus of Japanese technicians and managers, a result of the division of labor along ethnic lines during the colonial period, further impeded the recovery. Faced with these interconnected hindrances, the American military government attempted to navigate the conflicting policy advices between “relief” and “rehabilitation.”<sup>31</sup> The hesitancy also stemmed from the fear that fostering a separate economic entity would, at the least, be futile after the unification, and at the worst, further exacerbate the division of Korea. The colonial legacies as well as the postwar division thus stalled any long-term planning and crucial restructuring.

### *The Shift to “Buildup” and “Semi-Permanent Occupation Status”*

By early 1947, the uncertainty of the first year shifted toward a political and economic “buildup” of the southern zone. President Harry S. Truman’s March 1947 announcement of the “containment” policy – the unilateral “checking” of the spread of global communism through military and economic aid – proclaimed the official death of the “Rooseveltian internationalism.”<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, the goal of economic policy clearly changed from “relief” to “building up” the south as the “display window of democracy” against communism.<sup>33</sup> The headline, “Cash for Korea: Truman is Advised to Seek \$200 Million for Stop-the-Soviet Drive” on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* on May 19, 1947, announced the application of the Truman Doctrine in Korea.<sup>34</sup> More than just containing the “Soviet drive,” containment also synthesized economic aims with security concerns. As historian Bruce Cumings posits, an integral part of this “build up” was to “connect up” Korea to Japan. As discussed in a March 27, 1947 State Department interdepartmental report, Soviet dominated Korea would threaten Japan, the primary US interest in Asia. Washington deemed a friendly Korea necessary as “a hinterland for Japanese industry and a frontyard of Japanese defense.”<sup>35</sup> According to historian Takemae Eiji, by bolstering the Japanese economy, the State Department strategists intended to transform Japan “into a pro-American center of regional power from which the spread of Soviet influence in Asia could be checked.”<sup>36</sup> The “buildup” of Korea meant integrating the peninsula as Japan’s economic appendage and security buffer zone against the threat of a Soviet dominated Korea and later, a communist China.

<sup>30</sup> Shoemaker, “Notes on Korea’s Postwar Economic Position,” 19.

<sup>31</sup> Brown and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 373-4.

<sup>32</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract 1947-1950*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002), 35.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 373-4.

<sup>34</sup> The proposal followed the \$400 million Greek-Turkey aid bill, which had recently gained congressional approval. It also reported that the Korean occupation presented an opportunity “for America to make a good impression in the eyes of the world, to show it can do a bang-up job of rebuilding Korea by methods of democracy and free enterprise. Robert Brundage, “Cash for Korea: Truman is Advised to Seek \$200 Million for Stop-the-Soviet Drive,” *Wall Street Journal*, 19 May 1947.

<sup>35</sup> Secretary of State Marshall asked Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson to draft a policy “to organize a definite government of So. Korea and *connect up [sic]* its economy with that of Japan,” in January of 1947, before the announcement of the Truman Doctrine. As quoted in Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, 50.

<sup>36</sup> Often referred to as the “reverse course,” this major shift in American occupation policy in Japan – from the initial democratization, decentralization, and demilitarization toward political repression of the left, economic recentralization, and limited rearmament – failed to generate a robust economic turn-about, however. In early March 1948, Policy Planning Chief George Kennan visited Tokyo, with a mission “to engineer a shift away from such ‘destabilising reforms’ as the purge, reparations, the dismantling of the Home Ministry, police decentralization, *zaibatsu* dissolution and liberal trade unionism.” In concert with the Pentagon and US business interests, Kennan engineered “a change of pace and orientation that some would later become known as the ‘reverse course.’” Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), 458-9.

This struggle for communist containment was of course not just external, Soviet or Chinese, but also within Korea. Land reform policies, perhaps more than any other single issue, illustrated both American ignorance of local conditions as well as the shift in the occupation aims from carrying out a multilateral trusteeship plan toward unilateral buildup of a viable southern government. If the northern half of the peninsula had been developed for mining and extractive industries, the south had 75 percent of arable land paddies.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, the colonial land and rice export policies disproportionately intensified class division in the south, with the tenancy rate increasing to over 70 percent.<sup>38</sup> In line with the early economic policy of “relief,” the USAMGIK refrained from mass redistribution of former Japanese owned properties. The USAMGIK left the land issue unsettled, in part because of the strong popular impulse among Koreans for economic self-government and autonomy.<sup>39</sup> But more significantly, the military government continually postponed land reform at the urging of USAMGIK’s conservative Korean advisors, many of whom were large landowners.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to the radical land reform in Japan carried out during the American occupation, the military government in Korea instead supported landlords and maintained the economic-power status quo.<sup>41</sup>

In the last months of the military rule in 1948, the US Army introduced a limited program that divided formerly Japanese owned land in order to offset the propagandist appeal of land collectivization and reform in North Korea.<sup>42</sup> By 1946 in the North, Kim Il Sung and the communist party had gained legitimacy for implementing one of the most rapid and thoroughgoing land redistribution in history.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, the conservative political and economic policies of the south largely helped fuel a series of strikes, peasant uprisings, and guerrilla movements (with Jeju Island and Yosu Rebellions being the two most significant and brutally repressed) that claimed over 100,000 South Korean lives between Liberation and the Korean War.<sup>44</sup> Before exiting, thereafter, the USAMGIK implemented moderate land redistribution, which although accounting for less than twenty percent of the total, effectively

<sup>37</sup> Brun and Hersh, *Socialist Korea*, 119.

<sup>38</sup> A conservative estimate is that in the 1920s and 1930s Japanese holdings probably accounted for 20 percent or more of the total arable land in Korea and more than 50 percent of the farmland in some southern counties, where land was particularly productive. Moreover, rent payments equaled between 40 and 60 percent of total harvests. About 60 percent of the rice exported from Korea was supplied through Japanese landowners. Sameul Pao-San Ho, “Colonialism and Development: Korea, Taiwan, and Kwantung,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 373-4. In 1913, the tenancy rate was 42 percent, but by 1945, the tenancy rate had increased to 69 percent. Eckert and others, *Korea Old and New*, 307.

<sup>39</sup> The reason why the land reform remained unsettled, according to Dr. Arthur C. Brunce, economic advisor to General Hodge, “lay in the attitude of the Koreans.” In a Seoul press conference, September 4, 1946, Dr. Brunce stated that, “We have not put any of them into action, because in our public opinion poll, 70% of the farmers said they would rather wait until we had some sort of a provisional government to handle the reform, rather than have the Americans do it in cooperation with the Koreans.” Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 227.

<sup>40</sup> Eckert and others, *Korea Old and New*, 339.

<sup>41</sup> John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>42</sup> Brown and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 374.

<sup>43</sup> Widespread approval and lack of bloodshed can be explained by the moderate nature of the reforms, such as the land to the tiller policy and not collectivization, as well as the availability of the south as a refuge for landowners. The “revolution” was not portrayed as socialism, but rather as broad-based, democratic, patriotic, and anti-Japanese nationalism. In the aftermath of the land reform, 70 percent of the farmers were ardent supporters of the new North Korean regime, according to the US military intelligence reports. Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 81, 85.

<sup>44</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, chaps. 7 and 8.; Bruce Cumings, *The Two Koreas: On the Road to Reunification?* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1990), 35.

reduced the tenancy rate from 73 to 40 percent by June 1949. Furthermore, to help legitimate the new Rhee government, the Americans pressed the South Korean legislature to pass the 1949 land reform law, limiting the size of land owned by large Korean landlords. When fully implemented during the Korean War, this more comprehensive redistribution eventually reduced the tenancy rate to seven percent, successfully dismantling the political-economic foundation of traditional and colonial Korea.<sup>45</sup>

The official policy shift from “relief” to “buildup” also meant improved troop housing conditions. Although the United States did not intend to build any permanent military bases in Korea, from late 1946 and peaking in 1947, the Military Government constructed temporary structures and modified existing, mostly Japanese colonial, buildings as part of its “conversion from combat status to semi-permanent occupation status.”<sup>46</sup> When the USAMGIK returned schools and factories taken over the previous year to Korea in 1946, American forces built tent and Quonset hut camps to replace this lost housing.<sup>47</sup> The military approved a series of building projects, such as to “construct approximately 550 tent frames, including floors and subfloors for squad tents... necessary roads and electrical fixtures... [and] winterized tent frames for utility buildings, latrines and headquarters rooms” for the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (7ID) Area in Seoul.<sup>48</sup> Unlike the temporary housing of his first year, T/Sgt. Hodges’ company moved into a former Japanese barracks on the south side of Seoul by the fall of 1947. The two-story building had “space for a recreational room for the men, barracks area and toilets and showers,” which Hodges noted were much better than the former abandoned police barrack. Hodges’ new residence was probably similar to such two-story brick structures as building 2552, located in Yongsan Army Post (Figure 3).

Initially named Camp Sobinggo (“Western Ice Box” and later renamed Yongsan, “Dragon Mountain”), the 7ID first occupied Yongsan early in September of 1945. At that time the camp, which had been the headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Army and the 23d Infantry Regiment garrison in Korea for some thirty-five years (1910-1945), consisted of 56 mostly two-story redbrick buildings.<sup>49</sup> Upon taking over the 56 buildings, Americans continuously modified the interiors to accommodate the new military residents. A project to “rehabilitate 39 houses, formerly Japanese occupied,” for officers’ quarters was approved in September of 1946 for Yongsan, for instance.<sup>50</sup> The renovation of these houses included “Americanizing” them by raising the door openings, laying new floor to replace mats, and installing American type bathroom facilities. Americans also undertook urgent projects to install or rehabilitate heating facilities by early 1947. Inadequate heating plants and supplementary oil-fired space or

<sup>45</sup> According to John Lie, this land reform “unleashed a structural transformation that opened up the possibility of later development.” Lie, *Han Unbound*, 12, 18.

<sup>46</sup> The Maintenance Project 1946 claimed, “This command is in the process of conversion from combat status to semi-permanent occupation status, therefore computation of quantities of materials required are based on demand experience, and survey of condition of installations.” “Maintenance Project 1946,” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 114), NARA.

<sup>47</sup> “Assignment of Barracks and Quarters 1946,” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command General Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 136), NARA.

<sup>48</sup> “Project Directive (Signal Service Installation) to Project Directive (Tent Frames),” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 116), NARA.

<sup>49</sup> Denfeld, *American Military Camps in the Republic of Korea*, 109.

<sup>50</sup> “Rehabilitation of Officers Quarters 1945-48,” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 116), NARA.



conversion heaters posed consistent fire dangers for the troops.<sup>51</sup> Even in the new barracks, Hodges, too, experienced Korea's bitter winter: "The Japanese officers must have trained themselves to take this cold weather better than we have," Hodges commented. As the period of occupation extended indefinitely and the American personnel still numbered over 50,000 in August 1947,<sup>52</sup> the 24 Corps Headquarters noted the need to develop "Mobilization Type standards" and estimated that the plans to renovate the "crude and deficient" Japanese constructions would take four years and cost \$82.5 million dollars.<sup>53</sup> This proposed long-term and expensive investment as well as T/Sgt. Hodges' housing trajectory, from ad-hoc warehouse to more comfortable barracks, indicated the physical changes in the presence of the USAFIK from temporary-1945 to "rehabilitated"-1948.

In addition to adequate housing for the troops, the new phase included provisions for athletic activities and leisure facilities, in a concerted effort by the American military leaders to bolster the health and morale of the troops. In September of 1946, the military approved a proposal to erect fourteen Quonset huts to prepare for "enlisted personnel on recreation pass in Seoul Area," designated as the central region for Rest and Recreation.<sup>54</sup> The American military also renovated the Japanese-designed Hot Springs Hotel at Paekchon for the use as a 7ID rest area. This 1947 project included equipping latrines "with American style flush toilets in place of the Jap slit trench type toilets," replacing the mat floors of bedrooms with wood, and installing an American style kitchen as well as a "soda fountain terrazzo topped counter...in the ping pong room" with an ice cream machine.<sup>55</sup> A particular request for the construction of a theatre, chapel, and gymnasium reasoned that "the problem of maintaining the health and morale standards of the troops" in more remote camps was considerable. Accordingly, the local commander contended that the construction of the recreation building was of "essential" and "an emergency nature."<sup>56</sup>

Military efforts to boost troop morale also included activities such as organized sports and dances. Several *New York Times* articles painted a jovial social scene of large dance halls, where American troops danced with "Keisang girls, the Korean equivalent of the Japanese high-class geishas, [who] are remarkably well up in current dance steps," and of the Bun Chung shopping district, where Americans "found a real East in the Seoul Bazaar."<sup>57</sup> The US Army also launched an ambitious sports program throughout the Asia Pacific for its more than 350,000 GIs to foster physical and mental wellbeing, while exposing the host nations to American sports.<sup>58</sup> The Red Cross also contributed to providing "healthy" recreations. During a spring month in 1946, nearly 34,000 troops used the Capitol Club in Seoul for Red Cross-sponsored activities

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<sup>51</sup> For a single month of November 1947, the military reported 29 fires, majority caused either by oil-fired stoves, hot water heaters or ranges, with a damage of 126 thousand dollars. "Records and Reports of Fires and Other Accidents" and "Construction 1946," USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box127 and Box113), NARA.

<sup>52</sup> 48,276 troops, 3,600 civilian employees, 3,600 dependents, and 150 other authorized personnel. "Dependent Housing Construction" and "Maintenance Project 1947," USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378 Box119 and Box114), NARA.

<sup>53</sup> "Dependent Housing Construction," NARA.

<sup>54</sup> "Project Directive (Signal Service Installation) to Project Directive (Tent Frames)," NARA.

<sup>55</sup> "Hotel Renovation 1947-1948," USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378 /Box117), NARA.

<sup>56</sup> "Construction of Theatre, Chapel, Gymnasium, 1947-1948," USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box117), NARA.

<sup>57</sup> "Korea's Gaiety Survives Bondage," *New York Times*, 21 October 1945; "GI's in Korea Go Shopping," *New York Times*, 25 September 1945.

<sup>58</sup> "Army Sports Open for All in Pacific," *New York Times*, 12 December 1946.

such as Bingo, music hour, talk on Korea, and a birthday party.<sup>59</sup> Dances appeared to have been the most popular activity among the troops. In May of 1946, the Seoul Club branch of the American Red Cross reported, “Our E.M. Dance that week was, shall I say, ‘well-attended,’ or ‘over-attended.’ The boys enjoy dancing more than anything else over here, but even on the night when we hit an all-time high mark in attendance with more than 40 girls present, it was still the same old theme – ‘not enough girls.’”<sup>60</sup> The military leaders believed that “healthy” recreational opportunities, such as those offered by the military and the Red Cross, would improve morale. Moreover, they believed that these activities would also alleviate the problems arising from servicemen’s crime and fraternization with the locals.

Along with jovial depictions of the troops enjoying themselves in dances and sporting events, the media also reported on the growing black market and crimes ranging from theft to murder. General Hodge expressed dismay that “few outlaws and thugs” were “destroying the good-will and trust of liberated Koreans for the American forces here, making them fear and hate us...destroying the prestige of America in the Orient.”<sup>61</sup> The growing black market, exacerbated by rampant inflation and the dearth of consumer goods in Korea, offered enterprising GIs opportunities to supplement their salaries. The *New York Times* reported in 1947, perhaps with some exaggeration, that “there is a greater flow of money into the United States from the occupation area than is going out from the United States to these zones.”<sup>62</sup> Koreans also actively participated in this profitable flow of American goods into the rest of Korea, at times as partners to GIs or as thieves who brazenly disregarded the installation boundaries to steal the goods to sell in the black market. T/Sgt. Hodges, while asleep, had all of his belongings stolen from his room. His company then “built a fence around the back side of the compound and had some army guard dogs to protect us,” recounted Hodges, and “by the time a few of the would be burglars got bit by the dogs, the word got around to stay away from there.”

All American encounters with Koreans, of course did not create problems. Rather, some GI humanitarian works fostered a great deal of goodwill. Stories of GIs as “the unsung heroes” working to fight diseases like cholera and such headlines as, “‘Forgotten’ Korea Lepers Given Hope by U.S. Aid: GI Benefactors Relays Thanks of Colony for American Gifts of Money, Clothing, Toys” and “G.I.’s in Korea to Play Santa,” frequented the news.<sup>63</sup> T/Sgt. Hodges, too, extended his time and resources to Korean children. On his way up to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, he stopped at a large orphanage to offer them heating supplies. “I called Lt. Kemp and he said he could send them a load of wood,” Hodges recounted. He visited the orphanage several more times, and for Christmas, he went to the Post Exchange (PX) to purchase gifts. He then put the names of his two daughters back in the US on the wrapped gifts before giving them to two of the children. Stories of such individual acts of generosity, as well as military organized humanitarian efforts, abounded well into the postwar years. Among the most extensive, the EUSA Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK), which lasted from 1954 to 1963, contributed approximately \$22 million to projects such as building of schools and orphanages.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Capitol Club Seoul, Korea 21 February to 20 March 1946,” American Red Cross Papers, National Library of Korea, Seoul.

<sup>60</sup> “20 May 1946, Seoul Club,” American Red Cross Papers, National Library of Korea, Seoul.

<sup>61</sup> “Soldiers Upbraided for Crimes in Korea,” *New York Times*, 5 March 1946.

<sup>62</sup> “U.S. Acts in Korea to End Exchange Evil,” *New York Times*, 21 June 1946.

<sup>63</sup> “Fighting Cholera in Korea,” *New York Times*, 12 November 1947; “‘Forgotten’ Korea Lepers Given Hope by U.S. Aid: GI Benefactors Relays Thanks of Colony for American Gifts of Money, Clothing, Toys,” *Los Angeles Times*, 17 January 1955; “G.I.’s in Korea to Play Santa,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1953.

<sup>64</sup> 8th US Army Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK) Project Files, 1954-63, (RG 338/290/C/53/02-04/Boxes

In contrast, fraternization of a more intimate kind with Korean women, and especially the high rate of venereal disease, caused one of the greatest problems for the American military. Stationed in the heart of Seoul, Hodges “lived right in town among the population,” and the contact was so prevalent that he “had to physically eject the young Korean girls from the barracks.” “This had been going on for some time, and I had to stop it. There was too much Venereal Disease going on around us,” he explained.<sup>65</sup> The venereal disease rate in 1948 among American troops indicated the extent of this intimate contact. According to the December 1948 Historical Unit Medical Detachment (HUMEDS) Records of the Far East Command, venereal diseases “continued to be the highest single cause of admission to hospital and quarters with a rate of 109 per thousand per annum.” Korea had a higher number of VD cases than the Far East Command average, with nearly 20 percent of the troops hospitalized in 1948 for VD.<sup>66</sup> Not only in Korea, but in general, military authorities battled to reduce extremely high rates of VD wherever the GIs went. One solution to this predicament, as previously mentioned, was to provide more entertainment on installations. A March 1948 request to renovate a building for use as a theater and chapel emphasized the need for recreational facilities for troops, “particularly as a means of reducing venereal disease contacts.” The War Department in its January 1947 letter, “Discipline and Venereal Disease,” established the correlation between availability of “healthy” recreation opportunities with that of troop discipline and VD rates.<sup>67</sup> In Korea, however, the temporary nature of the military occupation prevented extensive investments into housing and recreational structures in these impermanent garrisons.

American military also sought to regulate the sex industry. Concerns over the health of American troops led the US military government to adopt the Japanese colonial system of officially sanctioned red-light districts along with compulsory VD exams and a registration system for the prostitutes.<sup>68</sup> AMG intelligence officer, Meade, reported that although houses of prostitution were ordinarily placed off limits for American troops, the medical officer secured permission “to keep them on limits providing there would be weekly inspection of the working personnel.” Despite prohibiting it legally, the military government did not consider “a Korean

2195-2214), NARA.

<sup>65</sup> Veteran’s Survey, James Hodges Papers, USAMHI.

<sup>66</sup> 185, 178, and 169 out of 1000 in September, October, and November of 1948, respectively, were hospitalized for VD. “Venereal Disease 1948, Office of the Surgeon General 1948,” Historical Unit Medical Detachment (HUMEDS) Records, (390/18/17/14/E.1012/Box 500), NARA.

<sup>67</sup> 6 March 1948 Request for a Project Directive for Construction of a Theater and Chapel, Box 113/Folder AG 600.1 Construction and Installation 1948, NARAII.

<sup>68</sup> Prior to American entry in 1945, *kisaeng*, artistic female entertainers organized by the state and institutionalized during the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, served elite Japanese and Korean men during the colonial era. The Japanese eventually promoted commercialization and expansion of sexual work, by first “importing” Japanese prostitutes and later organizing Korean women into prostitutes. John Lie, “The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Korea,” *Gender and Society* 9 (June 1995): 310-327. Lee Na Young, in her study of the construction of camptown prostitution chronicles this colonial process of establishing a government-controlled sex industry. The Japanese enacted the Kyungshung Consulate Order No.3 in 1904, officially sanctioning the existence of prostitutes and authorizing “pleasure quarter districts” in regions where the Japanese were concentrated. In March 1916, the Laws Regulating Houses of Assignment and Prostitutes consolidated the licensed prostitution system on a national scale and granted licenses to operate with detailed regulations to control prostitutes. As USAMGIK took over Japanese colonial military camps and other structures, the military government also “inherited” some of the pleasure districts established during the colonial period in areas with concentrated Japanese residence. Some of these communities continue to exist as contemporary red-light districts, such as Wanwol-dong in Pusan and Sonhwa-dong in Inchon. Lee Na Young, “The Construction of U.S. Camptowns in South Korea: Trans/Formation and Resistance” (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2006), 65-69, 101-2.

prostitute disobeying the law unless she engaged in sexual intercourse with any member of the occupying forces while ‘suffering from a venereal disease in an infectious stage.’” This direct-regulation held venereal disease among the occupying troops to a minimum until the spring of 1946, according to Meade, when the efforts of Army chaplains succeeded in having the brothels placed off limits.<sup>69</sup> Military authorities not only tolerating, but also even assisting organized prostitution as a way to stem VD rate was not unique to Korea. Commanders overseas generally took for granted troop participation in the sex industry and often argued for measures to fight against VD, such as military management of brothels.<sup>70</sup>

The permissive policy indicated the military’s primary concern for the health of their troops as well as the attitude that considered sexual “recreation” inevitable. In other American occupied nations, such as Germany and Japan, black markets and military sex trades also flourished. In Germany, women traded sexual favors for tins of corned beef, cigarettes, soap, or chocolate – taking on a kind of “amateur prostitution” in order to survive.<sup>71</sup> Petra Goedde documents that food served as the most common instrument of courtship and the “borderline between love affairs and prostitution became blurred because nearly all GIs supported their German lovers with food and material supplies.” The threat of venereal disease and the steadily increasing number of so-called *Besatzungskinder* (occupation children), children born between German women and occupation soldiers, indicated the degree of fraternization.<sup>72</sup> In Japan, on the other hand, prostitution for the occupying forces took on an officially organized form. The Japanese state continued its wartime role as the “pimp” of the “comfort system” into the American occupation period, according to John Lie.<sup>73</sup> Militarized prostitution began with the advent of Japan’s expansionist war into China in 1937 and the subsequent mobilization of as many as estimated two hundred thousand women, the majority of them Koreans, in a sexual slavery system maintained by the Japanese military during the war.<sup>74</sup> Just three days after the defeat, the Japanese Home Ministry instructed regional police officials to prepare “comfort facilities” for the occupation army,<sup>75</sup> which, on August 26, 1945, commenced as the Recreation Amusement Association (RAA). Despite its popularity and initial support, alarmed by the rise in venereal disease among the troops, SCAP ordered the abolition of all “public” prostitution in January 1946.<sup>76</sup> The American government in Japan, like its counterparts in Korea, accepted the

<sup>69</sup> Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 220-1.

<sup>70</sup> Annie P. Baker, *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 34.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>72</sup> According to Goedde, unofficial estimates placed the number of American-German babies at roughly 94,000 over the course of the occupation. Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 90-6.

<sup>73</sup> And the recruited lower class and displaced women became “a blockade, to sustain and cultivate the purity of the race” by protecting the rest of the Japanese women from Americans. John Lie, “The State as Pimp: Prostitution and the Patriarchal State in Japan in the 1940s” *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (Spring, 1997): 257.

<sup>74</sup> 80 percent of an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 “comfort women” of World War II were Korean. And this high proportion of Koreans was the fact that, according to Oh, there were plenty of poor Korean young women, who could be “recruited,” enticed, and deceived with the promise of well-paying jobs, kidnapped, conscripted, and even sold. Moreover, Japanese soldiers reportedly preferred Korean women. Bonnie B.C. Oh, “The Japanese Imperial System and the Korean ‘Comfort Women’ of World War II,” in *Legacies of the Comfort Women of World War II*, ed. Margaret Stetz and Bonnie B.C. Oh (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2001), 9-10.

<sup>75</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 125.

<sup>76</sup> By the time of the prohibition, almost 90 percent of the R.A.A. women tested positive for infection, and syphilis was detected in 70 percent of the members of a single unit of the EUSA, and gonorrhea in 50 percent. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 130. Although proscribed after 1958, paid sex work survived and in fact proliferated, particularly

existence of the sex industry that catered to the occupation troops; and both flip-flopped between controlling and outlawing prostitution largely for the purpose of VD control.

Besides providing more recreational opportunities and regulating prostitution, the American military began to send families overseas in the late 1940s, especially in occupied Germany and Japan. By sending families overseas, postwar planners attempted to address issues of morale, retention, and discipline as well as solve the problem of family reunion demands.<sup>77</sup> The War Department announced on January 31, 1946, that depending on the availability of housing, subsistence, and medical services, families could join the soldiers overseas.<sup>78</sup> A small number of spouses joined military officers deployed in Korea as well, yet the percentage of family-accompanied tours and the construction of dependent housing stayed relatively small, compared to other overseas theaters. While Germany and Japan constituted two “strongpoints” to defend and rehabilitate, the US considered Korea a peripheral place and thus, a low priority for dependent housing investment. By 1950, an estimated 90,000 military family members lived overseas, mainly in West Germany and Japan; by 1960, this number would climb to over 462,000.<sup>79</sup> The USFIK, in contrast, cancelled in January of 1948 even the limited construction plans for family housing put forth in 1947 in light of the rapidly changing political situation and subsequent troop reductions underway.<sup>80</sup>

Irma Tennant Materi and Dorothy House Vieman were two of the earliest and limited number of wives allowed to accompany their husbands, high-ranking officers in the Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG), to Korea in the late 1940s. Vieman moved into a former Japanese house in the industrial suburb of Yeongdeungpo (Camp Gray Annex), a few miles from downtown Seoul and Camp Sobbingo. Vieman adored her new house with its paper-sliding doors and walls. The American military housing compound in this area consisted of homes of Japanese colonial officials who had managed the silk mills of the suburb. Materi also first moved into a “lovely” two-story house, replete with Japanese *tatami* floors, Western parlor furniture, and Korean servants.<sup>81</sup> Within a couple of months after arrival, however, Materi moved out of this hybridized house and into a Quonset in Camp Sobbingo (Yongsan). Materi described the installation as an area “entirely American, like an army post, an idea that appealed to [her] immensely for security reasons.” They furnished their two-bedroom Quonset hut with convenient amenities, such as an oven and washing machine, and stocked it with familiar consumer goods from the commissary. The military also provided entertainment places on bases, such as the officer’s club that Materi described, that offered “several dining rooms, a ballroom, two bars, ping-pong room, card room, and nursery with several Korean nursemaids in attendance.”<sup>82</sup>

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in Okinawa, which was occupied by the United States until the early 1970s. Lie, “The State as Pimp,” 259.

<sup>77</sup> Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Overseas and the Cold War, 1946-1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 26.

<sup>78</sup> According to Alvah, an “Army account cited the ‘reestablishment of normal family life,’ said to constitute ‘an essential long-term morale measure,’ as the primary motivation for sending families overseas.” *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>80</sup> The March 1947 Interim Dependent Housing report indicated that the demand amounted to 1,789, while units available numbered 803. 1,455 family units had been authorized for construction, with 1,800 family units were expected to be available by December of 1947. But by February 1948, project directives for dependent housing were canceled, with the construction of 99 dependent housing units suspended in the 7ID Area. “Construction of Dependent Housing 1947” and “Construction Projects in the Seoul Area 1948,” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 135 and Box 118), NARA.

<sup>81</sup> Irma Tennant Materi, *Irma and the Hermit: My Life in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), 28.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-5, 115, 202.

While the life on Camp Sobbingo offered security, conveniences, and familiarity, living in what Materi called a “modernistic tin can” also meant frozen water pipes and poor insulation as well as frequent plumbing problems. She wondered whether “the Koreans had learned anything from the Japs at all,” when comparing her situation to her “friends in Japan who had not only faultless plumbing but pearl-inlaid toilet seats.”<sup>83</sup> Unlike Materi in Korea, military wives in mainland Japan described their houses as attractive and comfortable.<sup>84</sup> Even Vieman, who declared herself “Korea crazy,” could not help but admire the grand amenities for the American military in Tokyo compared to Korea. She described the PX in Tokyo as a “paradise!” with six stories of “everything from fur coats...to Oriental silks and gifts.” The “primitive” conditions in Korea were exacerbated not only by the material poverty of the nation, but also the lack of American military investment. Dorothy Vieman described Korea as the “end of the line – the hardship post, where dependents were taboo and the prospect was eighteen months of bachelorhood.”<sup>85</sup>

Within these converted former Japanese dwellings, history and a hierarchy of power converged; within Japanese frame and foundation, American comforts and tastes occupied its inside, while Koreans were relegated to the servant quarters. Since Korean domestic workers “came attached to” the military houses, one of the most common forms of encounters between Americans and Koreans took place in the domestic space, with Koreans employed by the U.S. military to work as “houseboys” or maids for American military families. Upon meeting her three houseboys, Vieman “felt funny” realizing that “they were going to be a part of my daily life from now on.”<sup>86</sup> Materi also employed Korean domestic workers, and throughout her memoir, Materi did not hide her disdain for her employees. “One wondered at times whether to brain Korean servants, laugh at them, or fire them,” she marveled. Materi claimed that her contemporaries shared “almost unanimously” the opinion “that the Koreans as a whole made very poor house servants as compared with the Chinese or Japanese.” “To begin with,” she explained, “even the lowliest of them seemed to have a fierce national pride. They embraced wholeheartedly the American theories of democracy and all men being created equal. There was never any trace of the inferiority complex which plagues many minority groups.” In her various counts of Koreans – “Irish of the Orient,” “lazy hillbilly,” “pest” – Materi described Koreans in general as unsophisticated. Unflattering judgments aside, Materi conceded that “it was impossible to generalize about a whole people. The East seems destined forever to confuse and confound the West.”<sup>87</sup> That Koreans actually embraced American ideals of democracy and equality made them even more peculiar to Materi.

This “Orientalizing” of Koreans, of course, was not unique to Materi. The fact that Materi found it surprising that the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans did not exude the same interchangeable traits attested to a popular notion of the monolithic “Orient.” Vieman, very aware of this racialized perceptions of Asians, addressed the stereotypes by claiming, “Two truths that may be shocking to some Westerners are that Koreans do have a concept of cleanliness and that they are not stupid.”<sup>88</sup> Materi’s attitude signified her participation in the construction of an “Orientalized” imperial hierarchy; American-Korean relations were informed

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 210-11.

<sup>84</sup> Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors*, 32.

<sup>85</sup> Dorothy House Vieman, *Korean Adventure: Inside Story of an Army Wife* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor Company, 1951), 6, xi.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>87</sup> Materi, *Irma and the Hermit*, 129, 50, 250.

<sup>88</sup> Vieman, *Korean Adventure*, vii.

by preconceived notions of Asians brought by the Americans and colored by the most frequent form of contact with Koreans, who, for the most part, worked as domestic employees and in service industries for Americans. Perhaps the very temporary nature of the military occupation period and the equally transitory dwellings exacerbated the arrogance and unwillingness to “invest” in a place and the people.

### *The Disengagement and Exit*

Desiring to end the formal military occupation while also safeguarding the southern zone from communist spread, the US sought the involvement of the United Nations. Despite vehement Soviet denunciation, the UN General Council called for a joint election, and then for separate elections when the Soviets barred the United Nations Committee from entering the north.<sup>89</sup> Kim Kyu Sik, a moderate Korean political leader and a self-exiled nationalist during the Japanese colonial period,<sup>90</sup> denounced the plans for separate elections in 1948 and demanded foreign powers leave Korea. Kim called for unification and declared, “our independence cannot come from war between the big Powers or from peace among them... It is obvious that we can obtain independence only through our own efforts.”<sup>91</sup> True to Kim’s words, independence with the presence of the big powers proved impossible. In spite of violent oppositional obstructions against separate elections in the southern half, a separate Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) were established on August 15<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup> of 1948, respectively.<sup>92</sup> Accordingly, the US invested heavily to ensure the ROK’s survival after the American exit. By the time the newly centralized Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) took over the helm from the Army in 1949, their three year plan emphasized industrialization and recovery that proposed to develop fertilizer and power plants, expand technical assistance program, and encourage trade, especially with Japan. The Truman administration asked Congress for \$150 million in June of 1949 to fund this new economic direction in South Korea, the nation that James E. Webb, the Secretary of State, likened to an “outpost of freedom.”<sup>93</sup> All in all, from 1945 to 1951, total American grants to Korea amounted

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<sup>89</sup> *FRUS, General: The United Nations, 1947, Vol. 1*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1973), 100-102; Richard Whelan, *Drawing the Line: The Korean War, 1950-53* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 44.

<sup>90</sup> Kim was active with the Korean exiled provincial government and independence struggle. Early in 1919, Kim Kyusik traveled from Shanghai to Versailles on a mission to petition the Paris Peace Conference for his country’s independence from Japan on the basis of the principle of national self-determination espoused by Woodrow Wilson.

<sup>91</sup> Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 237.

<sup>92</sup> Fearing an end to all reasonable hopes of a peaceful unification, political leaders throughout Korea opposed a separate election. The left and the moderate-right called upon their followers to do all they could to obstruct the elections. The police killed 323 people in riots or raids, arrested more than 10,000, most of them leftists, and barred many more from political participation before the election date. *FRUS 1948, Vol 6*, 1080-1095; Whelan, *Drawing the Line*, 46.

<sup>93</sup> S. 2319/ H.R. 5330, “A Bill to promote peace and the general welfare, national interest, and foreign policy of the United States by providing aid to the Republic of Korea,” was first introduced in June of 1949 and after an initial rejection in the House on January 19, 1950, passed with amendments on February 9, 1950, and signed by President Truman on February 14, 1950 (Public Law 447). On June 28, 1949, James E. Webb, Under Secretary of State, testified that if the U.S. did not “assist this outpost of freedom so that it will have an opportunity to survive, countless millions of the peoples of Asia will begin to doubt the practical superiority of democratic principles.” “If we fail,” he continued, “we will provide a rallying cry by which the Communist leaders in all countries from Japan to India will attract more and more people to their cause.” Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Economic Assistance to China and Korea: 1949-1950: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations on S.2319*, 81<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1974), 120-1.

to nearly 530 million dollars and close to 25 million dollars more in loans and credits.<sup>94</sup>

The US made explicit that it had no intentions of building-up Korea as a fortress or to assume military responsibility for the ROK's defense once the occupation ended. Already in April of 1947, General Hodge declared to the South Korean Legislative Assembly that the United States did not have an interest in establishing military bases in Korea.<sup>95</sup> This announcement reflected the 1947 assessment by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), which ranked Korea 13th among 16 countries in terms of their importance to US security. The JCS believed that the Korean Peninsula was not an appropriate place to wage a war against communist countries, and recommended that the US military in Korea withdraw as soon as possible.<sup>96</sup> Policy Planning Chief George Kennan, one of the foremost authors of containment, also advocated commitment to "strongpoint" rather than "perimeter" defense. And the Truman administration shared Kennan's view that while the selected island strongpoints – Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines – should be protected, potentially debilitating commitments on the mainland Asia, from Afghanistan around to Korea, should be avoided.<sup>97</sup> Although the KMAG supported and oversaw the purging campaigns of domestic communists under the authoritarian regime of Rhee, which forced an estimated 300,000 Koreans to join communist re-education camps called the "National Guidance League," the US did not leave behind heavy equipment for fear that the south would launch an attack on the north.<sup>98</sup> The United States considered Korea a temporary outpost and the peninsula did not warrant a place in the "defense perimeter" of the US, as explicated in Acheson's "Great Crescent" speech in January 1950.<sup>99</sup>

By September of 1948, soon after the establishment of the Rhee regime, the US Army Forces in Korea began to withdraw from the peninsula. The period of buildup and semi-permanent occupation status, seen through the expansion of housing and recreational structures as well as the beginnings of dependent housing developments that peaked in 1947, quickly shifted toward disengagement by latter 1948. The flurry of installation and building relinquishments in late 1948 and early 1949, as well as the concentration of the remaining KMAG into the Seoul area, signaled America's military disengagement from the peninsula. Although this "abandonment" of Korea proved to be a brief interlude, the USAFIK expeditiously returned properties requisitioned since 1945 before their rapid departure.<sup>100</sup> The remaining

<sup>94</sup> From 1940-1952, in 12 years, the US extended over \$90 billion in total foreign assistance. Grants for East Asia, from 1945 to 1951 amounted to: China and Formosa 1,667,190,000; Japan 2,175,982,000; Ryukyu Islands 66,903,000; Korea 528,647,000. Loans and Credits: China 337,539,000; Japan 268,604,000; Korea 24,928,000 (form of surplus property). Brown, Jr. & Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 316. In comparison to its neighbors, Korea received far less grants and loans/credits.

<sup>95</sup> "More Aid to Korea Pledged by Hodge," *The New York Times*, 15 April 1947.

<sup>96</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, "U.S. Policy Change toward South Korea in the 1940s and the 1950s" *Journal of International and Area Studies* 7, no. 2 (2000): 89, 93.

<sup>97</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, rev.ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 2005), 56-9.

<sup>98</sup> Brown and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 382.

<sup>99</sup> "Speaking a week before the House of Representatives dramatically refused in January 1950 to accept the Executive proposals to continue assistance to Korea, Secretary Acheson did not include Korea in the 'defensive perimeter,' the areas in which the United States held defense positions and assumed direct responsibility for immediately resisting an attack." Acheson spoke in past tense when describing the commitment to Korea: "In the north, we *have* direct responsibility in Japan and we *have* direct opportunity to act. The same thing to a lesser degree is true in Korea. There we *had* direct responsibility, and there we *did* act, and there we have a greater opportunity to be effective than we have in the more southerly part." Brown and Opie, *American Foreign Assistance*, 380-1.

<sup>100</sup> For the year of 1948, 721 facilities were returned to the ROK. The flurry of activities, for example, was indicated in the properties returned and released for the week of May 20 to 26, 1948 amounted to 171. By the following few



KMAG concentrated into Camp Sobinggo, Yongdeung-po, and ASCOM City (Camp Market). American military strength decreased to 16,000 by the end of 1948 and further dwindled to 7,500 by early 1949. In January of 1949, the 24th Corps reversed its steps of September 1945 and left Korea. The last American combat soldiers (1,500 of them) steamed out of Incheon harbor on June 29, and USAFIK was officially deactivated at midnight the next day.<sup>101</sup> The end of the KMAG and the definitive closure of the occupation period came on June 25, 1950. Having completed their tour as KMAG, Dorothy Vieman and her husband received their orders to leave Korea in July of 1950. When the war broke out in June, however, Vieman had little time to gather her possessions, limited to one suitcase, before being evacuated with 800 other military dependents from Incheon to Fukuoka, Japan. All that was left behind was not long lost, however. The United States military returned to the peninsula, after the brief interlude, with the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950.

### The Reengagement: 1950-1953

*It was 9 P.M. when we got on the barge. As we sailed through a maze of islands, the water smelled stale. We got off and walked up a long ramp, waited in the darkness, realizing that in the hills people were fighting and dying—only 35 miles from us. We got on a truck and drove through the streets of Incheon. The filth and odor were something. People were sitting in front of the buildings, just staring. To think that some of the men came here looking for sex. Suddenly we came upon the camp, surrounded by a fence and barbed wire. This is where we were to spend the night. It was so bad that it was funny. The beds were cots, luckily off the floor. I placed a blanket over the bed, a towel where there was no pillow, smeared myself with insect repellent, and climbed into bed in my underwear.*

Melvin Horwitz, July 21, 1952<sup>102</sup>

Melvin Horwitz entered Korea during the Korean War via the Incheon harbor, like the occupation troops who had preceded him in the 1940s. As a doctor for a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH), Horwitz arrived in July 1952, after the war had reached a stalemate. His camp consisted of a dozen tents alongside a railroad track, 40 miles north of Seoul. The tent that Horwitz lived in had “brick floor, wooden supports, electric light, four bunks, table, wash stand with basins, and boy to keep it clean and get warm water in the morning.” Despite the minimal housing conditions, Horwitz enjoyed some nice services, such as “a good dinner, on a table cloth on a tray, served by a Korean waiter” and breakfast delivered to his tent by his 17-year-old houseboy.<sup>103</sup> Dr. Horwitz also sent to his wife a reel of film that he took of the Korean Service Corps putting up a small frame canvas hut with GIs. He shared his hope that he had captured “some of their faces—some clowning, some camera shy.” As for the tents, the “Jamesway Hut,” Horwitz described them as “really something,” with insulated walls, windows, screens, lighting

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weeks, ending in June 9, 1949, the total reached 575. And by the third week of January 1949, returned buildings numbered 1,191. “Disposition of Real Property or Land,” USAFIK Adjutant General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of Far East Command Headquarters, (RG554/290/51/25/A1/1378/Box 133), NARA.

<sup>101</sup> Herman M. Katz, “Memorandum for General Stilwell: Withdrawal of US Troops from Korea in 1949, 13 January 1975,” Yongsan Archives.

<sup>102</sup> Dorothy G. Horwitz, ed., *We Will Not Be Strangers: Korean War Letters Between A M.A.S.H. Surgeon and His Wife* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 29.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

fixtures, and even wall plugs.<sup>104</sup>

Dr. Horwitz's description of his initial days in Korea in many ways captured the wartime cultural landscapes. The living conditions on American military garrisons and the overall physical environment were rudimentary, albeit with nicer amenities according to military rank. Americans and Koreans interacted in their everyday life; GIs worked and lived on these garrisons with Koreans employed by the US military. Beyond the camps, the wartime conditions and the re-entry of millions of foreign troops also meant the proliferation of prostitution in the form of "blanket armies" and in "camptowns."<sup>105</sup> As Horwitz wondered how some came to Korea "looking for sex," the Korean War helped to systemize camptowns, or *gijichons*, red-light districts and service-oriented communities adjacent to foreign military installations. With their return, the American military resumed the official occupation of garrisons as well as expanded their vernacular landscapes. Moreover, the American military in wartime Korea reanimated the cultural landscapes developed during the occupation period, establishing a precedent that would impart a lasting postwar legacy.

### *The [Re]Building of Wartime Military Posts and American-Korean Interactions*

The wartime tent camps, such as those composed of the "Jamesway Hut" that Koreans and GIs put up in Melvin Horwitz's camp, indicated a new phase in US acquisition of land and facilities.<sup>106</sup> For instance, Camp Casey was constructed in November 1951 in Dongducheon, north of Seoul and south of the stalemate line of defense at the time. The US chose Dongducheon for two major reasons: the natural environment and the remnant of the Japanese colonial transportation system. The Soyu Mountains on the north side of Camp Casey created a parabolic arc, providing natural cover from long distance bombs, and the area also had plenty of natural water sources. Dongducheon, moreover, sat along a major trans-peninsular railroad. During the colonial period, the railroad project connecting the southern port city of Busan to Wonsan in North Korea-Manchuria border, passing through Yongsan Station in Seoul and Dongducheon Station, was completed on August 8, 1914.<sup>107</sup> Camp Casey started out as a tent camp in 1951, with additions of Quonset huts, messes, chapels, and recreation buildings in 1952-1953.<sup>108</sup> Four different US infantry divisions (2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>) garrisoned in Camp Casey during the Korean War; it subsequently housed four divisions (3d, 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and then 2d) after the war and stands as one of the largest military bases in South Korea today. Like Camp Casey, other wartime garrisons, which began with tents and Quonset huts, became the foundation for more permanent installations in the postwar decades.

Along with building new wartime garrisons, the US military also requisitioned occupation period installations. During the war, the American military reclaimed occupation period installations, such as Yongsan Garrison and the Naija Apartment Hotel. The KMAG, which had remained after the occupation ended, abandoned Camp Sobinggo in the early days of the war. This headquarters changed hands several times between the North Korean and United Nations forces, suffering extensive damage in this volley. In February 1952, the US once again occupied Yongsan and on September 15, 1953, the Eighth US Army relocated its headquarters to

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>105</sup> Blanket armies referred to camp followers who participated in informal prostitution system.

<sup>106</sup> James P. Finley, "Historical Origins of USFK Real Estate, Memorandum for MG Palastra, 18 August 1981," Yongsan Archive.

<sup>107</sup> Kim Byoung-Sub, "Dongducheonsi Doshiseongjanggwajung Yeongu" ["A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si"], (masters thesis, University of Seoul, 2004), 15, 19-20.

<sup>108</sup> Denfeld, *American Military Camps in the Republic of Korea*, 80.

Camp Sobinggo and renamed it Yongsan (Dragon Hill) Army Post.<sup>109</sup> After the Korean War, both the EUSA and the US Forces Korea (USFK) made their headquarters in Yongsan. The Japanese imperial star continues to emblazon the outer wall of building 2552 and announces its colonial origins, yet the interiors of 2552 and similar buildings such as 2554 and 2462 now display the history of the United States military in Korea, with halls within these buildings named after fallen American heroes of the Korean War (Figure 4).<sup>110</sup> Dedicated in 1953 to the members of the EUSA who lost their lives during the war, the “Memorial Circle,” a Grecian-pillar construction built on the foundation of what had once been a Japanese Shinto shrine on Yongsan garrison, is another example of an American-modified former Japanese structure (Figure 5). This symbolic hybrid structure indicating the new American commitment, yet built upon colonial foundation, is ironic yet a fitting metaphor for the “foundation years” of 1945-53.

The Naija Apartment Hotel, built by the Japanese president of the Mikuni Coal Company as an apartment house for his employees and their families in 1935, consisted of four buildings occupying an acre in the heart of Seoul. The US or UN forces occupied Naija as a billet after 1945 until the outbreak of the Korean War. After reclaiming the compound in 1951, journalists used it as offices and quarters and referred to Naija as the Press Billets. The four stucco-concrete buildings, with 80 living units, a main dining room, cocktail lounge, roof garden, a PX, movie theater, beauty parlor, 24-hour switchboard, and a parking lot, survived the war. After the war, the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency rehabilitated the property and occupied the premises, followed by American Embassy personnel, and then by the EUSA officers. When the Eighth Army decided to close the Naija Hotel in 1970, the EUSA staff historian remarked that “the Naija is as comfortable as an old shoe on the inside. Over the years its facilities have been enjoyed by thousands of Americans and their guests. It will be sorely missed.”<sup>111</sup> For Koreans, the remarkable histories of places like Yongsan and Naija from their colonial origins to the continuous changes under the Americans through the occupation, war, and postwar years offer symbolic and material evidence of living among a foreign military in the heart of its nation throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In these wartime camps, Americans came into everyday contact with Koreans, especially through the partnership with “KATUSAS.” During the early days of the war, the ROK and US commands initiated the Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSA) program to reinforce the understaffed American divisions with Korean troops. Although a part of the ROK Army and paid by the ROK government, the KATUSA lived, worked, and trained with their American units. This program had a rocky start, however, as it matched Americans with new recruits, young men often literally seized off the streets with no military training and who could hardly speak English.<sup>112</sup> Despite early problems that led to the breakdown of the “buddy system” in some of the divisions, the Department of Defense noted that KATUSAs proved effective in supportive roles, such as guarding, scouting, patrolling, moving heavy weapons, and teaching American soldiers how to camouflage with local natural elements. In June of 1951, there were 12,718 KATUSAs and with improved training, KATUSA strength reached 27,000 at its 1952 peak. During the war, news coverage praised the heroism of KATUSAs and their friendship with

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>110</sup> Building Records for 2552, 2554, and 2462 in “Historical Overview: U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan,” Yongsan Archives.

<sup>111</sup> Herman M Katz, “The Naija Apartments: Past and Present, Memorandum for Record, 29 April 1970,” Folder: “Yongsan Garrison & Naija Hotel,” Yongsan Archives.

<sup>112</sup> United States of America Korean War Commemoration, Department of Defense commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War <http://korea50.army.mil/history/factsheets/katusa.shtml>

American GIs. One story told of a KATUSA who became a quadruple amputee. Both Americans and Koreans praised this Corporal's bravery and gathered \$1,800 "in a helmet for their buddy," with almost every man giving up most of their month's pay.<sup>113</sup> "The soldiers of the two countries complement each other well," another *New York Times* article explained, "the Korean because he is proud and anxious to show his worth to his American friends, and the American because he makes double sure he gets every instruction fixed clearly in his mind so that, if necessary, he can explain it to his Korean buddy."<sup>114</sup> The KATUSA in supportive roles and as "anxious" pupils to American instructors characterized this Korean-American partnership, which, albeit positive, reflected the unequal big brother-little brother metaphor often used to describe the US-Korea relations as a whole.

Beyond working with KATUSAs, Americans came into everyday contact in the military camps with another group of mostly male Koreans. Korean boys and men found livelihood for themselves and their families by working as "houseboys" on American military bases, as had been the practice during the occupation years. Dr. Horwitz paid \$2.25 a month to his houseboy for services such as "laundry, making bed, shining shoes, mopping our tent, getting water (hot in A.M. for shaving), cleaning up mess, [and] generally just hanging around."<sup>115</sup> Dr. Horwitz also showed interest and generosity toward his houseboy, whom he described as "very bright," by agreeing to pay \$25 a year for four to five years to help the young Korean man attend Brigham Young University in Utah. "The tuition is \$150 a year," Horwitz informed his wife, and "if he does well, he may get a scholarship, but with 12-15 of us pledging this small amount, it seemed like a good investment."<sup>116</sup> Carol Camp, a GI who served in the Korean War also expressed his friendship with his 18-year-old houseboy, "Son." For Camp, his "love for Korea came first because there was first a Korean boy who became my friend." Through Son, Camp embraced his time in Korea, which "awakened in [his] soul...compassion on behalf of Korea."<sup>117</sup> Camp's account as well as Dr. Horwitz's unit's generous and collective long-term "investment" into one Korean man's education stood in stark contrast to Irma Materi's overwhelmingly negative experiences with her Korean employees. Relations between US military personnel and these Korean domestic employees probably varied within these polarized encounters of Materi on one end and Camp and Horwitz on the other.

Compassion and paternalism intermingled in the US service personnel's relations with the locals who shared their domestic space. Military units at times took on the paternal role by informally adopting and taking care of young, often orphaned, children as unit "mascots." A "cute and bright" Korean orphan of about five years old, whom the men of Horwitz's unit "clothed and fed," was so well integrated that he spoke better English than Korean and thought of "himself as better than the other Korean kids."<sup>118</sup> Another wartime GI, Curtis Morrow, arranged for an eleven-year-old boy, whom he accidentally nearly killed on a reconnaissance patrol, to be attached to the Korean labor force that worked at his battalion headquarters. This boy, who would "always stop whatever he was doing, smile, and salute" him, still haunted Morrow's dream years after the war.<sup>119</sup> The compassion shown by Horwitz and Morrow were a

<sup>113</sup> "Heroic Korean Loses His Limbs When He Skips Furlough to Fight," *New York Times*, 20 January 1953.

<sup>114</sup> "Koreans in Forces of U.S. Win Praise," *New York Times*, 18 January 1953.

<sup>115</sup> Horwitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 82.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>117</sup> Carol Camp, *Snapshots, A Season in Korea* (New York: Pageant Press, 1956), 38-9.

<sup>118</sup> Horowitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 57.

<sup>119</sup> Curtis Morrow, *What's a Commie ever done to Black people? A Korean War memoir of fighting in the U.S. Army's last all negro unit* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), 19.

part of spontaneous humanitarian aid rendered by the military, which also included evacuations, fundraising drives for food and clothing, and setting up orphanages to deal with the plight of the war's children.<sup>120</sup> The estimated number of orphaned children already numbered 100,000 in 1951.<sup>121</sup> Dean Hess, a US Air Force colonel and pastor, coordinated a large-scale airlift of 1,000 children from Seoul to safety in the southernmost Jeju Island in December of 1950. *Battle Hymn* (1957), a Hollywood film adapted from the memoir of the same name, chronicles this "Operation Kiddy Car,"<sup>122</sup> immortalizing on the American screen this white rescuer of Asian children. The popular images of American GIs as altruistic father to Korean orphans projected the benevolence as well as the intrinsic paternalism of the relationship.

At times, the relationship between a GI and a houseboy or "mascot" developed into a literal parent-child relation with inter-country adoption. Some of the young Koreans who had been integrated into the military camps during the war became among the first Koreans adopted to the US shortly after the war. Although the extensive discussion of postwar mixed-race progeny and immigration to the US is the subject of the final chapter, of note here is that international adoption first began as a humanitarian response to the war, especially for those children born to Korean women and fathered by American and European servicemen. The military, therefore, was at the forefront of perpetuating the paternalistic "familial bond," by both literally "creating" multiracial children and also by being among the first to adopt these children. Moreover, the reality of transnational adoption further linked the two nations in a parent-child metaphor. Other than responding to the wartime conditions and "creations," American policy makers also believed that the positioning of Americans as mothers and fathers to non-American children created familial relationships that strengthened cold war alliances and emphasized America's goal of "compassionate internationalism."<sup>123</sup> Compassionate internationalism entwined humanitarianism with the paternalistic hierarchy of the US as the parent of the Third World.

The material and symbolic power of the US represented necessity and seduction for Koreans on the receiving end of the paternalistic altruism. Foremost, Koreans sought work on American military bases during and after the war. The US military most commonly employed Koreans as houseboys and janitors, cooks and servers for mess halls and clubs, secretaries and other administrators, and maintenance and construction workers. "The Koreans especially are anxious to work around an army camp for the privilege of eating decent food," observed Horwitz.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, employment on an American installation often supported not only the employee, but also their entire family. Beyond livelihood, military bases also represented wealth,

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<sup>120</sup> Tobias Hubinette, "Korean Adoption History" in *Community 2004. Guide to Korea for overseas adopted Koreans*, ed. Eleana Kim (Seoul: Overseas Koreans Foundation, 2004).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Hess also helped to establish the Orphan's Home of Korea (*Hangukboyukwon*) on Jeju Island, although 200 orphans died within the first three months after they were brought due to a lack of food and medicine. Even after he left Korea, Hess continued to help the children and donated \$60,000 from the proceeds of *Battle Hymn*. Hye Seung Chung, "Hollywood Goes to Korea: Biopic Politics and Douglas Sirk's *Battle Hymn* (1957) *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 25, no. 1 (March 2005): 61.

<sup>123</sup> Donna Alvah, in her study of American military families overseas serving as "good will ambassadors" of the cold war, contends that "Stories and images intended for American audiences particularly focused on servicemen's interactions with children or women [and] depicted military personnel, and by extension, the entire armed forces...as paternal representatives of America's compassionate internationalism." For instance, military wives abroad who adopted non-American children received praise for serving as models for international relations in military publications, such as *U.S. Lady*. Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors*, 57-8, 104, 106.

<sup>124</sup> Horwitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 29.

abundance, and modernity commonly associated with America. Pak Won-So's autobiographical novel, *The Naked Tree*, depicts her wartime experience working in the PX on a EUSA post in Seoul, soliciting Americans to have portraits painted by Korean painters. The protagonist, Kyung-a's "heart ached with longing" while gazing at the American products in the PX; she yearned for "All those dazzling things, Made in USA, so lovely to look at" and "loved gazing at the glamorous scene."<sup>125</sup> American bases meant livelihood for Koreans as well as proximity to the "dazzling" American goods and power.

Military camps presented economic opportunity through both legal employment as well as illegal access to the seductive American goods at the PX. The Post Exchange system spread overseas along with the GIs and by the end of Second World War, the PX was the largest retail system in the United States and the world.<sup>126</sup> And as it had been a major problem during the occupation period, not just in Korea but also in Germany and Japan, pilfering of PX goods for the black market proliferated during the wartime. Some Koreans with access to the base acted as intermediaries to the black market. A scene in the *Naked Tree* depicts this "everyday" activity:

The cleaning women entered, pushing a large trash box in front of them. They hitched up their skirts...took out the endless tubes of toothpaste and bars of soap from the trash box, and stacked them up on their calves, tying each row tightly with an elastic band. They heaped up the goods tier after tier...and in no time they were fat with a layer of goods reaching from their calves, over their buttocks, to their waist. [...] They were on their way to make an illegal transaction during the lunch hour. They were experts at the smuggling act but managed to look as clumsy and dense as before. Another group of women, who had already finished their transactions, came in as if they were simply returning from lunch, walking slowly with humdrum expressions.<sup>127</sup>

Canned foodstuff and "luxury" goods, such as soap, cigarettes, and liquor comprised the most sought after products in the market. Koreans did not work alone in the black market, however, and GIs participated and benefited from this illegal economic system as they did during the occupation period. Among the several incidences Horwitz relayed of GIs partaking in the black market, one in particular involved a large-scale operation of entire army trucks full of smuggled goods. When the military police had "finally cracked down on" the Koreans and the GIs "trying to make some money," all the Koreans in the kitchen were fired and a new batch hired. And "as for the GI's," Horwitz continued, "I have no sympathy for them."<sup>128</sup> The mutual participation in the extensive black market system witnessed in both the occupation and wartime periods continued into the postwar reconstruction decade, a subject that will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Some of those not fortunate enough to find employment, whether legal or illegal, loitered at the gates of installations, hoping to chance a bit of generosity. At the bus-stop for the Eighth Army Post, as "boys clung to the soldiers' arms, hoping to sell something or just to beg, and even when they were pushed down to the ground with a curse," Kyung-a no longer felt "embarrassed or sorry for them." She had become inured to such a "scene that could not be expected to

<sup>125</sup> Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*, trans. Yu Young-nan (Ithaca, New York: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1995), 3.

<sup>126</sup> Baker, *American Soldiers Overseas*, 32.

<sup>127</sup> Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*, 15.

<sup>128</sup> Horwitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 137.

change.”<sup>129</sup> This moment not only depicts the economic dependency on American bases, but also the inherent power discrepancy. And for some Koreans, this power dynamics elicited ambiguous mixture of gratitude and admiration as well as humiliation and resentment. As Chungmoo Choi articulates, ambivalence arises “because charitable gifts require recipient’s self-degradation and surrender of dignity to the power.”<sup>130</sup> Another poignant scene in the *Naked Tree* describes a crowded Christmas party thrown by GIs for Korean base employees. As Koreans vied for all the “unlimited” popcorn and cola, the base electrician, Taesoo, felt intense humiliation and anger at the GIs “watching our struggles in fascination... smiling triumphantly, as if they were satisfied with the play they had put on, as if it were a success beyond their wildest expectations.”<sup>131</sup> The scene captures the tension within the relationship – of American arrogance and Korean humiliation, and of both seduction and repulsion for the latter.

This ambivalent landscape also encompassed the military sex trade. Besides working in military bases, black marketeering, or even begging from Americans, Koreans also depended on prostitution for wartime survival and livelihood. And the wartime sex industry had ubiquitous presence. Curtis Murrow, eighteen at the time of his participation in the war, recounts how easily he accessed the brothels: “Hell, you just walk about fifty yards from here, and crawl under the wire, and off you go. I met some little boy-san, and he took me right to a whorehouse.”<sup>132</sup> The pervasive availability and GIs participating in the industry posed – once again, as it had been prevalent during the occupation period not only in Korea, but also in Europe and Japan – the problem of venereal disease. Dr. Horwitz wrote in his July 1952 letter that “90% of the 50 patients” that his MASH unit treated that day were there for VD. “With the treatment I order, I try to tell those whom I think it might influence to stay away from these Korean women. The VD here is getting harder and harder to treat,” recounted Horwitz.<sup>133</sup> Camptowns, which had existed during the occupation period in temporary form, began to be “systematized” after the Korean War. The exigencies of war created Korean women as camp followers, but this system began to be instituted as an economic and social system after the war.

#### *Looking Forward to Postwar Reconstruction*

*The demolition of the house was accomplished quickly. I watched the demolition with an unendurable pain. The elegant eaves and the high ridges were broken down to nothing more than old tiles, and the lofty crossbeams, well-worn beams, and shiny square wooden floor boards ended up in disorderly piles of wood scraps. The lattice windows, which had concealed numerous joys and sorrows, were loaded recklessly onto the wagons of wood-frame peddlers. [...] I bravely endured that pain, even though it felt like my own body was being demolished. Perhaps I, too, wanted to be demolished and rebuilt.*

Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*<sup>134</sup>

*The Naked Tree* ends with the tearing down of the old Korean house, partially damaged by a wartime bomb that also took the lives of the protagonist’s two brothers. The land on which the family home stood is divided into two and half of it sold in order to raise the money to build

<sup>129</sup> Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*, 163.

<sup>130</sup> Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender” in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, ed. Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York: Routledge, 1998), 12.

<sup>131</sup> Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*, 43.

<sup>132</sup> Morrow, *What’s a Commie ever done to Black people?* 70.

<sup>133</sup> Horwitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 40.

<sup>134</sup> Pak Wan-so, *The Naked Tree*, 184.

a “useful, sturdy Western-style house” in its place. Like this divided family lot and the demolished house, the two Koreas faced their postwar rebuilding. South Korea that rose from the ashes of war looked to the West, in particular to the US, as the crucial source of “useful, sturdy” modernity. Among the various Korean-American contact zones and disseminating locus of Americanized modernity, the place of US military camps and their camptowns would prove to be indispensable in the reconstruction period, as they had been during the occupation and wartime years. Unlike the temporary and wartime intentions of this earlier period, however, the postwar garrisoning of American troops will assume semi-permanent nature for an indefinite period. The spatial appropriation and transformation of the initial eight years (1945 to 1953) of largely requisitioned occupation period and wartime tent camps will serve as the foundation upon which postwar installations will be built. Moreover, the developments of military installations on the southern half of the peninsula will not only constitute the physical expansion, but also the transplantation of “little Americas” as well as an elaboration of a militarized Korean and American cultural landscape of military camps and camptowns. The “foundation” for the postwar camptown system as well as the greater American-Korean interactions during the reconstruction decade can be located in these occupation and wartime landscapes. Koreans of camps and camptowns – KATUSAs, houseboys, orphans, black marketers, base employees, prostitutes, and girlfriends – “actors” introduced in this chapter, constitute the locals with whom Americans will continue to most frequently share the intimate everyday. The American-Korean contacts on the ground – in places of work, home, volunteer service, or leisure – and the ways in which these relations straddled gratitude and resentment, humanitarianism and paternalism, and compassion and arrogance are subjects of the postwar chapters.

### **Remembering the “Forgotten” War’s Postwar Consequences**

On April 13, 1953, Melvin Horwitz wrote his last letter from Korea to his wife, while sitting on the airstrip in Seoul waiting for the plane that would carry him to Japan. He described his last night in Korea as very strange, “difficult to describe.” He also expressed relief that the first prisoner exchange had been signed, with the peace “imminent,” and hoped not “to live with the shadow of war over us ever again.”<sup>135</sup> Four months after Dr. Horwitz left Korea, the fighting ceased with the signing of the Military Armistice on July 27, 1953, tragically only restoring the status quo ante and not resolving the tensions of national division. During the war’s duration, between June 1950 to July 1953, the US intervention under the UN auspices shifted the objective of the war from “containment” of communist forces back to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into a counterattack – a “rollback” of communism beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> line – and then eventually into a long stalemate along the frontline. A total of 1,789,000 Americans served in-theater of the Korean War, with casualties numbering 54,246 dead and 103,284 wounded.<sup>136</sup> Modest estimates indicate nearly three million Korean military and civilian deaths.<sup>137</sup> And even after this enormous destruction, Horwitz’s hope for a future not overshadowed by war never materialized. The DMZ continues to

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<sup>135</sup> Horowitz, *We Will Not Be Strangers*, 264.

<sup>136</sup> Total deaths: 54,246 (In-Theater Deaths: 36,574; Non-Theater Deaths: 17,672) Total wounded – not mortal 103,284. Hannah Fischer, “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics” (Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress) July 13, 2005, 10. Directorate for Statistical Services Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Selected Manpower Statistics* (Washington, DC: Department Of Defense, 1968), 55.

<sup>137</sup> Modest estimates cite 1.3 million South Korea and 1.5 million North Korean military and civilian casualties. Michael E. Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 114, 194.



divide Korea into two, remaining as one of the most heavily fortified places on earth to this day. The Korean War also helped sustain authoritarian regimes, which justified putting democracy on hold for the purpose of the nation's security against the communist threat that constantly loomed large in the postwar decades. America's "forgotten war," moreover, had significant postwar consequences not only for Korea, but also for the US and the Asia Pacific region. Here, a brief discussion of the war's ramifications provides a necessary contextual transition into the postwar years of the following chapters.

For Korea, what began as liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 ended with cold war polarization and national division by the time the two military occupations formally disengaged from the peninsula in 1949. The legacies of the colonial and occupation periods inaugurated the composite tensions that eventually culminated in the Korean War of 1950. The official recognition of the two republics in 1948, in many ways, was simply the formalization of separate regimes whose "de facto" existence had been well underway from the very first months of the occupations. As historian Bruce Cumings contends, "The cold war arrived early in Korea – really in the last months of 1945."<sup>138</sup> The American Military Government abandoned early the multilateral internationalism envisioned by FDR, as demonstrated by aligning with the minority rightist group largely due to their anti-communist stance, and ultimately supporting the establishment of two separate regimes on the peninsula. Instead of a unified and independent Korea, the American policy makers at home and the governing entity in Korea worked toward unilateral buildup of a viable southern government in an escalating cold war by 1947. As Meade assessed at the time, "Efforts to strengthen South Korea against threatened Communist domination tended to establish the American Zone as a separate government unit," and therefore, "our policy did not develop in accordance with the Cairo principle but in a direction opposed to it."<sup>139</sup>

The Korean War ushered in the height of the cold war; it fueled the global remilitarization five years after the end of WWII and compelled the United States to modify its initial conception of the Great Crescent to maintain substantial forces on the mainland of Asia. In terms of postwar American military policy, the Korean War marked a decisive change.<sup>140</sup> The war inaugurated an era of a large standing army and instigated the implementation of the National Security Council Paper Number 68 (NSC-68), which accelerated the American rearmament and the arms race.<sup>141</sup> NSC-68 of 1950 emphasized perimeter defense – that all interests, no matter how small, could upset the entire balance of power – in contrast to Kennan's earlier strategy of defending selected strongpoints.<sup>142</sup> President Truman and his advisers had foreseen difficulties in getting Congress to fund the massive military buildup that the new containment direction called for, but the outbreak of the war in Korea made possible the approval

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<sup>138</sup> Cumings, *The Two Koreas*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, 233.

<sup>140</sup> David W. Tarr, "The Military Abroad," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 368 (Nov., 1966): 35-8.

<sup>141</sup> Prepared by the State and Defense Departments in January 1950, the National Security Council Paper Number 68 (NSC-68) claimed that the Soviet's fundamental design was "to retain and solidify their absolute power" which requires "dynamic extension" and "ultimate elimination" of any opposition. NSC-68 proposed a policy of "rapid and sustained build-up [of] the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin's design of a world dominated by it." "A Report to the National Security Council (NSC 68)" (Washington, DC: 1950), 2, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 89.

and application of NSC-68.<sup>143</sup> Korea, previously regarded as a peripheral interest, occupied the center of the cold war in June 1950. And both the United States and Korea echoed the significance of Asia and in particular Korea in the global resistance against communism. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warned that “to sit by while Korea is overrun by unprovoked armed attack would start [a] disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war.”<sup>144</sup> South Korea’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Col. Ben C. Limb, addressing the San Francisco Town Hall meeting in February of 1951 to garner continued support for the Korean War, entreated that the “loss” of Korea would be of grave significance to the rest of the world. In apocalyptic terms, Limb warned that “He who controls Asia will control and guide civilization. [...] Permit communism to spread its evil tentacles over all of Asia, and the red tide will almost instantly become a tidal wave engulfing all of us.”<sup>145</sup> The Korean War ushered in a new direction in America’s cold war – that of peripheral defense, no matter how small the nation, in order to prevent the “domino effect” – which would soon culminate in another Asian “hot war” in Vietnam.

The Korean War also altered the regional dynamics. Although the occupation period efforts to “connect up” Korea to Japan economically had been largely unsuccessful, the war in Korea would stimulate the Japanese economy. Some three billion dollars in American wartime procurement orders revived Japanese industry, accounting for 70 percent of Japan’s exports between 1950 and 1952; and four months after the war began, Japan’s industrial production reached postwar highs.<sup>146</sup> For Japan’s postwar economic recovery, the Korean War was indeed “a gift of the gods,” as claimed by then Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida. Moreover, along with consolidating American military presence in Japan and Okinawa – which had served as a rear base for UN operations during the war – the Korean War enabled the establishment of semi-permanent bases on Asia’s mainland. The United States and South Korea signed a Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 and through the presence of its troops, the US sought to not only deter another war and protect the precarious peace, but also to defend the “frontline” against communism. But the significance of this borderland quickly dissipated as the attention turned to Southeast Asia. Although Korea now stood as a “frontier” in the Asia Pacific, the extent of United States’ interest would once again be uncertain and ambiguous under President Eisenhower’s “New Look,” which sought to achieve the deterrence of communism at the minimum possible cost.<sup>147</sup>

The Korean War, beyond its global and regional ramifications, also constituted a different battleground – that of federal government intervention in racial desegregation of the armed forces – and subsequently signified a defining moment in America’s national identity. Fighting fascism with the segregated US military in WWII highlighted American hypocrisy, and the cold war and its battle to win the “hearts and minds” of the Third World further made US racism a

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ben C. Limb, “The Importance of Asia” *The Korean Information Bulletin* (Washington, DC: 1951).

<sup>146</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: Norton, 1997), 293-4.

John Dower also sums that, “‘special procurements’ brought an estimated \$2.3 billion into Japan between June 1950 and the end of 1953, a sum that exceeded the total amount of aid received from the United States between 1945 and 1951.[...]Even after the Korean War ended in 1953, military-related U.S. purchases continued under the rubric ‘new special procurements,’ bringing in an additional \$1.75 billion from 1954 through 1956, a major portion of the country’s ‘export’ income during these years. This prolonged windfall enabled Japan to increase its imports greatly and virtually doubled its scale of production in key industries.” Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 542.

<sup>147</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 162.

glaring embarrassment. Compounded by growing black demands and political considerations in a presidential election year, President Truman integrated the armed forces in July 1948. Executive Order 9881, however, had little immediate impact. With a lot of “foot-dragging,” neither the Army nor the Navy altered their existing racial policies. The opposition to desegregation ran high in the armed forces, which resented being the “guinea pig” for a social experimentation. According to the US Department of Defense’s 1949 study, “Attitude Toward Integration of Negro Soldiers in the Army,” of the 1151 white enlisted men in the Army randomly surveyed, 61 percent opposed complete integration.<sup>148</sup> Violent emotional outbursts expressed in the survey, ranging from threats to “go AWOL” to warning of racial “civil war” within the ranks, indicated the intensity of feelings.<sup>149</sup> The Korean War, however, became the testing ground for implementing desegregation. In the initial months of the war, American commanders began to fill losses in their units with black replacements. This limited conversion to integrated units became permanent when the Army announced the integration of its Far East Command in 1951, and abolished the last racially segregated unit in the armed forces at the war’s end.

For black soldiers serving in the Korean War, the “enemy” was as much within as without. Curtis Morrow served as a rifleman in the Army’s last all-black combat unit, the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment Combat Team (RCT), also known as the Buffalo Soldiers. Race loomed large for Morrow from his very first days in Korea.<sup>150</sup> When receiving news about lynchings of black men back in the US while seeing his comrades’ bodies torn apart in Korea, Morrow began to ask bitterly for whom and what he fought. His “real” education, and not the military propaganda about “fighting the spread of communism to protect our land of liberty,” came from his conversations with other black soldiers. The inherent contradictions were not lost in their discussion sessions, when they asked, “Have the communists ever enslaved our people? Have they ever raped our women? Have they ever castrated and hanged our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or cousins?” Morrow realized that he was “fighting for my life, not my country.”<sup>151</sup> *Steel Helmet* (1951), the very first film to address the war, also foregrounds the “shameful” racist actions of the country.<sup>152</sup> The film tells a story of a racially integrated, motley patrol group, including a white sergeant, a Korean orphan, an African American medic, and a Japanese-

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<sup>148</sup> Complete Integration was defined as “working and training together, sleeping in the same barracks and eating in the same mess halls” and partial integration as working together but not sleeping in the same barracks or eating in the same mess halls. Armed Forces Information and Education, Attitude Research Branch, “Morale Attitudes of Enlisted Men May-June 1949: Attitude Toward Integration of Negro Soldiers in the Army” (Washington, DC: US Dept of Defense, 1949).

<sup>149</sup> A 20-year-old private did not hide his racist disdain about blacks who he claimed were “still like Head Hunters.” Several GIs warned that white GIs would leave the military if forced to integrate and foresaw a lot of racial conflict, such as a private from Ohio, who threatened to “go AWOL” if ever “put in with Negro troops.” He warned, “If the Negro and the whites were mixed there would be Civil War among the troops.” Others expressed resentment for the Army being a first place to enforce federal desegregation. A Major Sergeant wrote: “The equal rights plan should not be forced on the Army as an example to civilians.” A Sergeant expressed similar sentiments and asked, “Why should the Army be a guinea pig for a race problem.” Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Arriving in Korea in bitterly cold December of 1950, his initial impression of the war was that “it couldn’t be all that bad” if white women served him hot chocolate, coffee, and donuts, “knowing how protective Whitey was about his women.” Morrow, *What’s a Commie ever done to Black people?* 3.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 34, 11.

<sup>152</sup> Samuel Fuller recounted that regarding the Japanese American internment issue, “Truman or someone in the White House, and the Pentagon, raised hell with it.” To which he replied, “But it was fact. If the country did something shameful, it’s shameful. It has nothing to do with me. I’m reporting it with a fucking camera.” Lee Server, *Sam Fuller: Film is a Battleground* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994), 27.

American sergeant.<sup>153</sup> In one particular scene, the Chinese prisoner of war tries to provoke the Japanese-American soldier by evoking the internment camps during WWII. The Chinese prisoner asks the Nisei soldier, “What the hell are you doing fighting for these white sons-of-bitches? You got the same goddamn slant eyes I have. You know they hate our guts, hate our skin. I even heard that they arrested some of you Japanese-Americans just for being slant-eyed.” For a GI like Curtis Morrow or a filmmaker like Samuel Fuller, the Korean War was also an American War – a historical moment to re-imagine and re-shape America’s own identity. As Beth Bailey and David Farber contend in their study of Hawai‘i as “the first strange place” during the Second World War – as the “border of war, an ultimate frontier, the edge of our world...a liminal place” that revealed the tensions of the time and the possibilities for the future – the Korean War also marked a watershed moment when the “American identity” and the role of the federal government fundamentally changed.<sup>154</sup> Korea would continue to be the “first strange place” for many young GIs, who would be entrusted with the double cold war duties as a soldier and an ambassador of America in the postwar decades. The Korean War, therefore, constituted a battlefield not only for the Korean struggle for unification, but also for global cold war balance of power, regional reconfiguration, as well as in shaping of American identity.

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<sup>153</sup> Released about six months after the fighting began, the film surprisingly was a massive success. Samuel Fuller directed on a ten-day schedule, on the slopes of Los Angeles’s Griffith Park, for around \$100,000 (the average big-studio production at that time cost \$1 million). *The Steel Helmet*. Dir. Samuel Fuller. Perf. Gene Evans. 1951. Lippert Productions. Videodisc. Eclipse from the Criterion Collection.

<sup>154</sup> Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 17-9, 29, 215.

Figure 3. Building 2552



Former Japanese Imperial Army barracks converted to American barracks, Yongsan.

Figure 4. Japanese Colonial Foundation



Japanese imperial star on Building 2552

Figure 5. Memorial Circle



Korean War memorial in Yongsan, built on top of a former Japanese Shinto shrine.  
Dedicated in 1953 to EUSA soldiers who lost their lives in the Korean War.

### III. “What We Are Doing Here”: The American Military in Cold War Korea, 1954-1971

*It was cold outside the Bachelor Officers Quarters—too cold to snow. First Lieutenant Philip Sadler Wilkinson 05 001 345, Army Intelligence, stood on the frozen ground in front of his room beneath the bright starry night...He was watching the Korean prostitutes in their brightly colored robes trot past the barbed-wire fence. Others, already at the front gate, were waiting for the GIs to bring them inside for the party at the NCO Club.*

*Beyond the barbed wire, the muddy road, the frozen rice paddies, there was a Korean leading an ox along the top of the ridge. Both man and beast moved slowly, as though they had all the time in the world.<sup>1</sup>*

The barbed wire fence not only served as a border between the two nations, but also as a vantage point through which to observe Korea from a distance. P.S. Wilkinson was not alone in his assessments of the host nation. In letters, memoirs, novels, reports, and photographs, American personnel in Korea depicted and also projected their understanding of their cultural landscapes. The popular subjects of Korea captured in the camera eye by Americans during and after the war commonly and repeatedly included the barracks, the greater military installation, and the Koreans on these bases. The GIs depicted their everyday life by taking pictures of their living quarters, such as the sparse spaces in a Quonset. They also took pictures of the larger base buildings, such as the PX, library, and chapel, documenting structural improvements undertaken during this period. The Korean subjects they repeatedly photographed were houseboys, village children lurking outside of the base, Korean women, and KATUSAs and other Korean male employees on the base (Figure 6). And they often captured surrounding villages through barbed wire fence, providing an image of how these troops must have looked out to the host country everyday (Figure 7).

Beyond the installation walls was Korea, but a Korea specifically constructed to cater to American soldiers. In these “villes” or camptowns lived a “mixed bag of camp followers, business men, shop keepers, hustlers, slicky boys, beggars, and prostitutes,” observed Donald Campolongo in his memoir.<sup>2</sup> When they ventured outside of the garrison walls and camptowns, GIs tended to document farmers with oxen carts, elderly men and women in traditional garb, along with temples and palaces reminiscent of travel guidebooks and postcards from the “Orient” (Figure 8). The photo images perhaps differed little from what GIs expected to find in this far-away outpost. When Donald Campolongo first learned of his assignment to Korea, he went to the Post Information Center and requested a pamphlet on Korea. The “rather dated” material, noted Campolongo, “still depicted Korea fairly accurately (as) the Land of the Morning Calm,

<sup>1</sup> C.D.B. Bryan, *P.S. Wilkinson* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 3, 76.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Ralph Campolongo, “...And then there was Korea: memoirs of my experiences in the United States Army in Taegu, Korea, May 1970 to June 1971” (1995), 44-5. US Army Military History Institute, Pennsylvania (hereafter USAMHI).



rice paddies, rugged mountains, Orientals, severe weather conditions, and of course the Korean War.”<sup>3</sup> The Korean landscape that American GIs “documented” was as poverty-stricken as it was “exotic.” And the ways in which GIs engaged with this “first strange place” also shaped the contours of the intimate borderland and its greater ramifications.

The GI embodied American cold war desires perhaps more than any other Americans in Korea. Individual military personnel symbolized and acted as agents of American “hard power” and “soft power.” As “GIs of Security,” they not only fortified South Korea’s border, but their presence signified the US commitment to deterring communist ambitions in Asia. Concurrently, Americans deployed to postwar Korea helped to reconstruct the southern half of the peninsula in order for it to become a “showpiece” of democracy as well as to foster Korean goodwill toward America. As “GIs of Wellbeing,” the troops not only aided in the rebuilding of Korea through such programs as the Armed Forces Assistance in Korea (AFAK), but also introduced American goods and popular culture, and their deeds, both good and bad, influenced Korean views of America. At the same time, they brought Korea back home to the US through their photos, memories, and impressions of the poor, exotic, and little-known cold war frontier. For many young GIs, Korea was the “first strange place” and in their encounters with this foreign land and its people, the Americans, too, changed.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps these GIs’ most significant actions as “integrators,” however, were their direct and inadvertent role in propelling a significant migration of Koreans to the United States as military wives, mixed-race progeny, and international adoptees. And the US military camps and nearby camptowns, where GIs lived, worked, and socialized with Koreans, constituted the physical places and cultural spaces where most of these exchanges and creations originated.

This chapter focuses the cultural landscape of American servicemen in Korea during the long postwar reconstruction decade of 1954 to 1971. This chapter is comprised of two sections, the first of which chronicles Korea’s place in the changing geopolitical purpose of America’s cold war in the Asia-Pacific. America’s policy of containment conditioned both the official as well as the vernacular landscapes of the American military in Korea. Although declared an important frontline, in practice, American policymakers still viewed Korea as a temporary outpost and thus made only incremental improvements as necessitated by ground-level conditions. Nevertheless, American military camps evolved into semi-permanent places, reflecting the indefinite “exit” timeframe. The first section thus explores the ways in which the first postwar generation of American soldiers lived and worked in garrisons that straddled “temporary” and “semi-permanent” conditions. Moreover, the contradictory policy of improving camps to provide comfort and familiarity to the troops stationed in unfamiliar lands, while making Korea into a “model” of short-tours in “temporary outposts,” resulted in the development of both “Little Americas” in camps as well as a GI-Korean created system of temporary

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>4</sup> To Beth Bailey and David Farber, Hawai‘i was “the first strange place” for almost a million soldiers and defense workers during the Second World War. Although at the margin of American life prior to 1941, Hawai‘i became the “border of war, an ultimate frontier, the edge of our world... a liminal place,” where Americans directly confronted the complex meanings of cultural differences, “place of extremes” that revealed the tensions of the time and the possibilities for the future. Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 17-9, 29, 215.

domestic spaces in camptowns. American installations in Korea were transformed by local conditions, and they also transformed the vernacular landscape.

In the second section of the chapter, “snapshots” of GI life focus on the role of GIs as “people-to-people” ambassadors and agents of “soft power.” GIs participated in personal and organized assistance with reconstruction and aid programs that built goodwill. In their interactions with Koreans on military camps and camptowns, American sympathies and interests, however, intermingled with their prejudice and sense of superiority over Korea’s “backwardness” and dependence. As historian Bruce Cumings contends, the American GIs became “imperfect imperialists”<sup>5</sup> – espousing American liberalism and democracy, yet practicing imperfect imperialism in their arrogance. What emerged among Koreans was a complicated image of the American GI as both admired and resented representations of the United States. As “soft power” contingents, GIs negotiated these borderland spaces with the Koreans and in the process, produced both cold war integration as well as “imperfect” imperial relations between the two nations. And the official agreement that outlined the terms of stationing American troops in postwar Korea – the Status of Forces Agreement of 1966 – in many ways “legalized” the inequality through its conditions of extraterritoriality.

### **Korea: From a “Temporary” to a “Semi-Permanent” Cold War Outpost**

The “loss of China” to communism in 1949 challenged the world order that the US sought to build.<sup>6</sup> The loss of China followed by the Korean War would shape the policy in Asia that lasted for two decades: contain China, reshape Japan, and escalate American power to “hold” the line to protect Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.<sup>7</sup> China ascended as the revolutionary headquarters of the world in the eyes of American administrations from Kennedy to Nixon.<sup>8</sup> And under Mao, China did view itself as a center of both the cold war and postcolonial nationalist and sought to model and promote of “Eastern revolution.”<sup>9</sup> The US feared the powerful appeal of Communism as liberation ideology for Asians engaged in decolonization struggles. To prevent another China and counter China’s influence in Asia, the US emphasized policies of active economic aid and counter-insurgency military support for Asia’s Third World countries. With the lesson learned from the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the peril of brinkmanship, Washington policymakers, according to James Peck, argued that “nation building and counterinsurgency were two pillars of a process of developmental

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce Cumings argues that “Most are decent, humane, solid citizens of the American official diaspora, who wouldn’t dream of exploiting anyone. Over time, however, a colonial culture and racist discourse developed apart from anyone’s intentions. Full of idealist rhetoric in formal circumstances, in informal settings officialdom was a rule arrogant, racist, resentful, and colonial in the imperfect American way.” According to Cumings, the American brand of imperialism was imperfect, “compared to the old Japanese style, because our imperial foundation was filled out and justified by its opposite, the doctrine of liberalism.” Bruce Cumings, “Silent but deadly: Sexual subordination in the U.S.-Korean relationship,” in *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*, eds. Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus (New York: The New Press, 1993), 174-5.

<sup>6</sup> James Peck, *Washington’s China: The National Security World, the Cold War, and the Origins of Globalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 83

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-10.

<sup>9</sup> Jian Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

containment: that is, containment of communism by developing Third World countries in a capitalist direction.”<sup>10</sup> Within this polarized Asia, Korea’s importance as a “frontline” – a literal and figurative border between red China against free Japan, America’s linchpin in Asia – was re-emphasized after the Korean War. The rhetoric in the 1958 Eighth United States Army (EUSA) Pamphlet 355-14, “The Truce in Korea,” conveyed this significance of Korea. It warned that the possibility of a successful communist assault in Korea “might well set off a chain reaction in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and finally the United States.” “The red stain of Communism today blotches an area that spreads from the Elbe River in Germany to Central Indochina,” the GI educational pocketbook warned.<sup>11</sup>

In order to safeguard this “frontline,” Washington provided political, economic, and military support to South Korea throughout the long postwar decade. South Korea was far from a “beacon” of democracy, however, as autocratic governments dominated from the First Republic under Syngman Rhee and for nearly four decades thereafter, except a brief interlude from 1960 to 1961. Although aware of Rhee’s undemocratic and corrupt ways, Washington policymakers preferred anti-communist dictatorships to socialist states and thus supported each subsequent military leader who rose to power in Korea.<sup>12</sup> From 1946 to 1970, the United States also provided over five billion dollars in bilateral economic assistance.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the US and Korea committed to a military alliance with the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954. This agreement enabled

<sup>10</sup> Peck, *Washington’s China*, 212-3.

<sup>11</sup> EUSA Information Bulletin 355-14 “The Truce in Korea,” 8<sup>th</sup> Army Information Section Publications, 1958-1960, RG338/290/67/24/6/Box 1499, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

<sup>12</sup> During the First Republic, Korean style McCarthyism allowed for imprisoning of 60,000, 60 percent of whom were charged with the violation of the National Security Law. Passed in 1948, “to restrict anti-state acts that endanger national security and to protect [the] nation’s safety and its people’s life and freedom,” the law was widely interpreted under Rhee and subsequent regimes to criminalize association with communism and criticism of the South Korean government. After another fraudulent elections that kept Rhee in power, protests by citizens, mainly led by students, erupted all over the country in April of 1960. The April Revolution called for Rhee’s resignation, and with American Ambassador McConaughy and General Magruder’s urgings, Rhee went into exile. Following the April Revolution of 1960, Korea’s brief experiment with democracy came to an abrupt end with a military coup led by Park in May 1961, ushering in his autocratic rule until his assassination in 1979. Under Park, what Seungsook Moon calls “militarized modernity” – the dual goal of “strong and wealthy nation” pursued through anti-communist national security and vigorous industrial development – guided the postwar nation building and also defined national identity as well as provided legitimacy to the regime. Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005).

The Kennedy administration explicitly supported the military government by inviting Park to Washington in November of 1961, convinced that the Park junta could implement a long-term economic development and sweeping reforms in Korea. Sang-Yoon Ma, “From ‘March North’ to Nation-Building: The Interplay of U.S. Policy and South Korean Politics during the Early 1960s,” *Korea Journal* 49, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 29-31. Besides security alliance, the US also pushed for Korea’s economic reform and sought regional economic integration. The Kennedy Administration especially backed Park’s military regime after the coup and its plans of rapid economic reconstruction. And the Johnson administration pushed Korea’s economic normalization with Japan, which was signed in 1965 – a decision celebrated by Americans and protested by Koreans.

<sup>13</sup> Total economic and military aid from 1946 to 1970 amounted to 8.173 billion (640.1 million in loans and 7,532.9 in grants). House Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, “American-Korean Relations: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs,” 92<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1971, 2, 15-6.

the establishing of semi-permanent bases on Asia's mainland to garrison the 60,000 American forces stationed in Korea. The 1954 treaty, however, did not replace or revise the wartime Daejon Agreement, which meant that Korea continued to permit near free reign of its territory and unilateral jurisdiction to the US for the stationing of its troops for an unspecified future stay.<sup>14</sup> On July 1, 1957, the United Nations Command Headquarters also moved from Tokyo to Seoul in conjunction with an overall reorganization of the US military forces and command structure in the Pacific. Concurrent with this move, the US Forces Korea (USFK), a planning headquarters that coordinated joint service activities in the ROK, was established.

Soon after the Korea War, America's focus in Asia turned to Southeast Asia. In a January 1954 Senate Foreign Relations Committee session, Senator Mansfield claimed that the "loss of China will be as nothing compared to the loss of the rest of Asia, and if Indochina falls, that is what will happen."<sup>15</sup> And the battle over Vietnam became yet another testing ground for America's commitment to containment. In America's second "hot war" of the cold war, South Korea stood fast by its ally as the largest contingent assisting the US in Vietnam. The ROK contributed a cumulative total of 300,000 combat troops, second only to the US itself, between 1965 and 1973.<sup>16</sup> Foremost, this military cooperation was based in part on political reciprocity and legitimacy. For the Johnson administration, the ROK's participation gave some credence to the "More Flags" campaign of making the war appear more an allied rather than a unilateral action. In exchange for contributing to American "legitimacy," Park Jung Hee won renewed US backing for his dictatorship and a continued American troop commitment.<sup>17</sup>

The strengthened military and political alliance between the Park and Johnson administrations shifted with President's Nixon's "Asianization" policy following the 1968 turning point in Vietnam. With the promise to end the war "with honor," the Nixon administration in 1969 called for the scaling back of American overseas military commitments and for its allies, especially in Asia, to provide primary manpower for its own defense.<sup>18</sup> The late 1960s marked both the peak and the beginning of the decline of

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<sup>14</sup> Commonly referred to as the "Daejon Agreement," it was signed on July 12, 1950 "under the pressing circumstances of war and unilaterally assigned criminal jurisdiction to U.S. authorities." Article 4 of the 1954 Defense Treaty also ambiguously reads, "The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement." Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, *Let's Go Together: ROK-US Alliance and USFK* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2002), 66, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Executive Session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Historical Series, Volume VI*, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1954 (Washington: GPO, 1977), 48.

<sup>16</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, "America's Korea, Korea's Vietnam," *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (2001): 533.

<sup>17</sup> 4,687 ROK soldiers were killed and some 8,000 wounded in the Vietnam War. *Ibid.*, 531-2.

<sup>18</sup> The Nixon administration in 1969 sought to "Vietnamize" the conflict by training and equipping South Vietnamese military to assume the burden of combat, effectively cutting the number of American troops to 60,000 by 1972. Despite this rhetoric of de-escalation, however, the destruction continued and even escalated into neighboring countries with secret bombings of Laos and Cambodia. 31,000 Americans died by the time of 1969 policy shift, but by the time the war ended, 58,000 dead (27,000 more would die). And the total number of VNs killed is estimated at over 4 million. Marvin Gettleman and others, eds., *Vietnam and America: The Most Comprehensive Documented History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 436-7. In the Nixon administration's "quixotic search for an independent, non-Communist Vietnam," bombs dropped on Indochina during these years far exceeded that of the Johnson years." George C Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. (New York: McGraw-Hill,

this postwar over-extended American empire of bases. By 1969, an estimated 1,517,000 Americans in uniform served overseas in 70 to 80 countries, spread out over 429 major and 2,972 minor military bases that covered over 4,000 square miles.<sup>19</sup> The Vietnam War, more than any other development during the decade, brought about significant changes to the contours of the American military overseas, eventually culminating in the reduction of forces and a shift from a draft-based to the “All-Volunteer Force” by 1973. Moreover, the combination of local economic growths that depreciated the supremacy of the American dollar, rising nationalisms in host nations, and the beginning of détente and the consequent relaxation of security threats all challenged the American military presence around the globe. If the cold war in Asia began on the premise that Asians could not be left to determine their own future in the postcolonial world, and that the US must actively intervene in containing the communist aggression and integrating the “friendly” Asian nations, “Asianization” then was an ironic recognition that “Asia should be run by Asians” after the two catastrophic wars.

Asianization meant American troop reductions from the peninsula in 1971, marking what then-Ambassador to Korea, William J. Porter, called a “weaning process” toward Korean self-reliance. At the same time, Korea stood out as a success story of American influence and a proven “strong and loyal friend” to the United States. During the 1971 House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on “American-Korean Relations,” Representative Cornelius E. Gallagher of New Jersey claimed that although the American aid program in Asia had “not always been an unqualified success,” Korea stood in sharp contrast and wanted “all [to] share a moment of pride about what has been created in Korea.”<sup>20</sup> Ambassador Porter, too, credited the “miracle” of Korea’s postwar success in part to the American support and faith in the ROK, which “provided the basis for the enduring friendship.”<sup>21</sup> Although the “parent-child”-like relations of the US and Korea stood in the “weaning” phase, such as by reducing the number of Americans deployed in Korea to 45,000 by 1971, Ambassador Porter reaffirmed that the American military cutback did not “affect in anyway the determination” of the US military commitment to America’s “strong and loyal friends.”<sup>22</sup>

From 1954 to 1971, American policymakers still viewed Korea as a temporary outpost. Washington and military planners only made incremental improvements as necessitated by ground-level conditions. In an effort to provide comfort and familiarity to the troops stationed in the unfamiliar land, the Department of Defense (DOD) renovated barracks from temporary housing (tents) to semi-temporary buildings (Quonsets), followed by semi-permanent structures. The DOD also expanded recreational facilities and transplanted “Little Americas” into the camps, along with limited dependent accompaniment. At the same time, Washington hesitated and questioned whether to invest further. Moreover, Korea’s shorter overseas tours and limited dependents policy actually became the “model” for those who advocated cutting the costly upkeep of overseas installations. This incongruent policy of improving camps to provide comfort

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2001), 271, 320.

<sup>19</sup> Harry Magdoff, “Militarism and Imperialism,” *The American Economic Review* 60, no. 2 (May, 1970): 240.

<sup>20</sup> House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, “American-Korean Relations,” 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-5, 65.

<sup>22</sup> Porter pointed out that a sure sign of this continued commitment was the \$150 million pledged by the US Congress as supplemental funds to modernize the Korean forces. *Ibid.*, 5, 7.

and familiarity to the troops, while also making Korea into a “model” of short-tours in “temporary outposts,” resulted in the development of both the “Little Americas” in camps and a GI-Korean constructed system of temporary homes in camptowns. By the end of the 1960s, Korea had become a “success” story of America’s cold war policy in Asia and consequently, a semi-permanent frontier.

*Temporary Solutions on “Emergency Standard Basis”*

Uncertain of how long the US military would stay, Washington sought temporary constructions to address the most egregious conditions, while refraining from investing in expensive and permanent projects. The first phase of provisional improvements replaced wartime tent camps with prefabricated Quonset huts in 1955-56. American troops continued to live in tent camps for two years after the 1953 armistice.<sup>23</sup> When General I.D. White assumed command of Army Forces in the Far East/Eighth Army in July 1955, he directed that all soldiers be out of tents before the winter.<sup>24</sup> Quonset huts replaced tents as the new housing units and troops erected over a thousand of them by November of 1955. A second phase of the improvement program added three thousand Quonset huts, upgraded water and sewer systems, and constructed concrete block showers, latrines, and mess halls by 1956.<sup>25</sup> Poor living conditions, however, persisted well into the late 1950s despite these initial improvements. John Davis served as the 24<sup>th</sup> division artillery commander in Korea from 1956 to 1957 and attested to living in “very primitive and ready for combat” conditions. His command “had to haul in the water for the division in trucks and our lights were furnished by old field generators that were used during the war.”<sup>26</sup> In 1957, before the Committee on Armed Services as well as the Committee on Appropriations, Brig. General William R. Shuler, Chief of Construction Division, requested \$9 million for 1958 to continue the “effort to ameliorate the substandard living conditions of the troops in Korea [...] on an emergency standard basis.”<sup>27</sup> For the 1958 fiscal year, the total requested military construction appropriations for overseas installations amounted to \$361 million, of which Korean projects only accounted for \$9 million. Korea certainly did not constitute a major place of overseas installation investment, especially when compared to the \$400 million building project in Okinawa earlier. When asked about the quality of the new Quonsets, Brig. General Shuler replied that although “flimsy,” they would definitely last for three to five years.<sup>28</sup> Postwar efforts eliminated tents and addressed the most basic facility needs, yet these temporary solutions on “emergency standard basis” continued.

The armed services argued for improved camp facilities to maintain troop morale and retention throughout the interim augmentation policy that guided the decade of the 1960s. During another incremental construction phase from 1959 to the early 1960s, the

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<sup>23</sup> D. Colt Denfeld, *American Military Camps in the Republic of Korea, 1866-1996* (Anchorage: Pacific Bases Research, 1997), 15

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> 1986 Interview of Lieutenant General John J. Davis by Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Fullerton, John J. Davis Papers, USAMHI.

<sup>27</sup> Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Military Construction Authorization: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Military Construction of the Committee on Armed Services*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1957, 508.

<sup>28</sup> House Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Appropriations for 1958: Hearing before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1957, 210.

DOD proposed to build larger semi-permanent barracks and other structures made out of concrete and steel. In a 1959 hearing, Maj. General L.E. Seeman requested appropriations to construct “two 168-man barracks in Seoul area” of “semi-permanent” nature.<sup>29</sup> The defense department also proposed plans for communal buildings such as a library, chapel, 500-man consolidated mess hall, educational facilities, and a recreational court in 1959 and again in 1960.<sup>30</sup> Paul Black, who was stationed in Yongsan from 1958 to 1959, captured in his photographs these camp improvements, such as the Seoul Area Command (SAC) chapel, theaters, and rows of Quonset barracks (Figure 9). The armed services argued that neglecting the improvements of daily living quarters and other facilities would be “detrimental to high morale” and health of the troops. General Seeman reiterated similar sentiments during the military construction authorization hearing for fiscal year 1961. Although the majority of the requested projects concerned tactical facilities – such as missile maintenance shops and petroleum and ammunition storage facilities – the DOD also requested barracks for 364 enlisted men in Yongsan, 500-men consolidated mess in Busan, and an education center for troops in Seoul.<sup>31</sup> General Seeman, once again, reasoned that “Personnel must be housed in adequate, sanitary, and secure quarters in order to maintain good health, morale, and a reasonable standard of living,” and described the troop housing as dilapidated, “temporary structures of prefabricated type...deteriorated beyond economic repair, unsanitary and unsightly in appearance.”<sup>32</sup> Even in the late 1960s, troops lived in Quonset huts, as captured in Neil Mishalov’s photos from his 1968-69 tour in Korea. His “home sweet home” at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinance Battalion consisted of rows of Quonsets and within which his personal space consisted of a cot and sparse furnishings (Figure 10). Donald Campolongo also lived in one of these “six men bays” during his 1970-71 tour, where they each had a “bunk bed, a wall locker, a foot locker, and some GIs had large wooden cabinets called Kimchi Cabinets for stereo gear of other personal items.” He described living in such a Quonset as a “life in a fish bowl” with no privacy. Enlisted men who ranked E-5 and above, however, lived in more semi-permanent barracks in two-men rooms, with “a real bed, chest of drawers, lounge chair, and closets.” Upon his promotion to E-5, Campolongo moved into one of the semi-private rooms – “a step up toward better living.”<sup>33</sup> Military camps in Korea throughout the long postwar decade consisted of this motley collection of structures, ranging from American-built temporary and semi-permanent constructions along with Japanese colonial buildings, as it was unclear how “permanent” Korea would be as an American outpost.

<sup>29</sup> Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Appropriations for 1960: Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations on H.R. 8575*, 86<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1959, 161-2, 186.

<sup>30</sup> House Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Appropriations for 1960: Hearing before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations*, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1959, 258; Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1961: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Military Construction of the Committee of Armed Services on S. 3006 and H.R. 10777*, 86<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1960, 198-200.

<sup>31</sup> Of the \$4.9 million in estimated construction, \$1.139 million were earmarked for directly improving troop standard of living and consequently, their “morale.” The estimated cost for the barracks was \$248,000, \$79,000 for the mess, and \$40,000 for the education center. It also requested a \$772,000 for another water system in Seoul for the arrival of 346 dependents, 15,000-man laundry, a 50-bed hospital, and two additional steam plants.

<sup>32</sup> *Military Construction Authorization Hearings for Fiscal Year 1961*, 195-7.

<sup>33</sup> Campolongo, “...And then there was Korea,” 60.

*Korea as “Model” of Short Tours*

Along with better amenities, the question of dependents also frequently surfaced during discussions on troop morale and retention. By the end of the 1950s, approximately one million American troops and family members resided on or near overseas bases in all parts of the world, with the largest number of dependents in Germany and Japan. The DOD asserted that, “our ability to retain trained, qualified personnel within the Army is dependent to a large measure upon the availability of suitable living accommodations for personnel and their dependents.”<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the armed services maintained that the “morale of their personnel is substantially higher when dependents are allowed to accompany servicemen to foreign posts.”<sup>35</sup> Despite these opinions, the DOD did not factor Korea into the overseas family housing plans until 1959 and even then, only the families of military officers connected with the training of the Korean Army (Military Assistance Advisory Group) had that privilege. As a trade off for the “hardship,” the military reduced the tour of duty in Korea to thirteen months, compared to the 24 months without dependents and 36 months with dependents overseas sojourn in Europe and Japan.<sup>36</sup> Thus, while dependents numbered 180,049 in West Germany, 50,025 in Japan, and 23,808 in Okinawa, only 2,163 dependents resided in Korea as of June 30, 1963.<sup>37</sup> Despite the correlation between quality living conditions and benefits of accompanied tours to troop morale and retention, Washington chose interim measures in Korea.

Korea’s shorter overseas tours and limited dependents policy actually became a “model” for those who advocated cutting the “US gold outflow” – the problem of too much American gold reserve being spent overseas. Both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations attempted to reduce the gold outflow by ordering bans on government-paid overseas transportation and housing of wives and children. The policy originated in 1960, but President Kennedy lifted the ban in February of 1961 only to reinstate it in October of that same year. The wives left at home became known as “gold-dollar widows,” reported *Time* magazine. Since the marriage boom of WWII, followed by the subsequent baby boom, the armed forces had become a “married force,” with about 85 percent of all officers and 40 percent of enlisted men married and with an average of 2.8 dependents each. Commanders complained that “without the stabilizing effect of a wife and children, we may be creating more social problems than we are solving on the economic front.”<sup>38</sup> Besides morale and retention, moreover, poor discipline and fraternization with local women further bolstered arguments for sending families abroad.<sup>39</sup> After months of angry complaints by separated service families that the travel cutoff “succeeded more notably in reducing G.I. morale” rather than the gold outflow, the

<sup>34</sup> *Military Construction Appropriations for 1958*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1957.

<sup>35</sup> David Tarr, “The Military Abroad,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 368, no. 1 (1966): 38-9.

<sup>36</sup> During the 1957 Appropriations Subcommittee hearings, Congressman Harry Sheppard of California inquired about the dependents policy in Korea. General Seeman explained that no specific guidelines existed because the “normal tour of duty in Korea is a shortened one for those officers and men who do not have dependents.” *Military Construction Appropriations for 1958*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1957, 255-6.

<sup>37</sup> Tarr, “The Military Abroad,” 37.

<sup>38</sup> “The Families They Left Behind,” *Time*, 13 April 1962, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1945-1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 26.



Kennedy administration rescinded the policy for the final time in April of 1962.<sup>40</sup> The Korean model, however, resurfaced repeatedly in subsequent discussions as an alternative to the dependent system in Europe or Japan and as a solution to the gold flow problem. In a letter to the *New York Times* in 1964, a retired military officer proposed reduction or elimination of the “vast complexes” needed to maintain dependents overseas and advocated “modified short tour similar to the 13-month unaccompanied tour now used for Korea” to balance the deficit.<sup>41</sup> During a 1966 military construction hearing, Senator Stephen Young of Ohio similarly suggested that the DOD “adopt a policy of sending men over for a tour of duty to Western Europe, France, and West Germany, in particular, for 13 months and not have their dependents go, [as] the same policy you have in Korea.”<sup>42</sup>

Although advocates touted Korea’s shorter overseas tours as a model, several costly repercussions resulted. For one, the military repeatedly cited unaccompanied tours as a problem of morale among troops, who consistently ranked Korea among the least desired destinations. Moreover, the armed forces associated unaccompanied tours with problems of discipline, fraternization with locals, prostitution, and violence, as GIs sought recreation outside of their compound walls, without the grounding force of a family. The US government commissioned study on “Civil Affairs Relations in Korea” found that “the rapid rotation of military personnel has been an important factor in undermining effective cooperative action [and] has been very harmful to effective relations with the Koreans.”<sup>43</sup> Although not discussed in legislative hearings, another reason identified for constructing more recreational facilities on bases was “an effort to keep the troops occupied” and away from Korean camp followers and villages.<sup>44</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* in 1959 reported that the large number of “parasites” near U.S. military bases posed a major problem in Korea. It explained that “the Army—in an effort to beat camp followers with their high disease rates and shysters with their unfair deals for soldiers—has been forced to the extreme of building an extensive network of recent recreational facilities in an effort to keep the soldiers occupied.” The DOD created “Little Americas” as one response to the problem of low morale and fraternization with the local “parasites.”

#### *Two Homes: “Little Americas” in Camps, “Hooches” in Camptowns*

The consequences of substandard living conditions and lack of recreational facilities, compounded by absence of families, impacted troop morale, which forced the military command to improve facilities and accommodate more dependents. The turn of the decade witnessed some limited, yet nevertheless significant, changes toward accompanied families. A 1959 *New York Times* article announced the creation of four burgeoning “Little Americas” in Korea to quarter approximately 2,500 military advisory

<sup>40</sup> “Family Reunion,” *Time*, 4 May 1962, 24.

<sup>41</sup> “Army Dependents Overseas” Letters to the Times, *New York Times*, 25 Oct 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Senate Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Appropriations, *Supplemental Military Procurement and Construction Authorizations, Fiscal year 1966: Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services and the Subcommittee on Department of Defense of the Committee on Appropriations*, 89<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1966, 342.

<sup>43</sup> Carlton L. Wood, *Civil Affairs Relations in Korea* (Chevy Chase, MD: Operations Research Offices, Johns Hopkins University, 1955), 92.

<sup>44</sup> “Uncertain Army Status in Korea Poses Problem,” *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 1959.

personnel and dependents.<sup>45</sup> The new American military housing promised seclusion on “military reservations behind barbed wire” and “almost complet[e] self-sufficien[cy],” with their own stores, commissaries, dispensaries, clubs and other recreational facilities, a central hospital, and a high school in Seoul. The USFK requested another water system in Seoul a year later to “forestall an increased water shortage on the Yongsan Military Reservation caused by the arrival of 346 dependent families, a 15,000-man laundry, a 50-bed hospital, and the addition of two steam plants totaling 770 boiler horsepower.”<sup>46</sup> Concerns for improved troop morale instigated these base developments, including larger barracks, improved recreational and service facilities, and eventually a creation of “Little Americas” to accommodate newly arriving dependents. Although still uncertain of length and degree of future commitment, the everyday realities of troops forced the state to attend to the needs and surfacing tensions; the DOD hoped that the creation of an American oasis would solve both of these problems.

The military planners and commanders attempted to accommodate the personnel and their families by building “Little Americas.” According to political scientist David Tarr’s 1966 study, “The Military Abroad,” “American bases abroad stand as rather lonely islands of America in which their inhabitants seek emotional reinforcement by emphasizing things American. With respect to the latter, the military helps them do it by bringing much of America to the base.”<sup>47</sup> Described as “caricatures of the American suburbs, more perfect than the real thing” by Anni Baker, these communities included separate, specially built housing areas divided by rank, shopping centers with commissaries and post exchanges (PX) offering American goods, schools, hospitals, chapels, gymnasiums, playground, and other recreation areas such as golf courses, swimming pools, movie theaters, library, hobby clubs, tracks and baseball fields, and even beaches and ski resorts.<sup>48</sup> The physical layout of the camps also replicated the familiar American suburbs. Mark Gillem assesses that the American military installations abroad, centrally designed by the DOD in Washington for standardized reproduction on foreign lands, recreated the low-density American suburb. In order to give residents a slice of the American Dream” and to make familiar the unfamiliar foreign land, the planners “wholeheartedly adopted the suburban ethos, with its focus on conformity and consumption,” contends Gillem.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, this migration of not only the American troops, but also their families overseas meant the projection of the “American image” and transplantation of “little Americas” globally. The military engineers planning for dependent housing in Japan, for instance, cautioned that despite the strong pressure for rapid construction, haste should be avoided not only because “the Allied Forces must live for a number of years in the communities that are presently being constructed,” but also because sub-standard appearances “will tend to lower in the eyes of the Japanese their

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<sup>45</sup> “‘Little Americas’ Burgeon in Korea,” *New York Times*, 7 February 1959. This new policy only included personnel of the Military Assistance Advisory Group whose terms of service were extended to 24 months instead of the standard 13 months. The two Army divisions and other combat personnel and their adjuncts were not included in the program.

<sup>46</sup> Senate, *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1961*, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1960, 200.

<sup>47</sup> Tarr, “The Military Abroad,” 38.

<sup>48</sup> Anni P. Baker, *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence* (New York: Praeger, 2004), 53-6.

<sup>49</sup> Mark L. Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xv-xvi, 80.

conception of American standard of living.<sup>50</sup> Situated in the heart of the densely populated capital city, the sprawling 640-acre horizontal landscape of Yongsan Garrison in Seoul embodied this physical transformation of military camps into “little Americas.” Photographs taken by Paul Black of Yongsan in 1958-59 are reminiscent of an American suburban landscape, depicting rows of newly built one-story dependent housing with cars parked outside, as well as the main PX of Yongsan, also surrounded by a parking lot (Figure 11). The initial post-Korean War constructions on Yongsan Garrison, such as the PX, the library, and the dependent housing, consisted of one-story structures surrounded by lawns and parking spaces that reflected the architectural tastes of the 1950s American suburbs.

Concurrently, hybridized extensions of “little Americas” also formed beyond the walls of military camps. No matter how self-contained the bases may have been, military personnel and their families also sought services and recreation outside of compound walls. Areas that sprang up near US military installations gained numerous names, ranging from “the Ville” to “Camptown,” “A-town” (American Town), and *gijichon*. Anthropologist Felix Moos calls them “Boomtowns.” A case study of Itaewon, situated near Yongsan Garrison, offers a closer look at an evolution of a camptown. Originally a largely rural and unsettled district, Itaewon quickly developed into a service-oriented area catering to the needs of soldiers in the field, ranging from laundry to sexual services in 1945. After the Korean War, it evolved into a recreational site. In 1957 establishments with such names as the UN Club, King Club, 7 Club, and Lucky Club opened as businesses catering to foreigners and qualifying for tax-free liquor. Although these clubs banned Koreans in general, they hired Korean women to serve drinks, dance, and fraternize with GIs.<sup>51</sup> The infamous “Hooker Hill,” a cluster of brothels, also established itself. Besides this segregation between locals and Americans, whites normally boycotted bars serving black servicemen; establishments catering to black soldiers opened near the main drag and were euphemistically referred to as “DMZ”—Dark Man’s Zone. According to David Tarr’s 1966 study, in any country where local establishments serviced American servicemen, these two types of de facto segregations between locals and foreigners and also among whites and black existed “virtually universal[ly].”<sup>52</sup> Other large camptowns near American camps shared a similar trajectory, as will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

For the majority of the servicemen, who did not have the privilege of their families joining them in Korea, camptowns represented extensions of their recreational domain beyond the camps. Donald Campolongo describes “the ville” outside of Camp Walker, where he was stationed in 1970-71, as several streets of businesses that catered to GIs, with “bars, clubs, restaurants, pawn shops, barbers, tailors, shoe makers, antique shops, and little stores.” In this ville, one “could buy a hand made suit, have a meal, get a haircut, drink a beer, get laid, buy art work...all within walking distance from the main

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<sup>50</sup> “16 Nov 46 Construction Standards for Dependent Housing in Japan and Korea,” Folder: Assignment of Barracks and Quarters 1946, United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK) Adjutant General, General Correspondence 1945-49, Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, NARA.

<sup>51</sup> Although the Japanese military headquartered at Yongsan during the colonial era, the Japanese did not recreate their lifestyle around Itaewon as Americans. Most of the services for the Japanese were located near the center of Seoul. G. Cameron Hurst, “It’aewon: The Gentrification of a Boomtown,” *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, no. 29 (1984): 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> Tarr, “The Military Abroad,” 39.

gate.”<sup>53</sup> The exchange of American dollars and Korean bodies characterized this vernacular landscape situated literally and symbolically between “little Americas” and the greater Korea. “Every major U.S. military installation in South Korea is ringed by villages occupied by camp followers who make their living on G.I. largesse,” claimed a 1964 *Time* article. The same report captured the nightly scene of a camptown: “Every evening in Seoul they gather under the street lights for the shape-up: smartly dressed girls in spike heels and hopeful smiles. In the fading light, American soldiers cruise by to inspect the merchandise, pinching buttocks and tilting faces toward the light.”<sup>54</sup> A GI stationed in Korea seeking advice from the popular “Dear Abby” column in 1965 explained the extensive temptations of being stationed in Korea without their families. He entreated, “what is a young, healthy man supposed to do for his physical needs? There are 12 women for every GI over here, and women practically throw themselves at our feet. I love my wife and always will, but I have a long hitch over here and I am only human.” Abby’s advice to this writer and his “buddies in the same lonesome boat” overseas was “to keep busy with as many wholesome activities as possible,” such as reading, exhausting exercise, prayer, and to “Stay sober and to avoid temptation.”<sup>55</sup>

Beyond brief encounters, some American personnel created temporary domestic spaces with a “moose,” where a Korean woman could satisfy both household and sexual needs on long-term bases. C.D.B. Bryan, in his autobiographical novel, *P.S. Wilkinson*, recounted high-ranking officers as some of the most eager participants of liaisons with “mooses,” a corruption of the Japanese word *musume* (girl). P.S. Wilkinson, a Yale graduate and a captain in the Army during the late 1950s like the author himself, describes that while “Major Lewis’ singular ambition when he had first arrived in Korea was to sleep with each girl in a particular whorehouse at least once,” another officer, Major Sturgess, fired the Korean houseboy and “moved in some prostitute from the village to take care of his cooking, laundry, and other needs.”<sup>56</sup> The director of an American service center in Seoul, Reverend Ernst W. Karsten, described this systemized practice of setting up a “hooch,” derived from the Japanese word *uchi* (house), with a “moose.”<sup>57</sup> Karsten charged in 1964 that about 90 percent of the GIs in Korea consorted with prostitutes regularly and “Some of them own their girls, complete with hooch and furniture.” A “hooch” could be established for about \$150 a month, not counting food. The “girls” also organized themselves to establish minimum rates, with groups like the Rose Association and the Reconstruction Association instituting “pillow fees” ranging from \$100 to \$200 a month. This going rate was more than the monthly salary of a private at the time, but an enterprising GI could make up the difference by playing the black market. “A G.I. can provide his moose with cigarettes, radios and cameras, all of which are resalable on the black market for several times their original cost,” explained the *Time* article that colluded with Karsten’s claims. And at the end of a tour, a GI could sell the “package” – “the hooch, complete with furniture and moose, to an incoming soldier” for \$200 to \$300. This domestic-business arrangement persisted throughout the long postwar decade. Donald Campolongo described how in 1970-71, “Sex was cheap.

<sup>53</sup> Campolongo, “. . . And then there was Korea,” 44.

<sup>54</sup> “A Hooch is Not a Home,” *Time*, 16 October 1964, 48.

<sup>55</sup> “Dear Abby: Advice for GIs Overseas and the Wives Back Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, 3 January 1965.

<sup>56</sup> Bryan, *P.S. Wilkinson*, 10, 19.

<sup>57</sup> “A Hooch is Not a Home,” *Time*, 16 October 1964.

This was a fact of life in Korea. You could buy a live in girlfriend, called a “yobo,” for \$50 to \$100 per month depending on your rank and ability to pay. This was a semi-permanent relationship and was all economic and strictly business.”<sup>58</sup>

Korean women, as girlfriends, prostitutes, or employees provided a sense of home, albeit in a temporary and hyper-sexualized sense, for male soldiers. The brief domestic arrangements of “hooches” with “mooses” exemplified the temporariness that permeated the places (“temporary” or “semi-permanent” structures of garrisons and camptowns) and the relationships (short tours of 13 months unaccompanied by families). At the same time, the temporariness of the physical structures of the military garrisons also mirrored the American relationships with the locals. And like the physical structures themselves, these sexualized and gendered domestic spaces could be easily created and just as quickly dismantled year after year. According to John Brinkerhoff Jackson, the real significance of the impermanent dwelling lies in “the freedom from burdensome emotional ties with the environment...and above all, the freedom to move on to somewhere else.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, the temporary nature of the intimate and material arrangements that fulfilled the function of a “home” for a GI was one unintended consequence of Korea being a model of unaccompanied short tours. And these sexualized and temporary arrangements for homes reflected, in many ways, the overall relationship between the American military camps and their Korean camptowns. The interaction between Americans and Koreans and each side’s access to resources and power manifested itself in the vernacular landscape.<sup>60</sup>

#### *From “Temporary” to “Semi-Permanent” Outpost*

Meanwhile, everyone asked “for how much longer in Korea?” yet no one seemed to have had an answer. The military and legislators continued correcting the most egregious conditions while refraining from investing in expensive and permanent projects. When asked whether the military planned to leave Korea soon, General Shuler answered in 1957: “...if we had any idea that was going to happen within a reasonable time, which we do not know, we would not construct this.”<sup>61</sup> In response to the same question one year later in 1958, Major General K.R. Barney, Director of Installations, replied, “Korea is a temporary post of the Army.”<sup>62</sup> Again in 1959, the *Los Angeles Times* reported:

The biggest question facing the American Army in Korea today is whether it is a combat or a peacetime Army. Privately, officers say they wish someone in authority would decide. If the Army is a combat one, things are too plush. If the Army is a peacetime one, things are too primitive. [...] No one in

<sup>58</sup> Campolongo, “...And then there was Korea,” 76.

<sup>59</sup> John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 91, 100-1.

<sup>60</sup> As William Cronon raises, accesses to resources and political power are expressed as spatial patterns and complex boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity and race, and nations produce an intricate social geography. William Cronon, “Kennebec Journey: The Paths out of Town,” in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*, eds. William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 45.

<sup>61</sup> *Military Construction Appropriations for 1958*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1957, 209.

<sup>62</sup> House Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Appropriations for 1959: Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1958, 618.

Washington seemed to be able to make up his mind about...how to run the Army in Korea.<sup>63</sup>

No one seemed to know how much longer the United States would garrison its troops in South Korea in the immediate postwar years, and similar uncertainty continued into the 1960s. When asked whether a substantial buildup of installations in Korea was planned during the 1961 hearing, General Seeman once again denied it: “There is no intention of committing ourselves to a long-range commitment, or to increase.”<sup>64</sup> By the late 1960s, however, with the ROK troops supporting the American war efforts in Vietnam, the uncertainty had changed from not knowing *when* the American forces would leave to *if* they would ever leave. During the 1968 fiscal year hearings that discussed the request to build a military hospital in Seoul, General Dalrymple responded, “Just that I am not competent to state when we are going to move out of Korea, *or if we are*, sir” (italics added), when Senator Allen Ellender wondered, “if we may be moving out of there in the next 2 or 3 years, why we should spend this \$2,810,000.”<sup>65</sup>

By the end of the decade, the other hot war of the cold war – Vietnam – greatly determined the future of American commitment in South Korea; it reduced the number of troops deployed in Korea, but it ironically also facilitated the shift from a temporary to semi-permanent presence. The military construction authorization hearings for fiscal year 1966 addressed the two related issues – the gold flow and the ROK involvement in Vietnam. With the concentration of efforts and resources into Vietnam, the concern for gold flow to other overseas bases intensified. Senator John Stennis commended the austerity of the installations in Korea, based on his 1959 visit, yet also expressed concern that things were “getting rather swank over there” in 1965.<sup>66</sup> Despite the concern with the gold flow, however, the significant ROK troop contribution in Vietnam meant continued and even strengthened American commitment in Korea, in reciprocity. The “cost of Korean support in Vietnam,” as discussed during the 1966 military construction hearing, equaled to the US paying the costs of the weaponry, supply and other items required by the ROK troops in Vietnam. Moreover, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara confirmed that in order to get the Korean troops to Vietnam, the US also agreed to provide substantial equipment to strengthen the Korean military in Korea.<sup>67</sup> Even with American troop reductions under Nixon, a more permanent American military commitment in Korea was indicated by increased military constructions of semi-permanent structures in the following decade. The proposed military construction for fiscal year 1970 totaled \$133 million outside of the US and Korea accounted for \$24 million – a much larger portion of the overseas military construction budget than any

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<sup>63</sup> “Uncertain Army Status in Korea Poses Problem,” *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 1959.

<sup>64</sup> Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Military Construction Authorization Fiscal Year 1962. Hearings on S. 2743 and H.R. 5000*, 87<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 178.

<sup>65</sup> Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1968. Joint Hearings on S. 1241 and H.R. 11722*, 90<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., 1967, 94-5.

<sup>66</sup> Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1966. Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services and the Subcommittee on the Military Construction on S. 1771 and H.R. 8439*, 89<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1st sess., 1965, 256.

<sup>67</sup> *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1966*, 51, 138.

other year since the end of the Korean War and throughout the 1960s.<sup>68</sup> Increased spending for 1970 reflected Nixon's promise of a more permanent American military commitment, despite reduced number of troops. Like the incrementally renovated structures and the overall physical environment, the American overseas presence in Korea had gradually evolved from postwar "temporary" to "semi-permanent" by the early 1970s.

Again, the changes evident in Yongsan base speak to the physical transformation that has taken place since the transpacific migration of the American military to Korea in 1945. Today, Yongsan Garrison is comprised of modified Japanese colonial structures along with American-designed temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent buildings. Some American modifications literally added a prefabricated structure on top of a Japanese-built brick building, such as building 2364 in Yongsan (Figure 12). This hodgepodge of constructions, reflecting their Japanese colonial foundation as well as fluctuations in US policies and funding, now comprise this American suburban spatial layout of Yongsan Garrison. At the same time, despite the resemblance to American suburbs, these camps simultaneously embody a vernacular landscape, characterized by Jackson as identification with "local custom, pragmatic adaptation to circumstances, and unpredictable mobility."<sup>69</sup> The physical changes of American camps and camptowns coincided with the engendering of a distinct cultural landscape forged out of American-Korean contacts.

### **"What We Are Doing Here": GIs of Integration, GIs of Imperialism**

The Eighth US Army Pamphlet 355-13, "What We Are Doing Here," designed to inform what was "at stake here for the US and for the free nations of the world," described the "origin" as well as the three main purposes of the American military presence in Korea.<sup>70</sup> According to this 1958 pamphlet, the history of the American military in Korea started with the "unprovoked" Soviet-controlled war in 1950. This brief, 32-page illustrated pocketbook mentioned neither the context of America's military role in dividing the peninsula at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel nor the occupation of the southern half by the USAMGIK from 1945 to 1948. In the postwar period, the threefold "job to be done" by American GIs in Korea included, foremost, to prevent communist aggression and as a team with the ROK armed forces, "to stand firm and fast on a most important frontier of freedom." To help reconstruct Korea for it "to become a showpiece of democracy and a beacon of hope to the oppressed peoples on the dark side of the bamboo and iron curtains" constituted the second "vital mission." And lastly, as "ambassadors" of America, the GIs held "the key to the success of President Eisenhower's 'People-to-People' world-wide friendship campaign." "The Korean people are watching us," it declared and thus, this "third vital mission" of representing the US will shape the Korean "opinion of America and all that America stands for" (Figure 13). Continuing the occupation period's goal of establishing an anti-communist and pro-capitalist nation friendly to the US, the purpose of the American military in postwar Korea was to contain

<sup>68</sup> *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1969*, 125.

<sup>69</sup> Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, xii.

<sup>70</sup> "Troop Information Pamphlets Record Set 1958," 8A Information Section Publications, 1958-1960, RG338/290/67/24/6/Box 1499 (A1 191), NARA.

communism and to integrate this small nation.

The Eisenhower administration, shifting away from the costly defense buildup articulated in the seminal NSC-68 of 1950, tried to emphasize economic integration and to “warm up” the cold war with positive crusades that enlisted “people-to-people” participation. These “crusaders” included newly “massified” overseas travelers, state-sponsored cultural ambassadors, students, and largely middle-class participants in foreign aid as well as religious and humanitarian causes, according to Christina Klein. And of the 1.5 million Americans living around the world by the late 1950s, 800,000 GIs and their families made up the vast majority.<sup>71</sup> In a 1957 letter addressed to the Armed Forces and their dependents stationed overseas, President Eisenhower asked that as the largest group of official US personnel in foreign countries, the military personnel had “the essential mission of building good will for our country.”<sup>72</sup> As “representing us all,” their mission as personal ambassadors entailed assuring the people all over the world of America’s dedication “to the promotion of the well-being and security of the community of nations.” This dual goal of securing “well-being and security” guided American foreign policy in the 1960s.

Multiple and complicated images of the GI as partners, providers, heroes, fathers, criminals, and violent social menace emerged from various contacts between Americans and Koreans. Despite the emphasized role as people-to-people ambassadors of America, the projected ideal and the practiced reality often contradicted. The American soldier was a partner, but on “superior” terms; the GI was a generous and altruistic helper in the postwar reconstruction, but also criminal partner in the black market and perpetrator of indiscriminate violence against the locals; the Americans were father figures to those in need, especially those orphaned by the war, but also fathered and often abandoned their “Amerasian” children. These soldiers of American democracy thus also became “imperfect” imperialists in their everyday interactions with the locals. The GIs of democracy/GIs of imperialism demonstrated the ways in which “soft power” was contingent, constantly worked out by people on the ground and under the historical circumstances. Finally, the Status of Forces Agreement signed in 1966 in many ways “legally” guaranteed the hierarchical and privileged positioning of the American military personnel vis-à-vis the Koreans with whom they had the most intimate as well as contested relations. To explore the cultural landscape of the American military in postwar Korea, this section pieces together GI interaction with Korea and Koreans, in particular their frequent contacts with certain groups of mostly male Koreans<sup>73</sup> – KATUSAs, houseboys, and slickyboys – and foremost, children.

### *GIs as Heroes, GIs as Fathers*

In the aftermath of the war’s destruction, the United Nations, the United States, and a number of private organizations contributed to the enormous reconstruction program. Under the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency, nearly 4,000 projects with contributions of more than \$140 million made voluntarily by 36 nations rehabilitated

<sup>71</sup> Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 105-6, 49-51.

<sup>72</sup> “Troop Information Pamphlets Record Set 1958,” 8A Information Section Publications, NARA.

<sup>73</sup> Just as pivotal and ubiquitous American male-Korean female interaction on camps and camptowns is the subject of the following chapter.



textile mills, mines, factories, fishing boats, classrooms, and homes. Besides these large scale works, American soldiers in Korea also took on numerous personal and unofficial projects, such as supporting the Ae Yuk orphanage in Busan by the 724<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion, and the 51 Korean boys between the ages of 4 and 14 in the “New Life Boys Home” by the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.<sup>74</sup> The Department of the Army officially organized these unofficial voluntary aids to civilians under the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK) Program in 1954. Disaster relief, medical assistance, and donated military building materials to assist in the construction of schools, public health facilities, and orphanages, made up the three objectives of AFAK. This generous program lasted until 1963.<sup>75</sup> In their efforts to garner continued congressional funding, the EUSA explicitly and repeatedly stated that the AFAK Program, besides contributing to the welfare of the Korean people, “reflected great credit upon the Eighth Army and the United States Government.” This 1959 disposition continued that the program was “a valuable adjunct in maintaining a good community relationship” and that “the psychological impact of the program on the Korean people [was] incalculable.”<sup>76</sup> A briefing on the program presented in 1962 concluded that the AFAK had contributed approximately \$22 million to projects in its eight years, and also reiterated that the AFAK was “a major instrument for the commander to use in accomplishing his community relations objectives in Korea.”<sup>77</sup> GI assistance to Koreans, both voluntarily and through the EUSA organized AFAK, fulfilled two of the three stated troop “missions” to help rebuild Korea as well as facilitate people-to-people friendships.

Even after the military sponsored AFAK program ended in 1963, the USFK encouraged its military personnel to engage in various people-to-people programs. In the 1965 “Community Relations Opportunities for USFK Personnel in Korea,” General Dwight E. Beach prepared a list of possible activities and organizations for distribution to all personnel arriving in Korea. General Beach contended that cultivating and maintaining friendly relations with Koreans was a great asset to the United States in its diplomatic, economic, and military affairs with the Republic. The American servicemen particularly played a crucial role in this endeavor of friendship because they constituted by far the largest segment of the American population in Korea, stationed in the cities, towns, and villages throughout Korea. The foremost activity promoted to foster positive people-to-people interactions was athletics, such as friendly competitions with Korean teams or coaching and officiating Korean children group sports. Baseball, introduced to Koreans by American missionaries during the Japanese colonial period, represented a popular “goodwill” game “for the purpose of strengthening the bonds of friendship existing between Korea and America.”<sup>78</sup> Other activities outlined by the information

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<sup>74</sup> EUSA Information Bulletin 355-14 “The Truce in Korea,” EUSA Troop Information Division, 8<sup>th</sup> Army Information Section Publications, 1958-1960, RG338/290/67/24/6/Box 1499 (A1 191), NARA.

<sup>75</sup> In order to expand the military aid, the Department of the Army was authorized to divert construction materials in the amount of \$15 million, \$5 million and \$2 million, respectively, in 1954, 1955 and 1956.

<sup>76</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Army Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK) Project Files, 1954-63, RG 338/290/C/53/02-04 Boxes 2195-2214, NARA.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> “ROK-US Good-Will Baseball Games,” *Chosun*, 30 June 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.” The Information Section of the Eighth Army translated and compiled news coverage on the USFK for the use of headquarters staff. “World and Korean news roundup,” 8A Information Section, Publications 1958-1960, RG338/290/67/24/6/Box 1499, NARA, (hereafter “World and Korean news roundup”).

pamphlet included the following: 1) Cultural, such as presentation of concerts and sponsorship of art and photographic contests featuring local subjects; 2) Educational, such as English instructions in schools; 3) Informative, such as showing “appropriate films” to Korean groups; 4) Community projects consisting of the likes of assistance in digging wells, local road-building and playground construction; 5) Humanitarian and charitable activities through contribution to local fund-raising campaigns, disaster assistance, donations and sponsorship of charities; and 6) Agricultural projects, such as assisting locals with land reclamation projects and crop harvesting.<sup>79</sup> Among all of these possible people-to-people activities, “Humanitarian and Charitable” projects garnered the most positive praise in the media, even more than baseball, during the postwar reconstruction decade.

Humanitarian activities, especially for orphans or other destitute Korean children, fostered images of GIs as friendly, altruistic heroes. By 1954, an estimated two million people under the age of 18 had been displaced from their homes. And as discussed in the preceding chapter, American soldiers responded during the wartime with a mixture of evacuations, fundraising drives, setting up of orphanages, and incorporating of children into care at military bases, with some of these relationships developing into a kind of informal adoption.<sup>80</sup> These spontaneous humanitarian efforts continued in the postwar years. Especially during Christmas, sentimentalized media coverage of American generosity toward hapless Korean children appeared year after year. Besides holiday parties and gifts, the *New York Times* reported that “several billion dollars’ worth of affection...has been given by the big men in fatigues to the small people in ragged clothing.”<sup>81</sup> Individual acts of kindness during other months of the year also garnered favorable local news coverage. “US Army Men Help Poor Children,” published in *Donga Ilbo*, relayed that First Lieutenant Yani deeply impressed Pochun villagers by presenting the children with 180 pairs of rubber shoes. The Private had purchased the shoes from a fund raised by the men of the 40<sup>th</sup> Armor, in commemoration of Fathers’ Day in the US.<sup>82</sup> “American Officer Helps Helpless Boy” in *Sanup Kyungjae* told of an American officer’s instant feeling of sympathy toward a boy walking on old crutches, which resulted in brand new crutches for the boy. The American won praise from the villagers for his action.<sup>83</sup> In “Human Love in Flame,” *Seoul Iril* reported that villagers paid a high tribute to an American soldier for dashing into flames to rescue a little girl.<sup>84</sup> These individual acts of heroism and kindness toward the children garnered praises of entire villages, according to the articles.

Popular depictions of the generosity of Americans also evoked paternalistic

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<sup>79</sup> “Community Relations Opportunities for USFK Personnel in Korea, 12 November 1965,” US Forces Korea, Office of the Commander, Folder: ROK-US Relations Post War, Eighth United States Army (EUSA) and United States Forces Korea (USFK) History Office in Yongsan Military Reservation, Seoul, Korea (hereafter Yongsan Archives).

<sup>80</sup> Tobias Hübinette, “Korean adoption history,” in *Community 2004. Guide to Korea for overseas adopted Koreans*, ed. Eleana Kim (Korea: Overseas Koreans Foundation, 2004), 2-3.

<sup>81</sup> “G.I.’s in Far East Are Full-Time Santas; Their Giving Totals \$500,000 in Year,” *New York Times*, 9 December 1956.

<sup>82</sup> “US Army Men Help Poor Children,” *Donga Ilbo*, 27 June 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>83</sup> “American Officer Helps Helpless Boy,” *Sanup Kyungjae*, 21 July 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>84</sup> “Human Love in Flame,” *Seoul Iril*, 19 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

images of them as father figures to Korean children. Ironies abound in these depictions of American GIs as fathers since some of them literally did father children in Korea, and subsequently fueled intercountry adoption. The *Los Angeles Times*, in December of 1954, recounted that the “withdrawals of American troops from South Korea are creating an ever-deepening crisis in the feeding and care of 700,000 orphans, including 100,000 abandoned ‘United Nations babies,’ in that wartorn (sic) land.”<sup>85</sup> A decade later in 1965, the *Los Angeles Times* once again reported on the “desperate plight” of “abandoned children of American soldier fathers” or “GI ‘Orphans.’”<sup>86</sup> *Time* magazine also estimated in 1965 that there lived 20,000 “half-caste children in Korea” with 500 to 600 more born each year.<sup>87</sup> Although the exact figure of just how many “GI ‘Orphans’” GIs fathered in Korea is not known, estimates for the total number born since the Korean War ranges between 20,000 and 60,000. Of these, the number of “Amerasian” children sent out for international adoption totaled 6,533 from 1953 to 2005. The majority of them, 5,546 of the 6,533, left Korea during the years of 1955 and 1973.<sup>88</sup> In turn, the adoption of these progeny of American fathers and Korean mothers paved the way for systemization of intercountry adoption that created transnational families in the US from the mid-1950s. Thus, the American servicemen served a double role as GI of Integration: GIs fostered a positive image of America through their humanitarian work. But, GIs also fathered children and inadvertently advanced intercountry adoption that further “integrated” together Asia and America in a very material sense.

#### *GIs as Partners, GIs as Big Brother*

KATUSAs represented another group of Koreans with whom GIs shared the cultural landscape. Working in the same units and living together in the barracks, KATUSAs represented “partners” to an American GI. “Tried in battle, competent in peace, the KATUSA stands side-by-side with his American counterpart on ‘Freedom’s Frontier,’” declared a 1966 EUSA Troop pamphlet.<sup>89</sup> As discussed in the preceding chapter, the ROK and US commands initiated the KATUSA program (Korean Augmentation to the US Army) to reinforce the understaffed American divisions with Korean troops during the early days of the war. Despite initial negative wartime reactions due to the American units being “flooded with untrained troops, recruited without selectivity, and speaking no English,” the experiment showed improved effectiveness by the war’s second year.<sup>90</sup> A 1954 study assessing wartime experiences concluded that the KATUSA program had been functionally valuable and recommended its continuation for both tactical and goodwill purposes.<sup>91</sup> Both the Americans and Koreans surveyed positively rated the integration overall. Former KATUSAs especially considered their

<sup>85</sup> “GIs’ Exodus Hits Orphans in Korea,” *Los Angeles Times*, 17 December 1954.

<sup>86</sup> “Foundation is Helping Those GI ‘Orphans,’” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 February 1965.

<sup>87</sup> “Confucius’ Outcasts,” *Time*, 10 December 1965, 43.

<sup>88</sup> Overseas Korea Foundation, “Characteristics of International Adoptees, 1953-2007,” <http://oaks.korean.net/>.

<sup>89</sup> Eighth United States Army Command Information Troop Topic, Number 5-67, October 1966, “The KATUSA—Key Member of the Army Team,” Folder: KATUSA Program, Yongsan Archives.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> “The Utilization of KATUSA: A Study of Eighth Army Personnel toward the KATUSA Program,” Prepared for The Johns Hopkins University Operations Research Office (New York: International Public Opinion Research, Inc., 1954), ii-iv.

treatment by Americans to have been friendly and fair and 96 percent agreed that they liked America by extension. Based on this data, the study concluded that the KATUSA program would increase pro-American feelings among Koreans “by turning out a native corps of ‘ambassador of good will.’”<sup>92</sup> This wartime KATUSA experiment had succeeded in creating a partnership and good will between the soldiers of the ROK and the US and the program continued into the postwar period. With the end of combat, the number of augmenting troops declined to 18,000 by 1955, to 15,000 in 1959, and stabilized around 11,000 during the 1960s. On average, one soldier in six in a US unit was a Korean.

For the next fifteen years after the war’s end, the KATUSA program continued to be promoted as both tactical and symbolic success. A 1958 study on the KATUSA program’s postwar effectiveness concurred with the favorable assessment of the earlier 1954 study. Koreans still rated very highly their experience serving in an American unit, indicating that they especially appreciated the material advantage. Over 90 percent stated that they liked American food, and that American cigarettes, beer, and movies counterbalanced missing the off-duty recreational activities of the ROK Army.<sup>93</sup> Given the heightened value of goods in the postwar period, it was not surprising that KATUSAs responded affirmatively to this access to the highly coveted American products. Americans, on the other hand, did not respond with such enthusiasm as their Korean counterparts. The survey found that while 55 percent of the GIs did not mind serving with KATUSA, 34 percent preferred to serve with Americans only, and 11 percent flatly stated their dislike of Koreans in their units.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the varied American attitudes on the KATUSA partnership, the US Army continued to highlight the positive effects of the integrated units. Besides tactical advantages, the 1966 EUSA Troop pamphlet emphasized the reciprocal benefits of personal interactions during off-duty hours. It claimed that KATUSAs often acted as guides and interpreters, “showing their American compatriots the attractions of Korea—temples, palaces and villages he could never find on his own”; therefore, an “American’s introduction to the history, traditions and customs of Korea usually [came] through a KATUSA friend.” The KATUSA, on the other hand, gained “a firsthand understanding of American ideals and democratic institutions” as well as American culture since they “share[d] in our daily living habits.” Moreover, this relationship had a reverberating impact: “Feelings of an entire rural community toward the United States can easily be based on reports of its only member who has worked with Americans – a KATUSA,” claimed the 1966 Pamphlet.<sup>95</sup> Standing together side-by-side in the freedom’s frontline and also exchanging cultures in their off-duty hours, the KATUSA program offered Americans an opportunity to fulfill their dual duties as GI of security and GI of wellbeing.

Americans did not always impart positive impressions to Koreans, however, and the increasing tensions in this “experiment” became clearly evident by the early 1960s. On September 20, 1960, Korean newspapers reported that about 80 Koreans assigned to

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>93</sup> Alfred H. Hausrath, David S. Fields, Richard C. Sheldon, and John P. Kishler, “Integration of ROK Soldiers into US Army Units (KATUSA),” (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Operations Research Office, 1958), 38.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>95</sup> “The KATUSA—Key Member of the Army Team,” Yongsan Archives.

the US Army 44<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion walked out of their unit and intended to return to their ROK Army units. “The KATUSAs are said to have received discriminatory treatment at the unit mess hall and then asked the battalion commander to correct the situation. When their demands were rejected they walked out,” reported *Busan Ilbo*.<sup>96</sup> This accusation of discrimination and expression of dissatisfaction was not an isolated incident. A 1969 study indicated that the initial favorable opinion of Americans held by KATUSAs tended to decline as the period of association with the American military increased.<sup>97</sup> The report cited discrimination as well as economic discrepancy as sources of discontent among KATUSAs. Many commanders segregated KATUSAs instead of fully integrating them into their units; these Koreans then received what some described as “yellow nigger” treatment. A particularly flagrant case brought the relief of a battalion commander in 1965. Another common grievance involved sharing of recreational facilities and the privileges practiced by Americans in these spaces of leisure.<sup>98</sup> In the usage of theaters, for instance, the Korean soldier often had to wait outside until show time and entered the theater based upon the number of available seats; and if a GI arrived late, a KATUSA would have to vacate his seat for the American. Donald Campolongo conveys the tension or resentment of sharing these spaces with Koreans from a GI perspective. Campolongo describes KATUSAs as “a sorry lot of slackers” who were “good at taking advantage of all the facilities on post. There were very good at eating in our mess hall. They always were first in the chow line. They were quite adept at shopping at the PX and buying American goods. They also took full advantage of our other services such as the movie theater, the service club, the snack bar, and the craft shop.”<sup>99</sup> The low pay for the Koreans compounded the discrepancy already felt through the segregated units and discriminatory practices in recreational times. Since the ROK Army paid the salary of the KATUSA, the low pay tended to place him in an especially dependent position regarding arrangements made for his support and magnified other differences between him and the Americans, the report claimed.

These integrated units were founded on unequal grounds from their wartime origins. The majority of Americans viewed Koreans as “coming from a backward culture”<sup>100</sup> and did not view their partners as equals. The 1954 survey indicated that GIs rated “unfavorably” KATUSA’s overall effectiveness in combat, general performance as fighters, overall intelligence, and use of good judgment and common sense.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, the Americans rated Koreans most favorably for their brute force; “striking impressions” were made upon Americans “by the burden-carrying ability of Koreans,” the report cited. Not surprisingly, in the same survey, only 16 percent of the GIs expressed that they could serve under a qualified KATUSA NCO, while 34 percent declared that they “would not like it at all” and 35 percent expressed preference to serve under an American officer.<sup>102</sup> The 1958 survey also indicated that almost 60 percent felt that the KATUSAs were less

<sup>96</sup> “KATUSA’s Dissatisfied with Discrimination,” *Chosun*, 20 September 1960; “Dissatisfied KATUSAS Walked Out in Protest,” *Busan Ilbo*, 20 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>97</sup> As quoted in “The KATUSAS,” *Military Times*, April 1974, 57.

<sup>98</sup> Washington approved in 1958 a policy of free admission of KATUSAs to post theaters, the use of post libraries and service clubs, and visit to open messes and snack bars as the guest of American personnel.

<sup>99</sup> Campolongo, “...And then there was Korea,” 50-1.

<sup>100</sup> “The Utilization of KATUSA,” 1954, 17.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>102</sup> And 15 percent answered “No.” *Ibid.*, 62

intelligent than Americans. These two studies suggested that the language barrier could have contributed to the American opinion of Korean intelligence, and it was also “conceivable that this rating is a general expression of the Americans’ feeling of superiority to KATUSA.”

Created by the exigency of war, and meant to foster friendship and goodwill in the postwar, the program indeed represented a partnership, but of an unequal kind. A 1974 assessment in *Military Times* reflected on both the positive and negative outcomes of the “experiment.” While the program reduced American casualties during combat, filled peacetime units with much cheaper indigenous nationals, and allowed a greater degree of cross-cultural communication and interaction, “Many Americans have never willingly accepted the type of intimacy associated with the experiment and many Koreans have grown to dislike the GI as the result of the close association involved.” Moreover, the whole experiment involved an affront to Korean nationalism, it concluded, “creating an impression of American superiority over Oriental culture hardly tolerable today.”<sup>103</sup> American attitudes towards Korean soldiers, considered backward and intelligently inferior, belied the principles of equality and cooperation of the integrated unit. The disparities in economic and political power – both individual and national – between Americans and Koreans resulted in segregation and “yellow nigger treatment.” The KATUSA program embodied the “brotherhood forged out of blood” more than perhaps any other American-Korean association, yet this brotherhood was of an unequal one between a big brother and a little brother – a motif that reflected the US-ROK relations.

#### *GIs as Providers, GIs as Social Menace*

Another group of Korean males – “houseboys/slickyboys” – also shared intimate spaces with GIs. American installations employed Koreans to fill service duties in the mess halls, laundries, the PX, on-post clubs and shops, and even as guards, but a group of Korean employees assigned to upkeep the barracks, referred to as “houseboys,” perhaps came into the most frequent contact with the Americans. Mostly positive relations between GIs and Korean “houseboys,” as discussed more extensively in the preceding chapter, developed into lasting friendships and extended educational sponsorship or even adoption by the GIs for some Koreans. The discussion of “houseboys” in this chapter, however, addresses their dual image as a faithful domestic employee versus that of an untrustworthy potential thief – a “slickyboy,” a name coined to describe the infamous Korean thieves who stole from bases. Donald Campolongo describes “slickyboys” as “young Korean men, often in their late teens or early twenties, who were punks, hoods, trouble makers, and black market dealers. They were the male counterparts of the Business Women (prostitutes). They had come to the Villes looking for an easier life as camp followers.”<sup>104</sup> Besides those invited onto bases to fulfill a need, like the KATUSAs and “houseboys,” this third group entered the restricted space uninvited as “pests,” and at times their trespasses provoked American violence that escalated into diplomatic tensions. Here, the houseboys and slickyboys are positioned as two sides of the same coin. The houseboy/slickyboy straddled both the inside and outside of military camps, demonstrating the fluidity of boundaries between camp and camptown despite the barbed wired demarcation. Moreover, the relationship between houseboy/slickboy and the

<sup>103</sup> “The KATUSAs,” *Military Times*, April 1974, 58.

<sup>104</sup> Campolongo, “...And then there was Korea,” 77.

Americans could invoke both the GI of integration (Americans as a generous employers and friends) as well as the GI as arrogant and violent social menace.

As it had been a major source of concern during the military occupation years, the black market continued to flourish during and after the war. Enterprising Americans and Koreans often worked together to facilitate the theft and transport of goods into Korea's thriving black market. Wartime headlines blared: "G.I. says U.S. Supplies Are Being Sold in Korea," "5 G.I.'s in Korea Get Jail in Black Market," and "Army Says Theft in Korea Were Big."<sup>105</sup> Similar headlines, such as "American Soldier Involved in Larceny Incident" and "PX Scrip Sparks Trade at Seoul," continued to appear on both sides of the Pacific in the postwar years. Several Korean newspapers reported in October of 1960 that the Seoul police apprehended a Private in the US Army and two Korean base employees who illegally disposed of \$4,751 worth of US Army PX items, including radios, soap, cigarettes and coffee to several unidentified Koreans.<sup>106</sup> The *New York Times*, the following year, described how the Military Payments Certificates (MPC), scrip used by the US personnel for the purchase of goods or payments for services on the camp, had become "the foundation of Korea's black-market trade." The MPC had become the common tender in a black market that filled the shelves of hundreds of Korean shops with American products. The article also identified American soldiers and Korean wives married to GIs as the biggest suppliers of the goods and the MPCs circulating in the market. It also estimated that of the \$40 million annual PX trade worldwide, one to two million dollars worth of black market American goods ended up on the shelves of Seoul stores.<sup>107</sup> As these articles indicated, this massive black market of Seoul flourished often due to the cooperation of GIs, base employees, and Korean wives or girlfriends of American soldiers.

Some houseboys acted on their own, and crossed the line from helper to thief. *Busan Ilbo* reported in 1960 that the Korean police had apprehended a former "houseboy" who made off with a US Army officer's belongings, including five cameras, a radio, a bicycle and several items of clothing, all of which he then sold at the Dongdaemun Market in Seoul.<sup>108</sup> Around the same time across the Pacific, a 1960 letter written to the *Los Angeles Times* by an "Ex-GI" responded to a previously published letter by a "GI Mother" who had castigated the stealth of *all* Koreans due to a "Korean kitchen boy," who allegedly stole from her son. The former GI wrote:

Many Koreans were employed by Americans as servants. For \$10 a month a Korean boy would work his head off for you from early morning until late evening because you were the only means of support for his family. [...] Some of these boys were thieves, just as some American boys are thieves. I had several different houseboys while living at Wonju—all of them were trustworthy.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>105</sup> "G.I. says U.S. Supplies Are Being Sold in Korea," *New York Times*, 13 January 1951; "5 G.I.'s in Korea Get Jail in Black Market," *New York Times*, 11 June 1951; "Army Says Theft in Korea Were Big," *New York Times*, 7 May 1952.

<sup>106</sup> "American Soldier Involved in Larceny Incident," *Hankook Kyungjae, Sanup Kyungjae, Donga, Seoul*, 3 October 1960, "World and Korean news roundup."

<sup>107</sup> "PX Scrip Sparks Trade at Seoul," *New York Times*, 26 March 1961.

<sup>108</sup> "Thief Apprehended," *Busan Ilbo*, 16 May 1960, "World and Korean news roundup."

<sup>109</sup> "GI Theft in Korea Alleged" *Los Angeles Times*, 8 February 1960.

These news reports and the dialogue between the “GI Mother” and the “Ex-GI” illustrate that the line between trustworthy “houseboy” and an untrustworthy “slickyboy” could be blurred quite easily. This is not to infer that all houseboys stole from the American camps. It is impossible to know just how many of the employed pilfered or actively participated in a more large-scale theft for the black market, but some of the American military policies and individual GI’s responses demonstrated that many assumed widespread Korean employees participation in stealing.

A 1955 *New York Times* article described how the Eighth Army’s attempt to stop the theft had “taken a discriminatory turn against Korean nationals.” It reported that “the term ‘Gook’ [had] been revived with...any references to Korean employees of the Army” and these employees had to be searched every time they entered or left the base.<sup>110</sup> “Although a number of arrests and convictions of United States Army officers and enlisted men for theft and fund misappropriation have come to light,” it concluded, “the present Army command seems to feel that most of the blame should be pinned on the Koreans.” This policy exposed the depth of American assumptions of widespread Korean guilt, as seen earlier in the letter by “GI-Mother.” Moreover, expecting theft or other wrongdoing, intentional or accidental shootings and other forms of violence against Koreans persisted on camps. Soon Kil Lee, 23, an employee of the US Army 17<sup>th</sup> Artillery Unit, was beaten unconscious with a wine bottle on base by an American soldier for no apparent reason.<sup>111</sup> Another Korean employee, Lee Jun Hun, 19, was shot and killed by an on-duty US Army enlisted man. According to the report, although Lee showed his employee identification card to the soldier, the Private drew a 45-caliber pistol and fired Lee through the face, killing him instantly.<sup>112</sup> If employees with proper ID could become victims of seemingly arbitrary and heinous violence at the hands of GIs, “slickyboys” who not only stole, but also often literally cut through the barbed wire fence to trespass on the military camps, especially incensed Americans. *Time* magazine described an incident involving GIs shaving the head of and tarring and feathering a 14-year-old “slicky boy” caught stealing on the base.<sup>113</sup> The *New York Times* reported in 1962 that two lieutenants were charged with “unlawful detention and assault and battery” in the beating of a Korean caught stealing at a base.<sup>114</sup>

News of GIs inflicting harm on Koreans beyond the camp perimeters and the depiction of Americans as dangerous social menace also surfaced. For instance, within a span of several months in 1960, the Korean press reported a range of incidences from military-related civilian accidents, to GIs stealing from Koreans, unprovoked physical assault on locals, and organized mob violence on an entire village. *Pyunghwa* reported that a Korean woman and her baby were seriously injured when a speeding U.S. Army truck struck them.<sup>115</sup> On the same October day, *Seoul Iri* reported that six American soldiers knocked down the manager of a watch shop, beat him unconscious, and made off

<sup>110</sup> “U.S. Army Order Angers Koreans,” *New York Times*, 12 October 1955.

<sup>111</sup> “American Soldier Beats Korean With Wine Bottle,” *Kyung-ki*, 1 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>112</sup> “Fatal Shooting,” *Hankook*, 18 May 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>113</sup> “Slicky Boy,” *Time*, 10 March 1958, 27.

<sup>114</sup> “U.S. Charges 2 Officers in Beating of Korean Thief,” *New York Times*, June 5, 1962.

<sup>115</sup> “US Army Vehicle Injures Korean Woman and Baby,” *Pyunghwa*, 1 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”



with all the watches on display.<sup>116</sup> “American Soldiers Rob Taxi Driver,” reported *Hankook* several weeks later.<sup>117</sup> Unprovoked and unpredictable violence, such as when five US soldiers surrounded a Korean passerby and assaulted him with no apparent reason until he fell unconscious, shocked the locals.<sup>118</sup> Organized mob-action that took place on the night of September 3, 1960, terrorized an entire camptown of Bupyung. Forty soldiers of the US Army 97<sup>th</sup> Engineer Supply Point broke out of their barracks at midnight and assaulted sleeping Koreans and stoned Korean stores for two hours, seriously injuring two Koreans by stabbing and striking them with knives and beer bottles. The cause for this eruption of violence was retaliation against military police intervention in their fellow soldiers’ drinking in the camptown few nights prior.<sup>119</sup>

Such “unfavorable incidents” involving GIs against Koreans that ranged from careless accidents to organized mob violence not only disturbed and dismayed Koreans, but also disconcerted the commanders of the American military. In 1962, the headquarters of USFK requested that all units prepare a list of “individual, group or unit acts involving off duty voluntary professional, technical, and good Samaritan services and assistance, to include acts of heroism.” In light of the “unfavorable incidents” involving US soldiers, the commanding headquarters believed that a compilation of beneficial acts or services to the local populace “may serve a good purpose in future dealings between United States Forces and the Korean Government.” Along with this request to compile and quantify deeds of good will, base commanders were directed to encourage support of worthy Korean groups by US personnel.<sup>120</sup> Humanitarian and heroic actions of GIs consistently juxtaposed with their acts of social disruption and violent harm to Koreans. Although not to discount individual voluntary acts of generosity and kindness, the military encouraged GIs of Integration to take part in the postwar reconstruction efforts and to embrace their role as the largest group of American “ambassadors” to come into contact with Koreans. Aware of the benefits of a positive image of Americans to the host nation, military commanders participated in the conscious construction of the heroic, or at least a friendly, image of the American GI. Despite these concerted efforts, however, dichotomous images of the GI as heroes and GI as social menace emerged during the course of the long postwar decade.

The frequent recurrences of such “incidences” escalated into tense points of diplomacy between the two governments. “GI Killings Stir Row in Korea Press,” read a 1957 *Los Angeles Times* headline.<sup>121</sup> It reported that three recent incidents – a boy shot and killed for allegedly attempting to break into a boxcar, a woman killed in a hunting accident involving American soldiers, and another Korean woman shot and killed for

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<sup>116</sup> “Six American Servicemen Rob Korean,” *Seoul-Iril*, 1 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>117</sup> “American Soldiers Rob Taxi Driver,” *Hankook*, 18 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>118</sup> “Assault and Plunder by Group of U.S. Soldiers,” *Pyunghwa*, 28 May 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>119</sup> “40 American Soldiers Desert Camp and Assault Koreans,” *Kyung-ki*, 8 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>120</sup> As a follow-up to the request, it was compiled that the amounts of cash donations and estimated value of material donations reported to EUSA totaled \$58,626 since 1 July 1962 and \$3,026,196 since the end of the Korean War. “Benevolent Aid Given to the Korean Populace by American Soldiers,” 8<sup>th</sup> Army Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK) Project Files, 1954-63, NARA.

<sup>121</sup> “GI Killings Stir Row in Korea Press,” *Los Angeles Times*, 7 October 1957.

stealing supplies from an Army compound – sparked “the strongest Korean press criticism ever voiced against United States troops... assailing ‘indiscriminate shooting’ of Koreans by American servicemen.” The famous case of Robert Toth, a GI accused of murdering a Korean civilian found drunk on a base, even reached the US Supreme Court in 1955.<sup>122</sup> These GI shootings of Koreans on or near military installations gave rise to anti-American sentiments as Koreans increasingly perceived America’s representatives, the GIs, as arrogant and racist.<sup>123</sup> To alleviate tensions, the American military replaced guards with Koreans in order “to prevent the recurrence of incidents involving Korean citizens and American military service men.”<sup>124</sup> The repeated clashes nonetheless evoked questions over jurisdiction, as cries from indignant Koreans demanded US soldiers be tried in Korean courts.<sup>125</sup> Assessing the “worrisome repercussions” of these incidents, American media asserted that the “attacks” by some South Korean politicians and press had the political objective of pressuring the US into concluding a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Korea. To emphasize its point of the Korean press producing “serious consequences,” the *New York Times* quoted *Donga Ilbo*’s “caustic” comment, “Do they take Korean boys for rabbits?” in reference to the shooting of two youths who had cut through a barbed wire fence and entered a military installation.<sup>126</sup>

The Korean news coverage did indeed link these shootings of “slickyboys” on American military camps with the greater bilateral issue of SOFA. “ROK-US Administrative Agreement Should be Concluded Early,” declared *Donga Ilbo* in September of 1960 and accused the US of deliberately avoiding the agreement. It argued that this refusal on the part of the US “offended the dignity of a sovereign nation” because Korea did not have a SOFA, in contrast to Japan and European countries, where jurisdiction over US servicemen belonged to the host countries.<sup>127</sup> An editorial in *Chosun Ilbo*, “US Side Passive on Conclusion of Administrative Agreement,” concurred with the points made by *Donga Ilbo* and also emphasized that the subjects most urgently “desired to be concluded by Korea, as a sovereign nation, were agreements concerning the

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<sup>122</sup> The alleged reason for the slaying was that the Korean civilian was found near a restricted area of a base. Bang Soon was “apparently drunk.” Two Air Force men brought Bang Soon to their headquarter where Lieut. George C. Schreiber told the “two airmen to take him away and shoot him.” “The Korean was driven to a secluded spot, and Kinder shot him.” “Suspect in Slaying Returns from Korea,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1953. Those responsible for the shooting could not be tried as they had rotated out of Korea and deactivated from the military. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional, in a 6-3 decision, a law which allowed a citizen no longer in military service to be tried by court-martial for an act he had committed while under military jurisdiction. “Civil Rights in Court,” *New York Times*, 9 November 1955.

<sup>123</sup> “Americans Go Home,” *Time*, 12 September 1955, 102-3.

<sup>124</sup> “Koreans to Help American Guards: Joint Sentry Duty Designed to Prevent New Incidents,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1962.

<sup>125</sup> “Korea Asks Rule of U.S. Nationals,” *New York Times*, 23 February 1954.

<sup>126</sup> “Army Peril Seen In Korean Thefts,” *New York Times*, 20 February 1964. Another *New York Times* article concurred that “informed Americans believe that exploitation of these incidents by South Korean politicians and some elements of the press can produce serious consequences. The aim in part seems to be to put pressure on the U.S. to grant concessions in negotiations for a status-of-forces treaty that would legally define the position of American soldiers here. In particular, the South Koreans want to make the United States soldiers subject to the jurisdiction of the Korean courts for offenses committed while off duty.” “Gen. Park’s Foes Create Issue Over Slaying by U.S. Sentries,” *New York Times*, February 13, 1964.

<sup>127</sup> “ROK-US Administrative Agreement Should be Concluded Early,” *Donga*, 26 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

jurisdiction over criminal matters, and the lands and institutes.”<sup>128</sup> Although violent clashes between American GIs and Korean slickyboys garnered the media spotlight, issues other than the question of jurisdiction – such as, the agreement on land and property usage, which Americans had used “rent-free” since the occupation and war periods, as well as labor protection concerning 45,000 Koreans employed by American military garrisons – also instigated Korean demands for SOFA negotiations. Labor disputes, for instance, regarding dismissals of a hundred Korean guards working at a US Army unit in the port city of Incheon, as well as wage lowering and mass dismissals in Seoul in 1960, instigated protests, formation of a labor union among Korean employees of American military camps, and a signature campaign urging a conclusion of SOFA.<sup>129</sup> Although work on these foreign bases had meant livelihood and perhaps an enterprising opportunity, Korean employees also realized that their employment was very much contingent on the power and whim of American employers. Local workers could be dismissed or have their wages lowered without an explanation, and Koreans had no legal job protection working for a foreign employer not held accountable to any domestic labor laws or guarantees. Since others eager to work on the military camps could easily fill job openings, wages could be kept low and the labor pool quite dispensable for the American military.

The much belated Status of Forces Agreement of 1966, signed fourteen years after the war, settled very little, however. In some ways, the SOFA “legalized” the unequal postwar alliance through its conditions of extraterritorial jurisdiction and free usage of land. “Article XXII Criminal Jurisdiction” of the agreement, for instance, guaranteed that the “military authorities of the US shall have the right to exercise within the ROK all criminal and disciplinary jurisdiction conferred on them by the law of the US over members of the US armed forces or civilian component, and their dependents” and that the authorities of the ROK will “waive their primary right to exercise jurisdiction” over the American military personnel except in exceptional cases.<sup>130</sup> As for labor protections and disputes, not until the second SOFA revisions signed in 2001 would it be finally required that labor services by Korean employees within US bases conform to domestic labor laws and regulations.<sup>131</sup> And the 1966 SOFA did not establish any legal framework for Korean nationals who suffered damages or injuries due to US military operations or traffic accidents. The 1966 SOFA did very little to address the grievances and concerns of Koreans who came into everyday contacts on the ground with the foreign

<sup>128</sup> “US Side Passive on Conclusion of Administrative Agreement,” *Chosun*, 26 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>129</sup> “Labor Disputes Likely to Develop,” *Kyungin*, 10 June 1960; “Resolutions Adopted by the New Labor Union,” *Kyungin*, 10 June 1960; “Eighth US Army’s Wage Lowering Policy Protested,” *Kyungin*, 20 September 1960; “Korean Employees of American Forces Stand Up For Rights,” *Seoul Kyungje*, 26 September 1960; “Campaign Collects 750,000 Signatures,” *Hankook, Seoul-Iril*, 22 October 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>130</sup> According to Article XXII, the “authorities of the ROK, recognizing that it is the primary responsibility of the military authorities of the US to maintain good order and discipline where persons subject to US military laws are concerned, will, upon the request of the military authorities of the US pursuant to paragraph 3(c), waive their primary right to exercise jurisdiction under paragraph 3(b) except when they determine that it is of particular importance that jurisdiction be exercised by the authorities of the ROK.” Hearings before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, “American-Korean Relations”, 25.

<sup>131</sup> SOFA revisions in 1991 and in 2001 addressed for the first time the lack of any legal protection for those employed on foreign bases. For one, they now cannot be terminated without “just cause.”

troops – communities near American installations impacted by dangers of accidents and damages, those employed on foreign bases who had no labor protection, and the people of camptowns who had been the most frequent victims of violence at the hands of America’s soldiers. It would take another 35 years and countless number of conflicts in these borderlands before both governments finally addressed the grievance in official legal terms. Meanwhile, the rhetoric of America as an anti-imperialist democracy contradicted by the imperialist patterns on the ground culminated in the official 1966 agreement that outlined the terms of stationing American troops in postwar Korea.

## **Conclusion**

The cultural landscapes of US military camps in Korea from 1954 to 1971 explored through the interplay of policy, space, and human interactions provide “snapshots” of the postwar period. The changing official and vernacular landscapes that the troops inhabited and also created, and the ways in which they encountered the locals inside and outside of installations, illuminate the creation of this intricate landscape. The physical changes from temporary to semi-permanent outposts paralleled evolving bilateral relations, and also reflected policy makers responding to the everyday concerns and actions by the troops. American servicemen and Korean women also participated in the construction of “homes” in camptowns, and temporariness inundated these domestic arrangements. And as the physical spaces evolved into semi-permanent places, exchanges between military personnel and Koreans also became increasingly elaborate and contested. Through the porous borders goods and people flowed, and the breached boundaries dismayed Americans. And at times, the soldiers took the law into their own hands in response to the sabotaged border. In the end, these sort of ground-level conflicts and clashes helped pressure the two states to finally agree upon a SOFA in 1966.

The American “ambassadors” also exerted their “soft power” as models and teachers of democracy, partners and brothers on the frontline, and as heroes and fathers for the Koreans in need. These relationships, however, not only reflected, but also reinforced and perpetuated the hierarchical relationship along gender, racial, class, and national lines. At least for the period of 1954 to 1971, the fraternal metaphor of America as the “big brother” and Korea as the “little brother” was little disputed. GIs also fulfilled their role as “GIs of integration” by playing an inadvertent but nevertheless vital role in creating a migratory pathway for Amerasians, military wives, and orphans to the US. As the core representatives of the American transpacific diaspora, the GIs actively disseminated the ideals of America, instigated an outflow of Koreans going east across the Pacific to the United States, and perpetuated the imperial milieu. Korea also changed these ambassadors. Donald Campolongo, looking back on his time in Korea, reflected on his double duty as an American soldier and an ambassador as well as what his time in Korea has meant to him:

As Americans and soldiers we accomplished our duty. We did what we were told to do. We transmitted transactions, ran computer jobs, processed requisitions, and managed the inventory for KORSCOM. Beyond that we were ambassador for America in a foreign land. Hopefully we represented our country honorably. If I could go back and relive this period again I would do more. I would see more of

the country and its people. I would learn more about its history. I would try and take it in all over again. I don't know what permanent impact we made in Taegu. Probably the greatest impact is what Korea did to us, reflected in our fading memories. As a Korean said to Mary and me when our tour was almost over, "you will never leave Korea." He was right, for the memories of Korea have never left us.<sup>132</sup>

For many young American GIs, Korea was the "first strange place" they encountered outside of the United States and their experiences in this cold war frontier transformed Korea, the United States, and themselves.

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<sup>132</sup> Campolongo, "...And then there was Korea," 121.

Figure 6. Korean Base Employees



“My carpenter friend”



“Two of my co-workers at Yongsan base”



“Mr. Junk Woo, school boy, MSGT Anness”

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Paul E. Black

Figure 7. Beyond the Barbed Wire



“Outside the main gate of Yongsan”

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Paul E. Black

“Looking over the fence” of 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinance Battalion, 1968

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Neil Mishalov – [www.mishalov.com](http://www.mishalov.com)

Figure 8. Peoples and Scenes of Korea, 1958 and 1968



“Man with oxen”



“Man with a ‘honey bucket’ wagon

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Paul E. Black

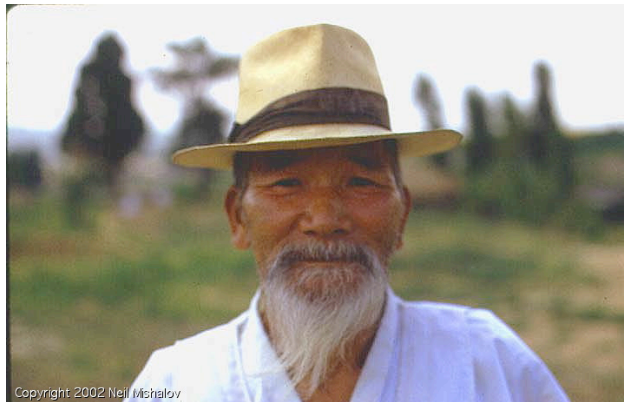


Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Neil Mishalov – [www.mishalov.com](http://www.mishalov.com)



Figure 9. The Greater Yongsan, 1958-9



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Chapel



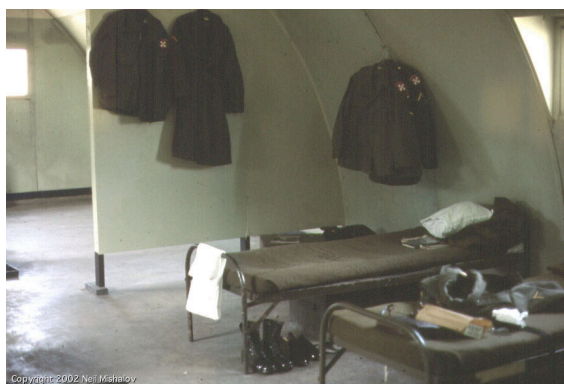
Seoul Area Command (SAC) Theaters in Yongsan

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Paul E. Black

Figure 10. Quonset barracks of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordnance Battalion, 1968



“Home sweet home”



Sparse spaces



Korean “houseboy” making up the bed.

Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Neil Mishalov – [www.mishalov.com](http://www.mishalov.com)

Figure 11. Constructing Little America



Dependent housing, Yongsan, 1958-9



Yongsan PX, 1958-9

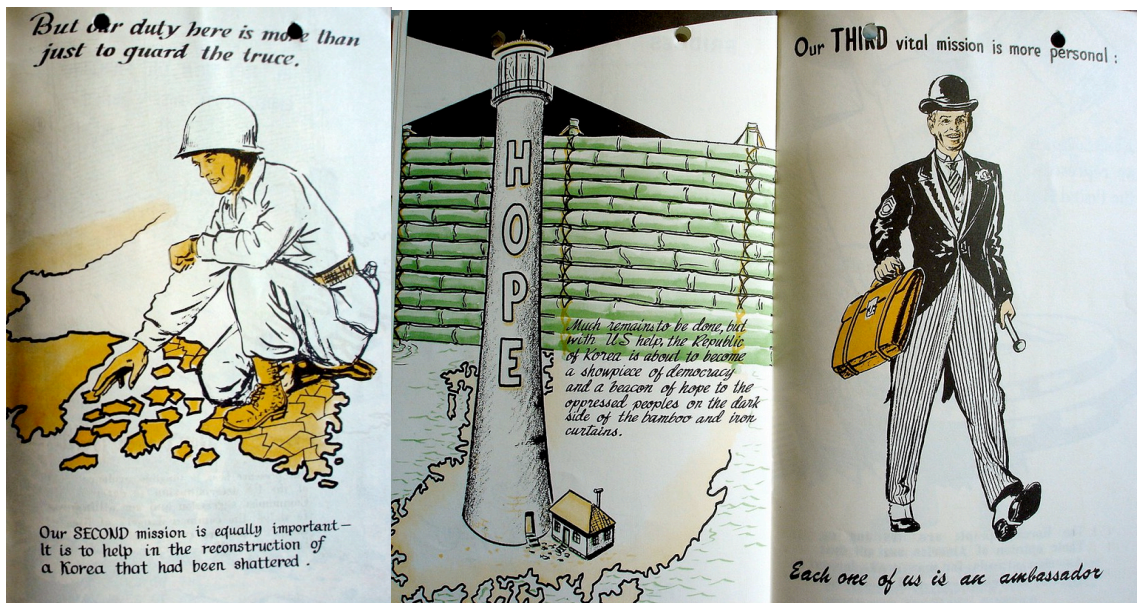
Photo permission has been obtained. Photographs by Paul E. Black

Figure 12. Hybrid Structure



Building 2364: American modification literally built on top of Japanese colonial brick structure, Yongsan

Figure 13. The 1958 Eighth US Army Pamphlet 355-13, "What We Are Doing Here"



Illustrating the second and third "vital mission" of American GIs in Korea

#### IV. An Indispensable Edge: American Military Camptowns in Postwar Korea, 1954-1971

A central sequence in Sin Sang-Ok's 1958 film, *Hell Flower (Jiokhwa)*, intercuts a cabaret show and dance party inside a United States military camp with a group of Korean men stealing goods out of this installation. While the gyrating dancers on the stage engross the American servicemen, accompanied by Korean women bused-in for the dance, two of the women slip out and approach the GIs guarding the garrison perimeters. As the two women seductively distract the American guards, a group of Korean men penetrate the installation through the barbed wire fence. The scene of the men loading and then driving off with the stolen goods is juxtaposed with the lively dancing inside. The multiple seductions and desires of the American military camp – as the place of sexualized entertainment and coveted American goods – as well as the “labor” of the inhabitants of the contiguous and interdependent Korean camptowns are masterfully captured in this scene. In the camptown, or *gijichon*, communities that developed adjacent to or near US military installations, Korean women worked in the sexual industry while the men pimped and stole American goods for the Korean black market. It is here in the camptown, caught between “Hell” and “Flower,” that Sin Sang-Ok situates and depicts the postwar nation in transition.

Clustered around American military camps *within* the geopolitical borders of postwar Korea, camptowns served as “borderlands” between two sovereign states. Camptowns are conceptualized as borderlands to denote their multiple geographies – as the physical site that delineated territorial boundaries as well as militarized socio-economic and border-cultural spaces that emerged from the “lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country.”<sup>1</sup> “Borderlands” consist of three components. Foremost, as the boundaries shared by two or more domains, borderlands are where power and intercultural relations are exploited, negotiated, and created. Second, borderlands influence the “peculiar and contingent character” of the overarching relations. In the case of Korea, camptown creations and conflicts did not stay contained; what happened in this borderland reverberated into greater Korea and affected US-Korea relations. At the same time, although the “conflict and brokering” of the borderlands shape the “outside,” camptown patterns are ultimately determined by the greater structural changes. The third and final characteristic, therefore, is that borderlands have “discrete turning points.”<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa describes borderland as an “open wound,” “a vague and undetermined place” that is “in a constant state of transition.” In this place, a border culture emerges from “the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country.” Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 3.

<sup>2</sup> “Borderlands” and “frontier” as theoretical concepts and their significance in North American history has received extensive critical attention. Historians Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Arron define “frontier” as *borderless* lands, “meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined” and “intercultural relations produced mixing and accommodation as opposed to unambiguous triumph.” “Borderlands,” on the other hand, redeposits the importance of geography, the physical site, into the historical analysis. For comprehensive historiographical discussion, see Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “Forum Essay: From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History.” *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 816.

distinct junctures of postwar camptowns coincided with shifting cold war bilateral political configurations and Korea's rapid industrialization.

American military camptowns constituted both the disposable and indisposable "edge" of South Korean modernity in the immediate postwar decades of the 1950s and the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Although camptowns are now considered to be on the *fringe-edge* – "cultural and economic wasteland"<sup>4</sup> left behind in Korea's rapid modernization and industrialization – they had been at the forefront, the *cutting-edge*, in the reconstruction period. Camptowns comprised a contact zone of American and Korean everyday interactions, an exchange place of commodities and services, and a disseminating locus of "Americanism." Although the purpose of these supposedly peripheral landscapes was to buffer Korea's "mainstream" from the foreign military presence, these outer edges did not stay neatly contained. Rather, the goods and cultures, along with contestations and negotiations between Americans and Koreans, overflowed from these contact zones and "contaminated" the everyday life and the cityscape of Seoul. And the camptown women proved instrumental or "indispensable" in creating and sustaining the economic patterns of these borderlands that reverberated into the larger society. Concurrently, these borderlands embodied a *violent-edge* of exploitation, ambiguous laws and "dispensable" intercourse – evidence of Korean dependency on the American military economy and colonial power disparity. *Gijichon*, thus, combined both indispensable material significance and also contradictions of sovereignty conditioned by foreign-dependency; camptowns represented the *cutting-edge* of Korea's postwar modernity because the material and the metaphorical converged here. In this re-centering of the periphery, camptowns and their inhabitants occupy an undeniable place in Korea's postwar history.

This chapter consists of three interdependent sections. The first section chronicles the overall structural changes – the rise, systemization, decline, and alteration of camptowns coinciding with the US-Korea cold war relations as well as Korea's industrialization. The second section explores the lives of those who came into contact in these spaces, with a concentration on the women, who constituted the majority of its population. By looking at the socio-economic creations and conflicts, this section discusses the tensions surrounding the power negotiations, not just among the camptown inhabitants and the American military personnel, but also between the two nations-at-large. And finally, the third section considers ambivalent attitudes regarding this space held by greater Korea. Camptowns in the postwar Korean national imaginary as material and symbolic manifestations of Korea's particular modernity is examined through the discussion of Korea's Golden Age Cinema of the 1950s and the 1960s.

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<sup>3</sup> Here, I examine "Korean Modernity" from a geohistorical perspective that emphasizes the development of a more fully integrated industrial economy and the rise of a democratic or representative political form, rather than the esoteric philosophical treaties that stress the universal secular rationality. South Korea's particularities of colonial legacy, division, and war as well as the process of incorporation into the international cold war world system as an American ally, conditioned South Korea's post-war modernization. Thus, Korea's particular modernity took the form of rapid industrialization and integration into the international liberal economic system, yet under a militarized rather than democratic political form.

<sup>4</sup> Myung Ja Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown*," in *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema*, ed. Frances Gateward (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 253.

### **Borderlands: The Postwar Construction and Development of Camptowns**

The evolving cold war alliance between the United States and the ROK as well as Korea's own compressed industrialization and modernization conditioned the rise, systemization, decline, and alteration of camptowns. From 1945 to the 1990s, American military camptowns transitioned through four phases: the foundation years of 1945 to 1953, beginning with the American Military Government to the end of the Korean War; the postwar systemization and "heyday" of the mid-1950s to the late 1960s; increased regulations and reductions of the 1970s; and the decline of traditional camptown prostitution as well as their coexistence with an industrialized and globalized sex-industry from the mid-1980s to today. The second period from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s constitutes the focal years of this chapter. Coinciding with the building of American military Rest and Recreation (R & R) facilities after the war, the Korean government concentrated prostitution into specific geographic areas beginning in 1957.<sup>5</sup> From this postwar period until the early 1970s, camptowns experienced their "peak." This "heyday" coincided with the height of US-ROK cold war alliance as well as the beginnings of Korea's rapid and compressed economic development.

The first phase of the camptown development encompasses the years from 1945 to the final days of the Korean War. Although it was not until after the war that the camptowns and military prostitution were systematically established, the American Military Government (AMG) in 1945 to 1948 laid the essential foundation of *gijichon* prostitution, based upon Japan's licensed prostitution.<sup>6</sup> The American military entered Korea in September of 1945 via the port city of Incheon and by the end of that year, a nearby town called Bupyong had become the first camptown. The construction of additional camptowns in Itaewon in Seoul and "Hialeah" and "Texas" in the southern port city of Busan, as well as in cities such as Jinhae, Daegu, Gwangju, and Jeonju soon followed. As previously discussed, the AMG maintained the remains of Japan's colonial infrastructures of clearly demarcated space for commercialized sex and a government-controlled registration system with compulsory venereal disease examinations.<sup>7</sup> The women who worked in the clubs and brothels, often simple frame houses that had sprung up in a neighborhood adjacent to American military camps, were made up of former prostitutes who catered to the Japanese (wartime comfort women) and rural and urban poor.<sup>8</sup> The life of I Bok-Sun bridges the colonial and liberation periods. I Bok-Sun, forced to serve as a comfort woman in Japan and then in China, barely survived the Pacific War to return to Korea. Ashamed by her wartime legacy, she could not face returning to her hometown. Instead she turned to the then burgeoning camptowns of the American occupation period, where she stayed for the next thirty years.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lee Na Young, "The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution in South Korea: Trans/Formation and Resistance" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2006), 103-4.

<sup>6</sup> The Japanese colonial government officially sanctioned special commercialized red-light districts in 1904 and in 1916, began to grant license to operate with detailed regulations to control prostitutes with compulsory venereal disease examinations. The American military government "inherited" some of these districts established during the colonial period. *Ibid.*, 62-69.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 77, 101.

<sup>8</sup> Ji-yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 20.

<sup>9</sup> Saeumteo (Sprouting Land), "Gijichon, Gijichonyeosung, Honhyeoladong Siltaewha Sarye" ["Research on Conditions of Camptowns, Camptown Women and Mixed-race Children"], (1997).



The Korean War “systematized” the temporary pre-war and wartime US military camptowns into more permanent “comfort stations.” Camptowns along the frontline, such as Yongju-gol in Paju-gun and Bosandong in Dongducheon became notorious postwar *gijichons*. For example, Bosandong developed in conjunction with the 1951 construction of Camp Casey in Dongducheon, north of Seoul. Chosen for its natural and infrastructural advantages,<sup>10</sup> Dongducheon witnessed the establishment of five major American military camps (Camp Casey, Camp Castle, Camp Hovey, Camp Mobile, Camp Nimble) in 1951.<sup>11</sup> Bosandong and much of the entire city of Dongducheon subsequently grew in conjunction with Camp Casey, one of the largest military installations in South Korea.<sup>12</sup> The population of Dongducheon grew exponentially after the construction of these installations: in 1950, 7,200 resided in Dongducheon; by 1955, the number had increased to 21,387; the population more than doubled again by 1965 to 53,568; and it peaked in 1970 with 60, 245 residents. Moreover, service-economy heavily dominated the city, with 27 clubs, one hotel, 101 motels, 30 cafés, 11 saunas, 69 beauty salons, and 50 barbershops in 1967. Whereas nearly 60 percent of the nation employed in the agricultural sector during the 1960s, only nine percent of Dongducheon residents were agricultural households in 1967.<sup>13</sup> American GIs conferred on the nickname “Little Chicago” to Dongducheon, conjuring up the image of a wild and “lawless” borderland; in the 1950s, as in Al Capone’s Chicago, pimps, gangsters, black marketers, prostitutes, and GIs shared this world. In a similar pattern as Dongducheon, other camptowns developed throughout the southern half of the peninsula, with a heavy concentration in the Gyeonggi Province.<sup>14</sup> The distinctive socio-economic culture of these *gijichons*, accordingly, formed around American servicemen and camptown women. The economy of camptowns consisted of entertainment and service industries for the GIs and Korean women; clubs and bars that only catered to foreigners, stores that sold American goods, illegal currency dealers as well as hair salons, laundry services, tailors, photo and portrait studios, souvenir shops, pool halls, and international marriage agencies made up *gijichons*.<sup>15</sup> Photographs of Osan city, adjacent to Osan Air Base, taken by Neil Mishalov in 1968 during his service in Korea capture some of the typical camptown storefront

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<sup>10</sup> Dongducheon was chosen as the site of major American military installation based on two major reasons: the natural environment and the remnant of the Japanese colonial transportation system. The Soyu Mountains on the north side of Camp Casey created a parabolic arc, providing natural cover from long distance bombs, and the area also had plenty of natural water sources. Dongducheon, moreover, sat along major trans-peninsular rail-line completed during the colonial period. Kim Byoung-Sub, “Dongducheonsi Doshi Seongjang Gwajung Yeongu” [“A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si”], (master’s thesis, University of Seoul, 2004), 15, 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> The US military evacuated and dispersed Koreans who had lived and farmed on the land by November of 1952. The ROK government issued requisition documents in 1956, but they became worthless amount of compensation. *Ibid.*, 24-5.

<sup>12</sup> Camp Casey has housed four different US infantry divisions (3d, 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2d) since the war.

<sup>13</sup> Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 30-1.

<sup>14</sup> Songtan grew into another well-known *gijichon* after 1951 when the 417<sup>th</sup> Squadron constructed an airfield, displacing one thousand farmers. Both the nearby city of Pyeongtaek and adjacent town of Anjeongri near the wartime airfield, Camp Humphreys, became centers of US military prostitution. The largest *gijichons*, therefore, solidified around Yongjugol in Paju, and Dongducheon and Uijeongbu north of Seoul; Anjeongri, Songtan in Pyeongtaek, and Osan on the southern outskirts of Seoul; and Itaewon in the nation’s capital. In addition, camptowns formed in Daejeon, Daegu, Waegwan, Chuncheon, Gunsan, Mokpo, and Jinhae—basically wherever American military servicemen were stationed.

<sup>15</sup> Saeumteo (Sprouting Land), “Research on Conditions of Camptowns, Camptown Women,” (1997).

signs that advertise everything from tailor suits, shoes, clubs, and visas for international marriages (Figure 14).

The Korean War and the forces of abject poverty, and wartime displacement and deaths that created millions of widows and orphans, forced a number of women into prostitution to ensure the survival of themselves and their families.<sup>16</sup> Yun Geum-Suk was one of the countless displaced during the war. Three months after Yun went to North Korea for an arranged marriage at the age of 19, the Korean War broke out. Separated from her husband during the war, she headed back south in search of her family. In order to survive, she prostituted herself to an American during this time. Yun did not have the courage to find her family after the war ended and worked in the camptowns for some thirty years, never knowing whether or not her family survived the war.<sup>17</sup>

Given the high number of foreign troops stationed in Korea during the war (214,000 at the beginning of the conflict to 325,000 by 1953), approximately 65,000 prostitutes worked in Seoul alone by 1951, and approximately 20,000 by the end of the war. It has been estimated that in the immediate postwar year of 1955, there were about 110,642 prostitutes, of which 61,833 catered to American soldiers. Signaling the widespread existence of camptown prostitution, terms such as *wianbu* (comfort women), *yanggongju* (Western princess), or “UN madams” frequently appeared in the print media throughout the 1950s.<sup>18</sup> The Korean War thus intensified the systematizing of military prostitution, a process that continued into the postwar decades.

As US camptowns became widespread, the American military and the Korean government began to organize officially *gijichon* prostitution into R&R systems after the war, and thus, marking the beginning of the second phase. In the 1950s, eighteen camptowns formed throughout Korea. On January 27, 1960, *Seoul Ilbo* (Seoul Daily) announced that the hope to attract “servicemen to stay in Korea on their Rest & Relaxation leaves, which would occupy the most important part of this year’s Korean tourist business, is expected to materialize soon, as an agreement was reached between the Transportation Ministry and the Eighth U.S. Army authorities.”<sup>19</sup> This early 1960 announcement coincided with the systemization, what Lee Na Young calls the period of “permissive promotion,” of camptown economies. The ROK government proclaimed the Tourism Promotion Law in August of 1961 and established the Korean International Tourism Corporation in 1962. Camptown clubs became “special tourism facilities businesses” and enjoyed tax-free alcohol. Reciprocally, each camptown club had to pay \$500 per month into government coffers under the Tourism Promotion Law.<sup>20</sup> The contradiction between illegalization and regulation of prostitution practiced by the AMG from 1945 to 1948, therefore, continued after the war by the ROK government. A year after outlawing prostitution in Korea, the Park Jung Hee government established 104 “special districts,” which included 32 military camptowns.<sup>21</sup> By 1964, the number of special districts increased to 145 and decreased to 72 in 1972, coinciding with troop

<sup>16</sup> Katharine H.S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 28.

<sup>17</sup> Saeumteo, “Research on Conditions of Camptowns, Camptown Women,” (1997).

<sup>18</sup> Lee, “The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution in South Korea,” 104-5, 111-2.

<sup>19</sup> “UN Servicemen on R&R to Stay in Korea,” *Seoul Ilbo*, 27 January 1960.

<sup>20</sup> Lee, “The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution in South Korea,” 122.

<sup>21</sup> In 1962, the Park Jung Hee junta signed on to the United Nations’ 1949 “Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.”

reductions and subsequent base closures.<sup>22</sup> A member of the ROK's military government even constructed the "American Town" in Gunsan. Created in September of 1969 by General Bak Taehwa and eventually incorporated, daily buses brought in American servicemen from the nearby military camp while the women lived in small rooms managed by the "American Town" corporation. For the Korean government, camptowns not only "confined" unhealthy American influences into limited areas while catering to the foreign military, but they also provided a livelihood for a sector of the displaced population and earned essential foreign exchange for the developing economy.<sup>23</sup>

The Korean government did not attempt to enforce its own anti-prostitution law because camptown economies contributed to the rapid industrialization. The Park Jung Hee-led military coup in May of 1961 cut short the brief democratic experiment ushered in the previous spring by the student uprising of April 1960.<sup>24</sup> National security, envisioned as anti-communism and a strong military, and economic development constituted the two pillars of Park's regime (1961-1979). The state directed export-led development coincided with opportune external forces to energize the development in Korea from the mid-1960s. The "Miracle on the Han" extracted a tremendous human and social toll, however. The state, through its agricultural policy, dislocated millions of farmers, thus creating a large low-cost industrial labor pool for the benefit of export producers. In just one decade, from 1967 to 1976, approximately 6.7 million people left their land and the rural population declined from 54.4 percent of the total population to 35.7 percent.<sup>25</sup> Women, over 60 percent of them between ten to twenty-nine years old, made up more than half of those who traveled from the country to the city.<sup>26</sup> The state not only expanded this mass labor pool, but it also enforced labor discipline by suppressing strikes and delaying rise in wages as long as possible.<sup>27</sup> This development strategy also created a profusion of urban poor, with an estimated three million slum dwellers in Seoul by 1977.<sup>28</sup> Social welfare systems did not develop, however, in accordance with this social disruption. And the massive population dislocation and urban poverty that the

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<sup>22</sup> Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Park's political usurpation marked the return to authoritarian rule, intrusion of the military into government for the next 32 years (1961-1993), and the period of what Seungsook Moon calls "militarized modernity." The idea of "strong and wealthy nation" equating to modernity guided the postwar nation building and also defined national identity as well as provided legitimacy to the regime. Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Beginning in 1966, the government used its control over grain and financial markets to lower prices and to deny farmers sufficient credit to modernize production. As a result, average farm household income fell to approximately 65 percent of average urban worker household income by 1969. Millions of people left the farms, hoping to find employment in the newly growing export industries. Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), 171-2.

<sup>26</sup> Of those who traveled from the country to the cities, women made up 53 percent from 1961 to 1965, 51 percent from 1965 to 1970, and 54 percent from 1970 to 1975. Young women also made up approximately 30 percent of all waged workers during the 1960s and they constituted almost half of all manufacturing workers by 1973. *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>27</sup> Michael E. Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 133.

<sup>28</sup> Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, 177-8.

compressed development had created also forced unprecedented numbers of poor and rural women to seek their livelihood in the sex industry.<sup>29</sup>

After the war, the combination of poverty and dislocation from industrialization sustained camptown prostitution. The common backgrounds of camptown women included low levels of formal education, poverty, absent or incompetent parents, and in many cases, history of sexual abuse or physical violence.<sup>30</sup> Many of them partook in the rural exodus to urban centers seeking employment and often ended up in the city's slums. Before entering camptowns, moreover, most worked in factories, as domestic laborers, or in other service industries including prostitution. Camptowns may have been a last resort or as a result of being tricked, kidnapped, or sold to camptown club owners by their current pimps.<sup>31</sup> In her autobiography, *The Big Sister of America Town*, Kim Yeon-Ja recalls growing up in the countryside and attributes her early self-destructiveness to being raped at the age of eleven and again in high school. Upon moving to Seoul, Kim eked out a living as a shoe-polisher and lived in one of the city's slums. In 1962, at the age of 20, Kim voluntarily went into the Seoul Municipal Women's Shelter (*Seoul Sirip Bunyeo Bohoso*) to learn a skill. Although she trained to be a barber, Kim headed to Dongducheon in 1964, at the age of 22, in hopes of making a lot of money quickly. What was supposed to be a brief stay turned into decades in the camptowns, during which time she worked as a sex worker and club manager before becoming a community organizer and camptown activist.<sup>32</sup>

Camptown economies also contributed to earning essential foreign exchange for the developing economy. The beginnings of rapid industrialization as well as the corresponding period of permissive promotion of camptowns also coincided with the intensification of the US-ROK cold war military alliance. In particular, South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War provided both political and ideological legitimacy for Park's regime as well as an essential infusion of foreign capital at a critical moment. Foremost, this military cooperation was based in part on political reciprocity. According to Charles K. Armstrong, "the Johnson administration under its 'More Flags' campaign sought to internationalize the war, giving the war the appearance of an allied effort rather than a unilateral U.S. action. In exchange, Park Jung Hee won renewed U.S. backing for his unpopular dictatorship and a continued American troop commitment."<sup>33</sup> Economic benefits, however, proved even more crucial. The ROK contributed a cumulative total of 300,000 combat troops, second only to the US itself, between 1965 and 1973.<sup>34</sup> In return, war-related income in the form of US paid equipment, wages, and housing for ROK army divisions, contracts to Korean overseas construction firms, and other procurements

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<sup>29</sup> John Lie, "The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Korea," *Gender and Society* 9 (June 1995): 310-327.

<sup>30</sup> Camptown women's advocacy NGOs, such as Duraebang (My Sister's Place) and Saeumteo (Sprouting Land), and researchers, such as Katharine Moon and Ji-Yeon Yuh, have identified these common patterns in various studies and oral history compilations.

<sup>31</sup> Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptowns*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Kim Yeon-Ja, *America Town Wangeoni: Juki Obun jeonkkaji akeul sseuda* [*Big Sister of America Town: Uses Desperate Effort Until Five Minutes Before Death*], (Seoul: Samin, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, "America's Korea, Korea's Vietnam," *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (2001): 533.

<sup>34</sup> 4,687 ROK soldiers were killed and some 8,000 wounded in the Vietnam War. *Ibid.*, 531-2.

amounted to over one billion dollars.<sup>35</sup> As Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru had called the Korean War “a gift from the gods” for stimulating Japan’s postwar economy, South Korea’s economic take-off in the mid-1960s would not have been possible without the “infusion” of the Vietnam War. Fighting in Vietnam, thus, strengthened both of Park’s pillars – national security and economic development – that helped sustain his regime. As designated and promoted R&R destinations for the soldiers, camptowns also became conduits of foreign currency earnings during their “heyday.” An estimated 30,000 women worked in the camptowns in the 1960s, which equated to one prostitute per every two American soldiers.<sup>36</sup> Koreans referred to Dongducheon as *Don* (money)-ducheon, a play-on-word to indicate just how much money flowed out of this city.<sup>37</sup> In 1964, camptown economies earned almost \$10 million, which accounted for approximately 10 percent of that year’s foreign earnings. By 1969, approximately 46,000 Korean workers in camptowns earned \$70 million and in general, US troops contributed 25 percent to South Korea’s GNP in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup>

The third phase of camptowns witnessed both increased regulations as well as active promotion by the ROK government. The Vietnam War, which afforded an economic boon for South Korea, also ironically brought about the major shift in American military commitment in the peninsula. The unpopularity of the Vietnam War instigated change in American cold war foreign policy in Asia. In 1969, the Nixon administration called for the scaling back of American overseas military commitments and for its allies, especially in Asia, to provide primary manpower for its own defense. Accordingly, the stationing of 62,000 US servicemen throughout the 1960s decreased to 45,000 in 1971. Fearing further troop withdraws as well as to ensure continued foreign currency earnings, the Korean government agreed to accommodate the US military’s camptown concerns and demands. As Katharine Moon extensively documents, both governments sought to control venereal disease and also to promote nondiscriminatory behavior toward black GIs by regulating camptown women.<sup>39</sup> The ROK government established or refurbished health clinics in every camptown, subjected all licensed women to regular exams and forced them to carry a VD identification card.<sup>40</sup> Neil

<sup>35</sup> According to Armstrong, “In 1967 alone war-related income accounted for nearly 4 percent of SK’s GNP and 20 percent of its foreign exchange earnings.” *Ibid.*, 533.

<sup>36</sup> Those registered were concentrated mostly in Seoul (2,231) and its surrounding Gyeonggi Province, such as Dongducheon (53.3 percent of the total number of registered military prostitutes). Lee, “The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution,” 124. This figure did not count the unregistered women, called *Hipari*, often older women who also sought livelihood in the camptowns by selling flowers, snacks, or acting as solicitors for younger women, and at times prostituting themselves for a fraction of club rates. Saeumteo, “Research on Conditions of Camptowns,” (1997).

<sup>37</sup> Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 29.

<sup>38</sup> Lee, “The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution,” 125.

<sup>39</sup> Camptowns had been racially segregated from their beginnings. Whites normally boycotted bars serving black servicemen; establishments catering to black soldiers were euphemistically referred to as “DMZ”—Dark Man’s Zone. Inspired by the civil rights and black power movements raging in the US in the late 1960s and early 1970s, black soldiers increasingly demanded the end of de facto segregation and discrimination. Fearing escalation into race riots among its ranks, the American military demanded that the camptown establishments desegregate and that the ROK government take an active role in enforcing this new policy. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*, 71, 84, 102.

<sup>40</sup> Katharine Moon documents that, “The ROK government allocated a total of 380 million won in 1971-72 (approximately \$1 million in 1971 terms) to improve health and sanitation in camptowns, with 224 million won (approximately \$600,000) earmarked for the prevention and treatment of VD.” *Ibid.*, 80.

Mishalov's photos of Seoksu village, adjacent to where he was stationed in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinance Battalion near Anyang city, capture the everyday signs of a camptown in 1968; signs advertise clubs, motels, liquor, clinic for venereal disease, and information board posted weekly with photo-identification of "girls sick" as well as a guide to the codes – "H for Healthy, M for Menstruate, and WBC for VD" – written on "her pass" (Figure 15). Those infected had to be confined in the "Monkey House," a name conferred to the clinics by the women, until treated with American military-contributed medical supplies. Along with this increased control over the bodies of the women, the government policy also deemed the camptown women "patriots" for earning foreign currency for the nation and "personal ambassadors" for facilitating Korean-American relations.

Kim Yeon-Ja, who worked in Songtan in 1971, recalled gathering in a large hall along with over one thousand other women for lectures sponsored by the local government. The regular lectures consisted of "obvious and repeated repertory" of government officials thanking the women as "hidden patriots" and encouraging them to contribute to earning dollars with "courage and dignity." The officials also beseeched the women to "clean-up" their attire and language in the presence of the GIs, "who were here to help our country." Then the chief of the health clinic would remind them to get regular VD examinations.<sup>41</sup> Fearing further troop withdraws and to ensure security commitment from the US as well as guarantee continued foreign currency earnings, the Korean government agreed to accommodate the interests and demands of the US military.

The decline of camptowns, largely due to Korea's rapid industrialization, marked a fourth phase in the history of camptowns. The uncertainty of American commitment after the Nixon Doctrine further intensified Park's determination for economic and security independence.<sup>42</sup> Korea's "compressed modernity" that ensued in the 1970s and 80s, from its stunning economic growth to the rapid rate of transformation from agrarian to industrial society, was indeed breathtaking.<sup>43</sup> The social transformations due to this "compressed modernity" consequently shaped camptown patterns. First, Korea's economic growth meant the devaluing of the US dollar and in turn, decreased GI economic power. Second, the revised American military policy discouraged spending in the Korean economy and also more strictly regulated the outflow of PX goods into the Korean market by limiting the PX allowance per GI. Moreover, the makeup of the military had shifted with the continuous increase of women in the service; women made

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<sup>41</sup> Kim Yeon-Ja, *Big Sister of America Town*, 123-4.

<sup>42</sup> Park announced in 1972 the Emergency Decree for Economic Stability with the twin objectives of stability and economic growth. Heavy and Chemical Industry (HCI) as the linchpin of the Third Five-Year Plan (1972-1976) replaced the light-industry development of the 1960s. The concentration on HCI served dual purposes of economic development as well as military strengthening. To direct and foster this shift to HCI, the government set export quotas to provide incentives and to drive industrial development, protected selected *chaebols* (conglomerates) from international competition in domestic markets, and funded HCI education and training centers. Notably, vocational education budget doubled from 1970 to 1979, and in 1971, the state established the Korean Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST), Korea's leading science institution.

<sup>43</sup> The 1960-95 period saw a stunning 238-fold increase of the total GNP (from 1.9 billion dollars to 451.7 billion dollars) and a 128-fold increase of the per capita GNP (from 79 dollars to 10,076 dollars). During this time, "the farm population shrank from 58.2 per cent in 1960 to 11.6 per cent in 1994, attesting to an almost complete transformation from agrarian society to industrial society over merely three-plus decades." Chang, Kyung-Sup, "Compressed modernity and its discontents: South Korean society in transition," *Economy and Society* 28, no. 1 (February 1990): 32.

up 13 percent of those stationed in Korea by the early 1990s.<sup>44</sup> Finally, the expanded sex-industry in mainstream Korea also offered more lucrative alternatives to camptowns from the mid-1980s. No longer confined to “special districts,” the sex industry started to diversify into new forms from the mid-1980s.<sup>45</sup> These factors significantly altered the makeup of the camptowns. The number of registered camptown women decreased to about 18,000 by the late-1980s. Dongducheon at this period had about 700 to 800 registered women<sup>46</sup> and the Dandelion Association, the self-governing group formed by the women in Bosandong, dissolved in 1989 due to low membership. With the decreased economic appeal of camptowns for Korean women, foreign workers from the Philippines and Russia began to replace Koreans beginning in the mid-1990s. Of the 899 women working in 309 clubs in Dongducheon and Uijeongbu in 2004, 811 of them were foreign workers, comprising over 90 percent of the total.<sup>47</sup> Another factor for “importing” foreign workers was the rise of Korean organizations dedicated to exposing and preventing American military crimes. The horrific and brutal murder of Yun Geum-I in 1992 by a private, Keneth Lee Markel III, in Bosandong, is considered to be a pivotal turning point in galvanizing Korean civil society organizations.<sup>48</sup> Today, with further troop reductions as well as the consolidation and relocation of American military installations under way, camptowns are closing down altogether or attempting to revamp their image as family-friendly international shopping districts.

In its 50 years, from the 1950s to the 1990s, an estimated total of 250,000 to 300,000 women worked in the camptowns.<sup>49</sup> The evolving cold war alliance between the US and the ROK as well as Korea’s industrialization and modernization conditioned the transformation of these borderlands. Although the greater structural changes determined camptown developmental patterns, the creations and conflicts within these borderlands also dialectically shaped the “outside.” Despite being designated as buffer zones to safeguard the “mainstream” host nation from the foreign, these Korean-American contact-zones did not stay in the “fringe-edge.” The distinctive camptown culture seeped into the heart of Korean society. The local inhabitants, the American military, the Korean government, and Korea at large clashed over and negotiated the significance of these sites.

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<sup>44</sup> Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 45-6.

<sup>45</sup> This included prostitution carried out not just in places like brothels, but also pandering of sex in bars and restaurants, as well as in hotels, public bathhouses, massage parlors, motels, video shops, barbershops, and room-salons. Saeumteo, “Research on Conditions of Camptowns,” 1997.

<sup>46</sup> Sandra Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, eds, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 176.

<sup>47</sup> Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 47-8.

<sup>48</sup> On October 28, 1992, Keneth Lee Markel, III murdered and mutilated Yun’s body. Yun was 26 years old at the time of her murder, working as a prostitute in Bosandong. Lee Sohee, “Understanding the United States through the Crimes Committed by its Troops in Korea” (Seoul: Pamphlet by the National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea, 2004). In light of civilian critical attention to camptown prostitution, clubs began to look for women from economically weaker countries, with potentially less accountability and threat of legal recourse in Korea. Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 48.

<sup>49</sup> Saeumteo, “Research on Conditions of Camptowns,” (1997).

### Indispensable Intercourse: Camptown Creations and Conflicts

On January 8, 1960, an editorial cartoon in *Donga Ilbo* (Donga Daily) illustrated a soldier standing guard in front of a gate with a pair of hair-clippers holstered on his right hip. The caption reads, “After the hair-shaving incident, guards are to be equipped with portable clippers” (Figure 16). On the front page of *Chosun Ilbo* (Chosun Daily) the following day, another caricature, titled “Peculiar Disease,” depicted a woman touching her shaved-head, looking into a hand-mirror and crying. A man, rubbing his bald head, sits directly behind her. “Since it is said that a malignant disease can be prevented by a forced head-shaving in some countries, it is strange that this damned habit of gluttony and high blood pressure are still incurable, even though I am bald-headed,” the caption explains (Figure 17). These two images in the popular dailies and their seemingly odd obsession with haircutting during the first days of the new decade were commentaries on an “incident” that occurred around 1:00 AM on January 2, 1960. On the first night of 1960, two Korean women walked through a hole in the barbed wire fence surrounding Camp Beavers, near Dongducheon. These unauthorized intruders went into a barrack to solicit pay for sex. A soldier apprehended the two women and took them to the orderly room, where two sergeants of the US Army 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, under the orders of the Camp Commander, Captain John W. McEnery, shaved all of the hair from the heads of these Korean women. Thereafter, the US personnel turned the women over to the Korean National Police.<sup>50</sup>

While several American papers briefly reported this New Year incident, Korean newspapers covered it ardently for the first three weeks of January 1960.<sup>51</sup> The word choices between each side of the Pacific in describing the women and the altercation, however, differed noticeably. While Korean newspapers referred to them as “Korean women,” without an emphasis on their profession, and as “victims” in an “act of lynching,” American coverage identified them as “aggressive prostitutes” and the perpetrators of an “invasion” of the installation.<sup>52</sup> For instance, the AP report, “Shaved Head Women’s Story,” opens with the testimonial of Kim Ae-Soon, one of the two women who had her head shaved. Kim Ae-Soon recounted that although they had “cried and begged” and promised that they would never return, “they brutally kept on cutting our head.” The reporter then claimed that Kim “talked...appealingly” and while “shedding tears continuously,” spoke of feeling “terrified” and “abashed” during the early morning of January 2nd.<sup>53</sup> Besides her sense of bewilderment and humiliation, Kim also explained why she requested compensation from the US Army authorities. Kim stated, “We got to eat in order to live, by any means. I would not care for myself, if I were not a

<sup>50</sup> “January 19, 1960 letter to Director Kang Hak, Rhee, National Police, ROK from U.S. Provost Marshal,” 8<sup>th</sup> US Army Adjutant General Section, Classified General Officer Correspondence 1959-1963, RG338/290/C/59/6 Box 30, NARA.

<sup>51</sup> The Information Section of the Eight Army compiled excerpts from stateside newspapers as well as translated Korean media coverage on the US military, for the use of the headquarters staff of the US Command in Korea. All quoted newspaper articles and translations of Korean newspapers regarding the January 1960 hair-shaving incident are from “World and Korean News Roundup,” 1960. “World and Korean news roundup,” 8A Information Section, Publications 1958-1960, RG338/290/67/24/6/Box 1499, NARA (hereafter, “World and Korean news roundup”).

<sup>52</sup> *Washington Star*, 7 January 1960; *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 January 1960, as transcribed in “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>53</sup> 5 January 1960 AP report, “Shaved Head Women’s Story” was carried by *Hanguok*, *Segye*, *Donga*, *Yunhap*, and *Chosun* dailies. The second woman remained silent throughout the commotion.



mother of a son who was born between an American soldier and me at my refuging (sic) place, in the early stage of the Korean War.” The portrayal of Kim as a victim and a dedicated mother fulfilling her maternal duties for the survival of her child, of a mixed-race progeny of an American soldier no less, suggested that Kim deserved sympathy. Korean editorials also linked this particular incident with past grievances and “lynchings” in demanding that in order to prevent such humiliating and arbitrary forms of justice in the future, the outdated wartime “Daejon Agreement” – giving the US unilateral jurisdiction over criminal offenses committed by American soldiers – be replaced by a bilateral Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). By the second week of January 1960, the hair shaving “incident” of two Korean women had ignited a national discourse on postwar sovereignty. Kim Ae-Soon’s brief encounter with “power” garnered her a moment in the historical spotlight and Kim became part of the “official” record.<sup>54</sup>

This January 1960 incident was symptomatic of the greater context – both the creations and the clashes – of American military camptowns in the Republic of Korea during the postwar decade. This particular conflict exposed the motivations of all those involved, whether directly or by symbolic association, from the camptown inhabitants and the American military personnel to the two nations-at-large. Moreover, it revealed the conflicted Korean attitudes regarding this space.

### *Camptown Creations*

The New Year head-shaving incident indicated the frequent contact between GIs and camptown women. Kim Ae-Soon expressed bewilderment at the arbitrary punishment, considering the hole in the fence at the rear side of the barracks “had been used as either an entrance or an exit by both in-and-out company soldiers and Korean women, to or from the nearby village.” Kim claimed that she herself began to enter the company area with a GI through the fence sometime in November of the previous year. And because “she used to come in and out through it so many times... she could not figure the numbers.” Clearly, this had not been the first “invasion” of the installation; the hole in the fence had served as a gateway to and from the US military camp and the nearby Korean town for *both* the American GIs and Koreans. Kim, thus, had been made a punitive example for transgressing what had been a fluid boundary of a mutually participatory system.

Compiled data by the American military attest to the frequency of contact between Americans and Koreans, albeit with emphasis on crimes and transgressions committed by Koreans. In a January 19, 1960, letter to the director of the Korean National Police, in response to the hair-shaving uproar, the US Provost Marshal, David P. Schorr, Jr., Brigadier General, expressed the seriousness of the situation surrounding the area of the 7<sup>th</sup> US Infantry Division,<sup>55</sup> which had “set the stage for these incidents.” The Provost Marshall claimed that in the previous six months, a total of 4,322 Koreans had entered the installations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division without permission. Of the

<sup>54</sup> In order for the lives of “infamous men” to reach us, “a beam of light had to illuminate them, for a moment at least,” postulates Michel Foucault. And the source of this historical “light” was the encounter with “power.” Michel Foucault, *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, eds. Paul Rainbow and Nikolas Rose (New York: The New Press, 2000), 161.

<sup>55</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> US Infantry Division occupied military camps in Dongducheon area from 1951 to 1971, including the site of the hair-shaving incident, Camp Beavers, as well as one of the largest military camps in Korea, Camp Casey.

trespassers, “3,266 have been females; 85 percent of them were estimated to be prostitutes. 65 percent of them were estimated to be repeated offenders.”<sup>56</sup> According to the “Crime Prevention Programs” report submitted to the Commanding General, over 11,000 illegal trespassers were apprehended on military installations during the 1959 calendar year. And of these, women constituted 72 percent and all were considered to be engaged in prostitution and “be actual or potential thieves.”<sup>57</sup> During the same period, moreover, almost \$300,000 worth of personal and military supplies and equipment was stolen from military installations. The report identified that the fence served as the key gateway for the vast majority of those apprehended. Although the report admitted that it “would appear reasonable to expect that some of these illegal entrants were assisted in entering by US personnel,” they had “no data on this.” What the Provost Marshall entreated as “these serious conditions” exposed the explicit contentions of the porous fence, prostitution, and theft. At the same time, the report also implicitly addressed the camptown sexual and black market economies and the indispensable role of the women within this system. Although the American military-compiled statistics emphasized Korean transgressions, Kim Ae-Soon’s testimony as well as the following court case of Major William W. Hogewood, Jr., suggests mutual participation in the GI-Korean socio-economic arrangements of temporary cohabitation as well as in the black market system.<sup>58</sup>

A military investigation into Major Hogewood, who had been the secretary of the KMAG Officers Open Mess, was conducted in his absence as he had already rotated out of Korea, but was pieced together through the testimonies of Korean employees on the military camp, four camptown prostitutes, and several of Hogewood’s former American colleagues. A Korean male employee of the base testified that he had brought cases of whiskey, cola, and beer as well as cans of food to Major Hogewood’s girlfriend with Major Hogewood on 13 different occasions. The recipient of these goods was a Korean woman with a “GI-name” of “Mary.” Mary testified that she sold most of the goods into the black market through her male servant. Mary and Major Hogewood lived together for about two months before “he left and went with another girl.” This “another girl” was “Candy.” To live with “Candy,” Hogewood brought her a mixture of MPC (Military Payment Certificates), Korean currency, bottles of whiskey, beer, cola, and one radio. Like Mary, Candy also sold most of the items into the black market. Finally, Gene P. Recchia, a Club Stewart of the Officers Open Mess explained that Hogewood could easily pilfer from the warehouse since he had a key. When asked whether the indigenous employees could have taken the liquor, Recchia replied, “You have to use a certain amount of common sense in dealing with Koreans and know just about how much they can steal. The quantity we noticed missing was too large for Koreans to be taking.” The investigation calculated that Hogewood’s arrangements with Mary and Candy had cost the military \$222 in cash and \$1488 in goods. The alleged actions of Major Hogewood

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<sup>56</sup> “19 January 1960 letter to Director Kang Hak, Rhee, National Police, ROK from U.S. Provost Marshal.”

<sup>57</sup> “Crime Prevention Programs” and “US Military Personnel Taking the Law Into Their Own Hands” from “Commanding General’s Conference of 26 February 1960 Concerning Measures to Prevent Further Taking of the Law into Their Own Hands by US Military Personnel.” 8th US Army Adjutant General Section, Classified General Officer Correspondence 1959-1963, RG338/290/C/59/6 Box 301, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> “Mess Fund Investigations 1953-1954,” 8th US Army Adjutant General Section, Administrative Files 1953-1955, RG338/290/67/22/04-05/Box1394, NARA.

reconstructed through these testimonies also revealed a system of mutual participation in the extensive black market.

That Hogewood openly enlisted the labor of a Korean employee to deliver the stolen goods to his girlfriend, and that Recchia could freely comment on the “common sense” amount of goods that could be stolen by indigenous employees, indicated the pervasiveness of American goods filtering through the camptowns. *Seoul Ilbo* in August 1960 reported that six million dollars worth of Post Exchange (PX) items flooded the Korean black market a year.<sup>59</sup> For instance, diverted PX goods traveled from Dongducheon via the train and sold in the “Goblin Market” (*Dokkaebi Sijang*) in Seoul. It was not a coincidence that Dongducheon train station held the record for the highest percentage of women passengers and cargo during this period.<sup>60</sup> Most of the merchandise from the PX first went to one of the four “Yankee” markets in Seoul. Then these articles were transferred to retail traders and into the hands of awaiting customers at department stores, general stores, and even street stalls. Almost every item could be bought at a “Yankee” market, but foodstuffs made up the biggest portion of PX articles. In some 40 of the 175 grocery retailers in the Seoul markets that specialized only in PX foods, American products such as cola, coffee, and canned goods could be purchased. PX and American military camp food products also influenced the local cuisine, such as the popular spicy stew, *budae jjigae* (literally “army base stew”). Camptowns in Uijongbu and Dongducheon became famous for concocting this fusion of Korean spices with canned meat, such as SPAM, and leftover foods from American military camps. Other than foodstuffs, top PX items consumed by Koreans included foreign cigarettes, liquor, and luxury and toilet items, “such as high-grade perfumes and pearl necklaces...mainly sold at department stores and high class haberdasher’s shops...at indefinite prices.”<sup>61</sup> From foreign music to liquors that could be found in wealthy homes of Seoul, camptowns disseminated American culture and goods.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, the trajectory of Hogewood’s stolen cases of liquor – shipped from the United States to provide familiar consumer products to overseas GIs, but stolen and smuggled off of the installation by a GI to pay for his off-base “home” with a Korean woman, who then in turn disposed of the goods into the eager black market, and from which these goods became coveted items in the greater Korean society – showed the extent of all those involved in this elaborate system. Hogewood, of course, was not alone; other GIs also participated in the black market system. The Korean police identified Korean PX workers, GIs, and prostitutes as the main culprits of diverting PX goods. As

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<sup>59</sup> “PX Routes: Six Million Dollars Worth of Items Pass Into Korean Markets a Year,” 28 August 1960; “The Post Exchange Commodities Are Being Brought to the Local Markets Through Various Routes,” 29 August 1960; “Three Tons of Coffee Reach Korean markets Daily,” *Seoul Ilbo*, 1 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>60</sup> Kim, “A Study on the Urban Growth Process of Dongducheon-si,” 29-31.

<sup>61</sup> It reported that six billion hwan worth of American cigarettes are consumed annually and more than 100 million hwan worth of PX liquor was consumed annually in Korea. “Three Tons of Coffee Reach Korean markets Daily,” *Seoul Ilbo*, 1 September 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>62</sup> Along with consumer products, camptowns also were conduits of American culture. For example, American music filtered through the U.S. military radio station, AFKN, and Korean professional singers adopted lyrical styles of American mainstream singers. Some popular Korean singers of the 1960s began their careers singing at clubs in Itaewon, entertaining the American military personnel. Choi Jongil, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space,” (master’s thesis, Seoul National University, 2002), 26-7.

for the GI's role, *Seoul Ilbo* explained that "Many American servicemen buy some articles at the PX when they go out on passes or leaves, and sell the merchandise in black-markets to obtain hwan. A large amount of PX commodities is pouring into the local markets through these Americans." The women also acted as indispensable intermediaries. "Most luxury items are obtained and sold by these street girls," according to the same *Seoul Ilbo* article, and "PX goods brought to the local markets through these girls reach an enormous amount." Another *Seoul Ilbo* article reiterated that "Our people are fond of luxury and spend almost 400 million hwan a year on luxury items and toilet articles, most of which reach the market via prostitutes."<sup>63</sup>

Heinz Insu Fenkle's autobiographical novel, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, chronicles an "Amerasian" boy's childhood in the chaotic and harsh streets of Bupyong, a camptown, in 1960s Korea. As a legal wife to an American serviceman, Insu's mother had free access to the PX and the commissary in the Yongsan installation. Insu recalled how his mother would "buy a shopping cart load of American goods—mostly rationed items like coffee, powdered milk, baby formula, cigarettes—and then she would take an Arirang taxi out to a market in Seoul and sell everything to a Yankee goods vendor at the Hollywood market near Pagoda Park." On the days that Insu accompanied his mother into the "fantastic chaos of Seoul," he would drink "cold cans of Coca Cola with black marketers and petty criminals."<sup>64</sup> The women negotiated with both sides of the borderland, the GIs and the Korean black marketers, to facilitate the flow of American goods from military camps to the greater Korean market. The brief domestic arrangements between Hogewood and both "Mary" and "Candy" exemplified the intersection of sex and American goods that constituted the central economic and social patterns of these borderlands.

The camptown sexual economy in the 1950s and the early 1960s, in comparison to the late 1960s and 1970s, enjoyed relatively more autonomy. The most common form of American-Korean interaction consisted of the brief sex-for-pay exchanges in the brothel and club systems. Large numbers of prostitutes worked outside the perimeter of official control (and even without pimps) until camptown prostitution became more systemized under the Park regime. The women also organized self-support groups as well as waged protests against exploitation.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, due to their access to highly valued American-made products and currency during the 1950s, a majority of prostitutes (between 55 and 65 percent) enjoyed relatively affluent lifestyles and monthly incomes.<sup>66</sup>

Camptown conditions worsened for the women in the latter 1960s and 1970s, however. Troop drug abuse and violence, presumably caused by the strain of the Vietnam War on the returning GIs, increased from 1967. Violent crimes committed by US soldiers against Korean civilians as well as fights between Americans and Koreans and between

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<sup>63</sup> "PX Routes: Six Million Dollars Worth of Items Pass Into Korean Markets a Year," 28 August 1960; "The Post Exchange Commodities Are Being Brought to the Local Markets Through Various Routes," 29 August 1960; "Three Tons of Coffee Reach Korean markets Daily," *Seoul Ilbo*, 1 September 1960, "World and Korean news roundup."

<sup>64</sup> Heinz Insu Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (New York: Plume, 1997), 120.

<sup>65</sup> According to Lee Na-Young, the "self-support groups, *Mugunghwahoe*, *Chinmokhoe*, *K'llobohoe*, *Ssas'akhoe*, and *Paekhaphoe*, had existed before the 1960s, and *Mintleheo*, in Tongduch'on, was established in 1961 with several local branches for the sake of prostitute 'human rights' and 'protection'." Lee, "The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution," 140.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

black and white servicemen intensified during 1967-72.<sup>67</sup> Faced with these worsening conditions, the women, as they had previously done, responded with organizations to protect their rights and engaged in protests, but they also faced greater pressure and control. Kim Yeon-Ja recounts a May 1971 protest in Songtan, when close to a thousand women gathered in front of the military camp to protest GI-circulated fliers that demanded: “Shoes \$10, Long-time \$10, Short-time \$5, Bags \$5!!!” When the GIs had insisted on these price regulations of “goods” and “services,” the enraged women countered with shouts of, “We are not shoes! We are human!” For this particular incident, the American general of the military camp apologized. At the same time, Kim recounts that Korean club owners and government officials pressured the women to not create further problems.<sup>68</sup> Military prostitutes in the 1970s began losing autonomy partly because of the Camptown Purification Movement.

Beyond brief sexual encounters through the club systems, some American personnel and camptown woman created a more extended arrangement of cohabitation like Hogewood’s agreements with “Mary” and “Candy.” For instance, approximately 200 women out of 1000 military prostitutes in the Yongsan area cohabited with American soldiers as “married couples” in 1962.<sup>69</sup> Compared to the daily strains of dealing with clients and pimps in clubs and bars, this domestic arrangement often proved more profitable than the insecurity of nightly work. Besides improved economic stability, such exclusive relationships also opened up the possibility of marriage and immigration to the US. In the “heyday” of camptowns, marriage between Korean women and American servicemen peaked. The *New York Times* reported in 1965 that about 100 American servicemen married Korean women each month in South Korea. In 1964, 1,265 American servicemen took Korean wives, which meant that one out of forty servicemen stationed in Korea married a Korean that year. Due to the high number of marriages with the locals as well as problems of GIs abandoning their wives, the Eighth US Army (EUSA) set up education classes on inter-racial marriages and tightened marriage regulations. Not to be deterred, however, marriage service agencies in camptowns profited by facilitating the paperwork for marriage and migration for a fee of about \$200.<sup>70</sup>

Korean military brides made up the largest group of adult Korean immigrants from 1945 to 1965, when immigration from most of Asia was blocked in the United States. Between 1950 and 1989, some 90,000 Korean women immigrated to America as wives of US soldiers. Subsequently, by sponsoring their extended families, these women played a crucial role in later Korean-American immigration.<sup>71</sup> The migration of such a massive institution as the military will indelibly impact the receiving nation, yet the correlating social implications on the US can be just as profound; this militarized

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<sup>67</sup> Lee Na-young documents that from 1967, the number prosecutions related to US drug crimes dramatically increased, from just 100 in 1967 to 635 in 1969, resulting in an annual growth of 129 percent. *Ibid.*, 133-4.

<sup>68</sup> Kim Yeon-Ja, *Big Sister of America Town*, 127-131.

<sup>69</sup> Lee, “The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution,” 142.

<sup>70</sup> “Marriages by G.I.’s Problem in Korea,” *New York Times*, 24 October 1965.

<sup>71</sup> By inviting their family members to the US under the family reunification provision, it is estimated that military brides are responsible (directly and indirectly) for bringing 40 to 50 percent of all Korean immigrants since 1965. Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown*, 164.

transpacific migratory pathway indicates one of the unintended consequences of the overseas garrisoning of American troops and its influence on the US.

Marriage and immigration to the United States offered an escape from the camptowns for marginalized women. Insu's mother raised Insu among "the prostitutes and husband-seekers who lined up outside the gates for escorts, [and] the unsponsored wives."<sup>72</sup> For the women in Insu's world, the "promise of America" loomed large. Insu's mother describes her own once idealized America:

And really, I did think the streets in America are gold or something. I used to think every American was a millionaire and everyone owned his own house and had a car and drank Coca-Cola instead of water and had meat for every meal. I don't know where I got those ideas, but I had them. My friends who came back tell me that everything will be a disappointment, but I don't care. I have to go there and see for myself.<sup>73</sup>

To a remarkable degree, Koreans shared this "American fever" in the postwar decades. For the women who chose to marry American soldiers and leave Korea, an idealized America promised an escape. As Ji-Yeon Yuh posits, especially for the military brides, adoptees, and racially mixed "Amerasians," their indelible association with the Korean War and the continued garrisoning of American soldiers made them "ideal" candidates for migration.<sup>74</sup> Pushed out by the war and its consequences, the camptown women "bartered" their lives in Korea for what they hoped to be a piece of the American dream.

### *Camptown Clashes*

Although borders demarcating the military camps and the camptowns often proved porous, the installations officially were protected American spaces. As the 1960 New Year incident revealed, these border conflicts could demand the attention of the highest political echelons of Korea and the American representatives in Korea. A January 1960 editorial cartoon in *Hanguk*, "Latest Gossip on the Heads Shaven Incident" (Figure 18), shows a bald-headed woman in a Korean traditional dress, *hanbok*, sitting and holding a mirror while a uniformed figure with captain bars on his hat brushes her head with a substance from a jar. Directly behind the captain is a civilian and behind the civilian is another uniformed officer. As the caricature conveyed, camptown contestations, such as this particular incident, involved others, whether directly or symbolically, far beyond the boundaries of the borderlands. The uproar surrounding this incident caused the ROK Home Ministry and the Foreign Ministry to make a report to President Rhee and to hand an "official memorandum of protest" to the United States Ambassador. Twenty-two Korean legislators also raised a motion recommending early conclusion of a SOFA. The American Ambassador, Walter P. McConaughly, and the UN Commander-in-Chief, General Carter B. Magruder, visited the ROK Foreign Ministry to

<sup>72</sup> Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, 121.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-8.

<sup>74</sup> Yuh contends that most of Korean migration since 1950 can be traced to the Korean War and its consequences. Especially in the postwar reconstruction period, the Park Jung Hee government encouraged migration through the 1963 Emigration Act to relieve perceived pressures of unemployment. Ji-Yeon Yuh, "Moved by War: Migration, Diaspora and the Korean War," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005): 278-80.

officially express their regret for this incident. The US military also acted quickly to mitigate the situation by relieving the responsible captain of his command and transferring him, while compensating each of the two women 480,000 Hwan (\$960).<sup>75</sup> Motivations behind such swift responses by the US military and demand for far-reaching actions by Koreans suggested that borderland clashes at times symbolized greater significance for the two nations.

For the US military, at least on the ground level, Korean transgressors posed the unruly nuisance of theft and venereal disease among its troops. The *Washington Star* reported on January 7<sup>th</sup> that the incensed captain “had ordered head-shaving in hopes of halting an invasion by camp followers...who cut holes in fence, evaded guards, entered barracks and caused a high venereal disease rate.”<sup>76</sup> It continued that Captain McEnery had issued the order without the knowledge of his superior, the battalion commander. The captain had decided to take the law into his own hands by not only punishing Koreans, but also by promising to reward his men with three-day passes for “catching prostitutes.” Frustrated, the captain created his own high-handed “justice” system.<sup>77</sup> And at the root of this controversy was the concern for high venereal disease rate among the soldiers. The “Crime Prevention Programs” report cited that the venereal disease rate for US troops in the I Corps area had increased from 228 per thousand in 1958 (23 percent) to 328 per thousand (33 percent) in 1959. The report adduced that “It is an accepted medical axiom that disease incidence among the military is directly related to the prevalence of that particular disease within the local civilian population.” Again, the report unquestioningly considered the local women as the transmitters of VD and thus, fully responsible for the increase in the infection rate among the GIs; absent was a discussion of GIs as willing “consumers” of the sexual economy as well as carriers and infectors of VD to the women.<sup>78</sup> Although the American side shied away from negotiating a bilateral Status of Forces Agreement, the USFK did want the Korean government to actively intervene and regulate these matters of the borderland.

If the ground-level problem of venereal disease motivated Captain McEnery’s hair-shaving policy, SOFA constituted the fundamental concern for General Magruder and the upper echelon of the USFK. General Magruder responded to the incident by calling together a conference concerning “Measures to Prevent Further Taking of the Law into Their Own Hands by U.S. Military Personnel” on February 26, 1960, which was

<sup>75</sup> \$960 in 1960 has the same buying power as \$6,864.65 in 2009. This sum was six to seven times the 1960 per capita GNP.

<sup>76</sup> *Washington Star*, 7 January 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>77</sup> The hair shaving, at the same time, was not as an arbitrary or random disciplining measure as it seemed. It had historical precedence, as attested in a dispatch that quoted a US Army spokesman, who “recalled that in the West, hair-cutting of those ‘followers of units’ have been traditional punishment since long ago.” *Seoul*, 8 January 1960. The problem and the outrage, as pointed out by several Koreans in their editorial responses, was that Korea was not the “West” and wartime measures had been implemented in a peacetime situation. *Hanguk and Seoul*, 8 January 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>78</sup> To control the VD rate among its men, the USFK provided “active and vigorous special services and education programs,” and encouraged the men “to attend the church of their faith and participate in religious retreats,” in order to “fill spare time, to entertain, and to divert.” As for the breached barbed wire fences, all that the command could do was to conduct, “Daily and frequent inspections and repair [the fence] immediate[ly] when required.” “Crime Prevention Programs” from Classified General Officer Correspondence 1959-1963.

attended by the highest ranked American military officials in Korea.<sup>79</sup> According to the confidential memorandum of the conference, “incidents which would have passed with a minimum of notice heretofore will be built up to serve the Koreans’ purposes.” According to General Magruder, this Korean purpose was “one in which the Koreans want a Status of Forces Agreement.” Then General Magruder pointed out that prostitution and pilferage, the two causes of friction, were “aggravating,” yet “neither [was] serious militarily.” The problems of prostitution and theft were secondary to the concern that Koreans would use such sensational borderland incidences as leverage to pressure the US into a new bilateral agreement. As the article, “Koreans Call For GI Trials” in the *Baltimore Sun* on January 9<sup>th</sup> pointed out, “The U.S. has Status of Forces treaties covering off-duty offenses in many of the countries where large American Troops contingents are stationed, but not Korea.”

For the USFK, signing a new bilateral agreement would mean relinquishing extraterritorial advantages as well as a contradiction of the American cold war rhetoric. The wartime agreement signed in Daejeon in 1950 gave complete advantages, such as unilateral criminal jurisdiction, free Korean land usage for US military installations, and not having to negotiate with Korean labor unions representing those employed on military camps. Another reason, more ideological than material, perhaps stemmed from the contradiction presented by the ROK demand for a SOFA. On December 29, 1959, just a few days before the hair-shaving incident, the *Washington Star* proudly declared that the 300,000 American military personnel “swarming all over the Far East...have assumed a political role in addition to their regular military duties.”<sup>80</sup> And these “diplomats,” the *Washington Star* claimed, “have contributed to...a growing feeling among free Asians that their freedom is more secure if they stand with the U.S. and improved relations between individual Americans and local people in Far East.” The rhetoric of American GIs as both cold war soldiers of “containment” and ambassadors of “integration” abounded in this period, as explored in the preceding chapter. General Magruder, in his December 19, 1959, prepared statement for briefing the visiting members of the US Congress and media, also reiterated a similar sentiment that the presence of US servicemen and women in Asia served not only military, but also diplomatic and political purposes. “The Republic of Korea offers us a show place for democracy, just as does the Republic of Germany,” General Magruder contended. Thus, if a staunch cold war ally as South Korea demanded a SOFA, it exposed that the “invited” American “ambassadors of democracy” did not always live up to their professed ideals.

For Koreans, the significance of this case did not stem from its uniqueness, but rather its typicality. The Korean press described the incident as yet another “lynching” in a far more extensive history of violence against Koreans at the hands of Americans. One indication of the frequency of these “incidents” was the fact that despite all the commotion surrounding this particular 1960 New Year incident, in the following month, members of the 444<sup>th</sup> unit of the EUSA beat seven Korean villagers with a club, and then forced them into a water hole, completely stripped, in the middle of winter. GI crime

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<sup>79</sup> “Commanding General’s Conference of 26 February 1960 Concerning Measures to Prevent Further Taking of the Law into Their Own Hands by US Military Personnel.”

<sup>80</sup> “Military Diplomats Help to Alter Political Climate,” *Washington Star*, 29 December 1959, “World and Korean news roundup.”



statistics between 1962 and 1967 compiled by the Bureau of Korean National Police indicate 48 burglary/robbery, 807 assault, 302 bodily injury, and 57 murder cases.<sup>81</sup> According to official Korean government statistics, roughly 52,000 crimes, ranging from car accidents to robbery, arson, mugging, physical and sexual assault, rape, and murder, were committed by the troops and civilians related to the US military from 1967 to 2002.<sup>82</sup> This figure constitutes the crimes reported to the police since the 1967 SOFA agreement and therefore, the actual number dating back to 1945 is likely much higher.

As Magruder had warned, the Korean public discourse also turned the women's humiliation into "their" grievances and "national" indignations in demanding SOFA. January 8 editorials claimed, "We cannot but feel unpleasantness with racial shame and the humiliation that we were insulted too much by foreign soldiers." In *Seoul*, another editorial expressed, "We cannot help but feel national indignation." And in *Pyunghwa*, another writer asserted, "It cannot be said to be too extreme, if we say that it is a sign of their scorn of all the Korean women and Korean Nationals."<sup>83</sup> In their rally around the two Korean prostitutes of American military camptown – the very people and place that Korean society marginalized – "them" became "we." This hair-shaving incident represented yet another humiliating chapter in the frustrated collective memory of empty promises of change by the officials of both nations. Editorials featured in *Seoul*, *Chosun*, and *Hanguk* on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of January all reminded that:

[W]e, two years ago, unanimously urged the conclusion of ROK-US administrative agreement to prevent misconducts against us by American soldiers when a Korean school boy was shot and killed by an American servicemen near Kimchun railway station. . . . At that time, the foreign minister, agreed to the public opinion, declared that he would do his best for the conclusion of the agreement. Since then we have heard nothing of that, and we do not know what caused to fail that effort, either.

The public discourses not only clearly articulated the unforgotten history of grievances, but also how this new "lynching" was a symptom of the absence of a bilateral agreement on criminal jurisdiction.

As feared by the US military, Koreans discussed the incident by evoking contradictions between American rhetoric and practice in their military presence in Asia. The Korean usage of the word "lynch" foremost conjured highly critical images of Jim Crow segregation and the virulent violence against blacks in the US at the time. This linguistic association contradicted America's self-image as the beacon of democracy. The Korean editorials contended that the soldiers had made a mockery of prostitutes and disdained indigenous persons, despite "the fact that they have a mission to maintain high

<sup>81</sup> Han Woo-Seok, "Juhan oegugin ui beomjoe" (Crimes of foreigners in Korea), *Sin Dong-A*, March 1968, 245, as quoted in Sang-Dawn Lee, *Big Brother, Little Brother: The American Influence on Korean Culture in the Lyndon B. Johnson Years* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 41.

<sup>82</sup> Lee Sohee, "Understanding the United States through the Crimes Committed by its Troops in Korea." Oh Yeon-ho estimates as many as five a day, 2,000 a year, and nearly 100,000 total from 1945 to 1990. Oh Yeon-ho, *Make Us Sad No More! (Deoisang urireur seulpeugae hajimala!)* (Seoul: Baeksan Seodang, 1990).

<sup>83</sup> *Chosun* and *Hanguk*, 7 January 1960; *Seoul*, 8 January 1960; and *Pyunghwa*, 19 January 1960, "World and Korean news roundup."

self-esteem and cultures as oversea-stationed American service-men.” Therefore, they “fear[ed] that the incident might be a fine propaganda datum to the communists who always try to alienate Koreans’ feeling from that of Americans.”<sup>84</sup> A *Seoul* editorial concurred that this kind of incident “fundamentally [shook] the achievements the United States had built in the free Asian nations in the common fight against communists.” To remedy this “misperception” that could fuel anti-American propaganda, the editorials urged the conclusion of an ROK-US administrative agreement. By doing so, as a *Pyunghwa* editorial on January 19<sup>th</sup> asserted, based on “the American servicemen’s new notion of Koreans and Korean sovereignty...the sincere friendship between ROK and US could be established.” Feeling deeply indebted to Americans, Koreans could not call their benefactors “den of murders” or “den of rapists” as Americans had referred to Korea as “a den of thieves,”<sup>85</sup> but they could evoke America’s “honor” and challenge them to live up to their espoused democratic image.

The ostracized women of camptowns briefly became a cause through which Koreans protested what they considered an outdated and unequal relationship and began to assert a more independent sovereignty vis-à-vis their “big brother” in the postwar period.<sup>86</sup> The editorials clearly demonstrated an awareness of disparity in American treatment of Koreans compared with other nations, which in turn signaled lack of American respect for Korean sovereignty.<sup>87</sup> Thus, for the participants of this public discourse, this national affront could be remedied, in part, with the signing of a more equitable bilateral agreement. But 1960 Korea lacked the power to realize the renegotiation.<sup>88</sup> Although in many ways “a tempest in a teapot,” the dispute surrounding this particular incident nonetheless indicated attempts at redefining Korea’s sovereignty and modernity, which were conditioned by the contradictions of foreign dependency. And in this political renegotiation between the two nations, the “personal” sexual-economy of the camptown women in the borderlands proved central, as Cynthia Enloe puts forward in her “personal is political” argument.<sup>89</sup> At the same time, although the New Year incident became a cause through which Koreans rallied to redefine Korea’s

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<sup>84</sup> “We Again Urge the Conclusion of ROK-U.S. Administrative Agreement,” *Chosun and Hanguk*, 7 January 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>85</sup> Sang-Dawn Lee, *Big Brother, Little Brother*, 8-9.

<sup>86</sup> The editorials contended that when the Daejon Agreement was signed, “our government had no time to think of national prestige or any restriction of sovereignty,” and thus should be replaced because “circumstances have completely changed in these days, ten years after that.” *Chosun and Hanguk*, 7 January 1960, “World and Korean news roundup.”

<sup>87</sup> Editorials in *Chosun and Hanguk* claimed that “such an agreement as U.S. has presently with NATO countries including Turkey, which stipulates all the crimes committed by U.S. servicemen, with the exception of violation of military orders, are to be subject to the criminal jurisdiction of the host country, could be applied to Korea, at least at the same level agreement as U.S. has with Japan should be concluded to Korea.”

<sup>88</sup> Editorials, frustrated by yet another cosmetic solution to the problem, expressed their outrage. An editorial in *Chosun* on January 13<sup>th</sup> declared, “We were thunder struck at the lukewarm measures taken by the authorities of both ROK and US about the incident.” And most of all, it criticized their own government. The same editorial castigated, “With this, we were again astonished at our government’s inefficiency that they showed.” Despite the fervor surrounding this incident, it, too, faded from the pages of the newspapers after the “gestures” of apology and acceptance took place.

<sup>89</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 195-7.

position vis-à-vis the United States, greater Korea's relation with camptowns was conflicted.

*Chosun* carried two juxtaposing editorial cartoons relating to camptowns on the same day. In contrast to the “Peculiar Disease” (Figure 17) caricature that opened this section, which clearly criticized the American logic of shaving heads to decrease “malignant disease,” the second caricature was more condemning of the women. “Truck Full of PX Articles Stolen” depicts a woman looking out of a window with an enlarged hand, with sharp claw-like nails, stretched outward with a small PX truck on her palm (Figure 19). Her mouth is wide open as if she is going to swallow the truck. The caption reads, “They must have considered this warehouse of pilfered properties a high-class restaurant.” Unlike the depiction of the head-shaven women as “victims” of American “lynching,” the latter cartoon criticized camptown women as voracious consumers of American goods and as central instruments in the organized black market. Another editorial cartoon, “Latest Gossip on the Heads Shaven Incident” (Figure 18), which shows a bald-headed woman in a traditional Korean dress in contrast to the ubiquitous association of camptown women with Western clothing, ultimately suggests a wishful projection of “tradition.” As the caption reads, “Wishing that the hair as well as the Korean-US friendship will return to the previous state,” it imagines a return to the past on multiple levels, including a re-masculinized Korea and its non-threatening, modest women. The themes expressed in these political cartoons – camptown women as both victims and devouring consumers, camptowns as both indispensable and problematic economic sites, and nostalgically imagining a stronger and thus more “masculine” national past and future – reverberated in other contemporary cultural mediums. Everyday encounters as well as contestations of these cultural landscapes “contaminated” Korea's postwar national imaginary.

### **Camptowns, American Goods, and “Free Women” in the National Imaginary**

To explore further the contemporary discourse, I turn to the popular visual medium of film from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, considered Korea's “Golden Age” of cinema, and in particular, three canonical films: *Madame Freedom* (*Jayubuim*, Han Hyeong-Mo 1956), *Hell Flower* (*Jiokhwa*, Sin Sang-Ok 1958), and *The Stray Bullet* (*Obaltan*, Yu Hyeon-Mok 1961). Golden Age films captured South Korea's postwar reality as a divided nation engaged in modernizing while dependent on a foreign power. As film scholars have highlighted, the juxtaposition of the “walking wounded” of the war against the modern cityscape of new consumerism – an “odd pastiche of a real and symbolic economy of American goods, language, money, and influence, all of which saturated the South Korean landscape” – constituted a resonant theme.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, amidst the depictions of the breathless chaos of a modern urban life was the essential component of capturing the nation at a crossroads in gendered and sexualized terms. The broken family/nation of the postwar Korea was explicitly represented through men's damaged and women's sexualized bodies, from which, ultimately, a remasculinized

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<sup>90</sup>Nancy Abelmann and Kathleen McHugh, “Introduction: Gender, Genre, and Nation,” in *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema*, eds. Kathleen McHugh and Nancy Abelmann (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 5.

national imaginary emerged.<sup>91</sup> The American presence and the shadow of the periphery – the camptown landscapes – also loomed large in these films. Camptowns, American goods, and “free women” represented the idealized and seductive American modernity as well as its darkness – unbridled consumption, threatening women’s sexual freedom, the emasculation and corruption of men, and the destruction of Korea’s nostalgically constructed patriarchal family. In increasing sophistication, these films situated the symbolic and material sites of the indispensable edge – American goods and “free women” of the camptowns – significantly in the postwar national imaginary.

From the introduction of film in Korea at the turn of the century to 1945, movies, especially from Hollywood, became a regular feature of the colonial city life.<sup>92</sup> Hollywood films, beyond the boundary of art, “became a ‘reference of fashions’ and a ‘map of customs’ by their influence over ‘cultural life in general,’” during the period of colonial modernity.<sup>93</sup> The heavy American cultural influence in Korea’s film industry continued from 1945 to the end of the Korean War on both the textual and the industrial levels. American films went wherever the US military headed at that time, as a popular propaganda medium of American culture. And large Korean crowds gathered in cinemas – the only recreational institution available during wartime for the general population.<sup>94</sup> As far as the textual – the popular content and film as an art form – Hollywood productions, especially melodramas, westerns, and comedies, overshadowed any indigenous outputs. Even at the industrial level, the US played an instrumental role in the development of Korean film as a business. During the American military occupation and the war, Korean film crews gained advanced film technology from producing newsreels for the US Army 502<sup>nd</sup> military unit.<sup>95</sup> And after the war, the Korean film industry began to flourish.<sup>96</sup> Until the full impact of the Motion Picture Law of 1962 and the increased censorship under the autocratic rule of Park Jung Hee took effect, the period of 1955 to the late 1960s is considered the Golden Age of Korean cinema.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Junghyun Hwang, “Specters of the Cold War in America’s Century: The Korean War and Transnational Politics of National Imaginaries in the 1950s” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2008), 135-180.

<sup>92</sup> Approximately 95 percent of the movies imported in the 1920s were American, and even in the 1930s, when the Japanese and Korean film industry achieved some development, American movies continued to dominate 60 to 70 percent of the movie market in Korea.

<sup>93</sup> Yoo, Sun-young, “Embodiment of American modernity in colonial Korea,” trans. Francis D. H. LEE, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (2001): 429-30.

<sup>94</sup> In 1946, a collaborative body of US film companies, the US Department of the Army, and the State Department organized the Central Motion Picture Exchange, which took charge of film distribution in Japan and Korea. The CMPE distributed 45 films in Korea in 1948, which was double the number of Korean films produced the same year. During the war, a total of 170 foreign films were imported and American films occupied over 50 percent of the imported foreign film market. The Korean Film Archive (KOFA), *Traces of Korean Cinema from 1945 to 1959* (Seoul: Munhak sasangsa, 2003), 19, 187, 196.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-3.

<sup>96</sup> In 1954, the Korean government redirected investment into the Korean film industry with the initiation of the admission tax exemption on Korean films. And the popular successes of *Chunhyang Story* (*Chunhyang-jeon*) in 1955 and *Madame Freedom* in 1956 demonstrated the great commercial potential of Korean films. These postwar developments launched the Korean film industry. Production grew rapidly from 15 films made in 1955 to 108 in 1959; the average number of films produced per year in the 1960s was 150.

<sup>97</sup> The films of the Golden Age constituted “a body of work as historically, aesthetically, and politically significant as that of other well-known national film movements such as Italian Neorealism, French New Wave, and New German Cinema,” according to Abelmann and McHugh. Abelmann and McHugh,

Although *The Stray Bullet*, critically hailed as *the* best Korean film of all times, presents perhaps the bleakest, most realistic social portrait of the period, it was the box office hit *Madame Freedom* that captured the popular imagination of immediate postwar Korea.<sup>98</sup> Based on a novel of the same name by Jeong Bi-Seok, serialized over eight months from 1953 in a newspaper (*Seoul*), the film was released in 1956. *Madame Freedom* features Seon-Yeong, introduced as a professor's wife and a mother, who ventures into the public space by becoming a salesperson in a Western goods store, "Paris." This exposure to spectacles of modernity, from Western luxury goods to dance halls and cafes to "free" love, leads her to an extramarital affair. Scrutinized and punished, Seon-Yeong eventually pleads on her knees to her husband and son to allow her to return to her "traditional" sphere and roles. Whether the "Madame Freedom" will be banished or reintegrated into the patriarchal family is left uncertain at the film's end. Madame Choe, another "modern" woman in the film, is dealt a far more harsh castigation for her dalliance, however. Madame Choe commits suicide when faced with ruinous financial ventures into the Western goods business. Seon-Yeong and Madame Choe are the middle-class representatives of the new "free women." What crucially distinguishes Seon-Yeong of *Madame Freedom* from the other "free women" in subsequent films are class and place. Despite the central symbolism of Western goods in the film, explicitly absent from *Madame Freedom* are camptowns and their inhabitants. In order to provide for the appetite of the "respectable" middle class, the goods sold in shops like "Paris" must first be "taken" from the American military camp. As discussed in the preceding section, the lower class women of these peripheral-edges facilitated this dispersion of ready-made American modernity as the essential intermediary between the US camps and Korea's thriving black market.

American goods and women's relations to them intersected with the "free women's" sexual freedom to denote and problematize postwar modernity. After the devastations of the war and the breakup of the family (1.4 million people separated from their families and 300,000 war widows in 1952), women's economic responsibilities increased and in turn, women entered the public sphere in large numbers for work and for social life. Women took up 38 percent of the workforce in 1950 and sexually assertive socialites or "free women" (*jayubuin*) became vogue in the fifties.<sup>99</sup> The "free women" of these films mark their transition to "modern" by shedding Korean *hanboks* for Western clothes, enthusiastically partaking in the imported culture of Western dancing, sprinkling their conversations with English, or even taking on a casual lover. The imagined America as well as its material consumer culture was equated to modernity in Korea from the colonial into the postwar period.<sup>100</sup> Modernity through female consumption, however, was criticized in these films, as depicted in *Madame Freedom*.

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"Introduction: Gender, Genre, and Nation," 2-3.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>99</sup> Hwang, "Specters of the Cold War," 146.

<sup>100</sup> In colonial Korea, according to Yoo Sun-young, "in the imaginary / fantastic dimension, America was conceived as the richest nation in the world as well as a gentleman-like brotherly nation that had no intention to occupy, but rather help weak countries to achieve independence, as the most powerful nation in the capitalist world, as the birthplace of Modernism." Yoo, "Embodiment of American modernity in colonial Korea," 427. Especially in post-1945, "American goods were the revolutionary missionaries for the American way of life; it transformed cultural matrix of other societies by penetrating the everyday life." Peter J. Taylor, *Modernities: A Geohistorical Interpretation* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 111

Beyond the silver screen, women's magazines emerging in the 1950s, such as *Yeosungue* (1952), *Yeowon* (1955), and *Yeosungsanghwal* (1959), also depicted the material and cultural consumption by women to symbolize and critique modernity. The popular novels serialized in these women's magazines, according to Kang So-Yeon, juxtaposed two types of "modern" women; one type engaged in superficial emulation of American modernity, only eager to follow the appearances of American actresses, while the other were "women of virtue and cultivation combined with advanced awareness of America." An explicit separation of the virtuous from the garish, for instance, was conveyed in *Yeowon's* New York-fashion analysis. While highlighting the fad of short skirts and bathing suits, the editors cautioned that the fashion trends of the lower class, such as the *yanggongju's* ("Western Princess," referring to camptown women) colorful makeup, should not become a "spreading development" (*bunjineun hyunsang*). The mostly male editors and publishers of the 1950s women's magazines promoted cultural admiration of America, but they also criticized indiscriminate imitation of anything American and emphasized conservative morals in the women.<sup>101</sup> The clear separation and the fear of "contamination" expressed in the magazines as well as the "absence" of the other "free women," despite their indispensable presence, was implicitly captured in *Hell Flower*.

If *Madame Freedom's* postwar cityscape is of boutiques, cafes, and dance halls, the landscape of *Hell Flower* is that of seductive American military camps and their lawless camptowns. The melodramatic plot of the film unfolds mostly in a US military camptown, Bupyeong, filmed near the Army Supply Command (ASCOM) Headquarter in the city of Incheon, located west of Seoul. The camptown in Bupyeong was the first *gijicheon* established in the post-liberation and American Military Government years of 1945-1948. The two central scenes in *Hell Flower* involve the acquisition of American goods. In contrast to the "successful" first robbery, the scene described at the beginning of this chapter, the climactic train heist sequence culminates in a catastrophic vortex of gunfire. As the train full of American supplies runs toward the military camps near the DMZ, a group of camptown men attempt to detach a cargo train. Their plan is foiled by the betrayal to the authorities by "Sonya," a camptown prostitute and a quintessential "free woman." Sonya is punished and killed by her Korean lover, who had masterminded the train heist. Access to these goods determined the power hierarchy among the inhabitants of the military camps and camptowns. The success of the first and the failure of the second robbery hinged on women's cooperation, who had freer access to the inside of the fence and could seduce and ultimately co-opt the Americans into the scheme. The emasculated Korean men attempted to forcefully upset this gendered and sexualized dynamic by bypassing the mediator (the women) and subverting the dominant source (Americans).

The Golden Age films persistently grappled with this particularly glaring contradiction of modernity – the incompetent and dependent men and the sexually "liberated" and economically autonomous women. The vital economic role performed by these "free women" for camptowns and beyond created impossible contradictions for a nation that could neither deny their existence nor embrace them. Film scholar Jinsoo An

<sup>101</sup> Kang, So-Yeon, "1950-yondae Yosong Chapchi e Pyonsangdwen Miguk Munhwa wa Yonsung tamnon" ["The Represented American Culture and Female Discussion in 1950's Women's Magazines *Sangho*], *Hakpo* 18 (October 2006): 135,115, 119-20.

posits that “By amalgamating and critiquing the sexual power and economic autonomy of women, these films echo the contemporaneous view that perceived women’s labor outside the domestic sphere as the cause of the moral breakdown of home and society.”<sup>102</sup> Ultimately, these films envisioned and professed, to a various degrees, a remasculinist imagining of postwar Korea. Whether portrayed as dangerous seductress or as tragic victims, or even as middle-class woman temporarily seduced by the modern consumption, these “free women’s” binary option was either to be completely disposed of, as in the case of Sonya and Madame Choe, or to be disciplined and refolded into the patriarchy, as in the case of Seon-Yeong.

*The Stray Bullet* has been critically hailed as *the* canonical film of Korea and acclaimed for its postwar realist social criticism.<sup>103</sup> Based on Yi Beom-Seon’s 1959 short story, “Obaltan,” the film is an allegory of postwar Korea presented through a disconsolate family from the North living in a war refugee shantytown, “Liberation Village” (*Haebangcheon*), near Yongsan Garrison in Seoul.<sup>104</sup> In contrast to *Madame Freedom*, in which camptowns and its inhabitants are explicitly absent, despite the centrality of American goods to the narrative, and also differing from *Hell Flower*, where the threatening aspects of modernity are contained in supposedly isolated “hell” that is camptown, in *Stray Bullet*, the symbolic and material camptowns have “contaminated” the everyday cityscape and “infiltrated” the family. For one, when Cheol-Ho, the protagonist, looks out of the bus window and spots his younger sister, Myeong-Sook, sitting next to an American soldier in a jeep in the bustling heart of Seoul, he turns away so that he cannot see. Cheol-Ho chooses to deal with his demasculinized position by averting his gaze from the familial and national shame. Similarly, all that Myeong-Sook’s former fiancé can do is to despondently limp away when he encounters Myeong-Sook soliciting an American soldier in front of the Chosen Hotel, a place exclusively reserved for US military personnel at the time in downtown Seoul. Evidence of camptowns – American goods, “free women,” and American GIs – did not stay within the peripheral edges, but rather filled the postwar space, from the heart of the capital city to the home. Finally, although Cheol-Ho first refuses the “tainted” money his sister earned from American soldiers, he eventually accepts and spends the money on having his rotten teeth – symbolizing the “sick” society – taken out.<sup>105</sup> In order to alleviate some of the pain of the postwar Korean home/society, Cheol-Ho, the head of the household/nation, reluctantly but ultimately takes the “tainted” money earned from the prostitution of his sister/the nation’s women to foreign soldiers. With this “realistic” resolution to the film,

<sup>102</sup> Jinsoo An, “Screening the Redemption: Christianity in Korean Melodrama,” in *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema*, eds. Kathleen McHugh and Nancy Abelmann (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 82.

<sup>103</sup> Both the Motion Picture Promotion Corporation’s 1995 list of the “10 Best Korean Films” and the 1998 *Chosun Daily* poll of the “50 Best Korean Films” confirm the number one status of *The Stray Bullet*. Yu’s critical depiction was made possible because the film was produced during the short-lived democratic Second Republic following the Spring Student Uprising on April 19, 1960. The film was later banned by the Park Chung Hee government.

<sup>104</sup> “Liberation Village” was a refugee camp set up immediately after the war in Itaewon, which consisted of makeshift shacks made from scraps from the Yongsan Garrison as well as tent villages. In contrast, tall apartment buildings and multi-story mansions housed UN families, ambassadors, and embassy employees from 1956. Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space,” 31.

<sup>105</sup> Hyangjin Lee, *Contemporary Korean cinema: Identity, Culture, Politics* (Manchester University Press, 2000), 121.

*Stray Bullet* complicates the gender binary of either condemning or reintegrating the women into a wishful masculine imaginary, as suggested in both *Madame Freedom* and *Hell Flower*.

These visual texts briefly discussed here are but a glimpse into both the complexities and the prevalence of the camptowns in the postwar national imaginary. Although camptowns and their inhabitants have occupied an ambivalent place in Korea's postwar history, these canonical films of the time suggest their significance. Beyond the popular cultural sites, such as silver screens or popular novels and magazines, the clashes of camptowns also garnered impassioned discussions in the pages of daily newspapers and the political and military meeting rooms. Both the symbolic and material significance of camptowns, therefore, was not lost to Koreans engaged in this public discourse. Camptowns, "free women," and American goods "contaminated" Korea's postwar national imaginary. This dichotomy of camptowns – as places of "dispensable" intercourse and violent clashes as well as "indispensable" source of foreign currency and consumable American modern, situated somewhere between "Hell" and "Flower" – could neither be ignored nor celebrated. Camptowns constituted an edge of postwar Korea, where the "unstable negotiation of identity and power" took place among Koreans and between the Self and the Other.<sup>106</sup>

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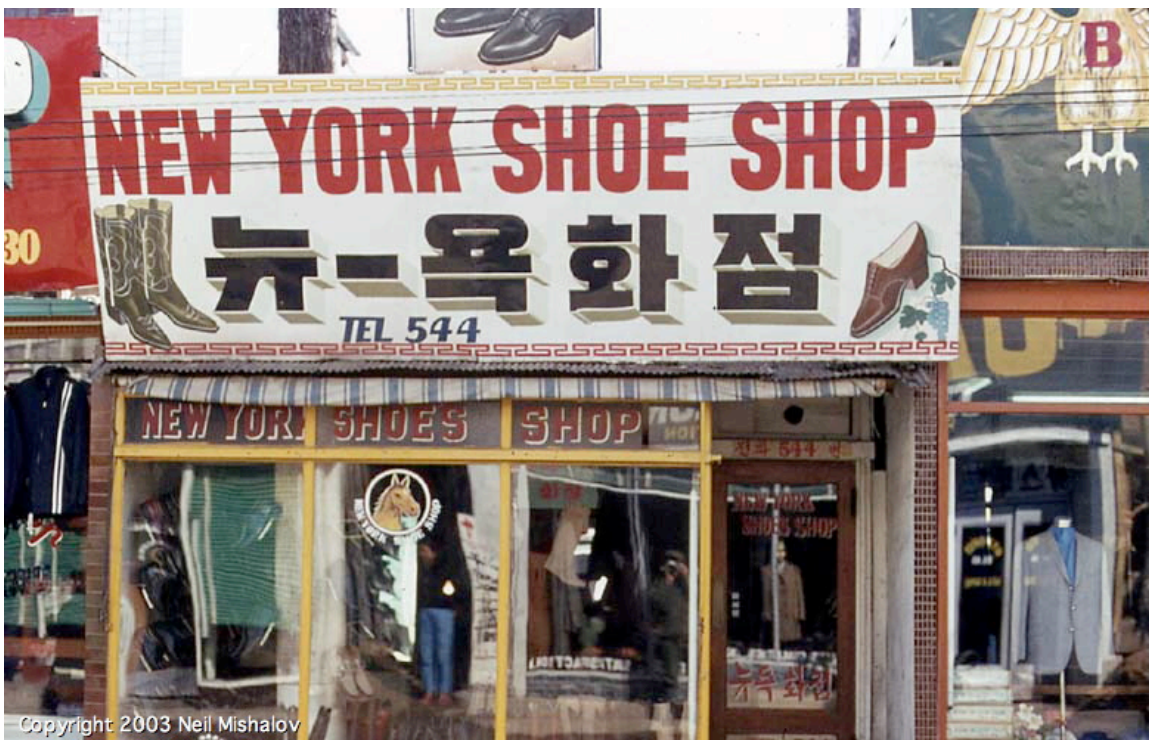
<sup>106</sup> Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (London: Routledge, 1996), xi.



Figure 14. Camptown Scenes: Osan City, 1968



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Figure 15. Camptown Signs: Seoksu Village, 1968  
Adjacent to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinance Battalion, near Anyang City.



Gateway Club



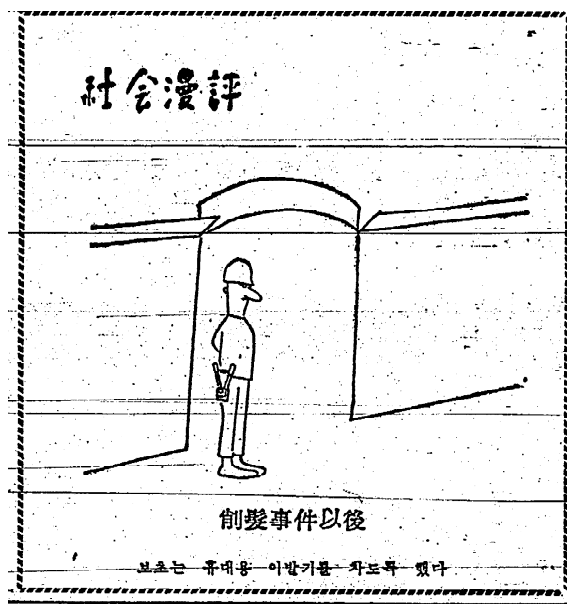
The large white sign on the right advertises motel and whisky, while the vertical sign on the left, with the women entering the building, indicates a clinic for venereal disease.



“Information Posted Weekly” in Seoksu Village includes photo-identification of “girls sick” as well as a guide to the codes – “H for Healthy, M for Menstruate, and WBC for VD” – written on “her pass.”

Permission has been obtained. Photographs by Neil Mishalov – [www.mishalov.com](http://www.mishalov.com)

Figure 16. After the Hair-shaving Incident



“After the hair-shaving incident, guards are to be equipped with portable clippers.”  
*Donga Ilbo*, 8 January 1960.

Figure 17. Peculiar Disease



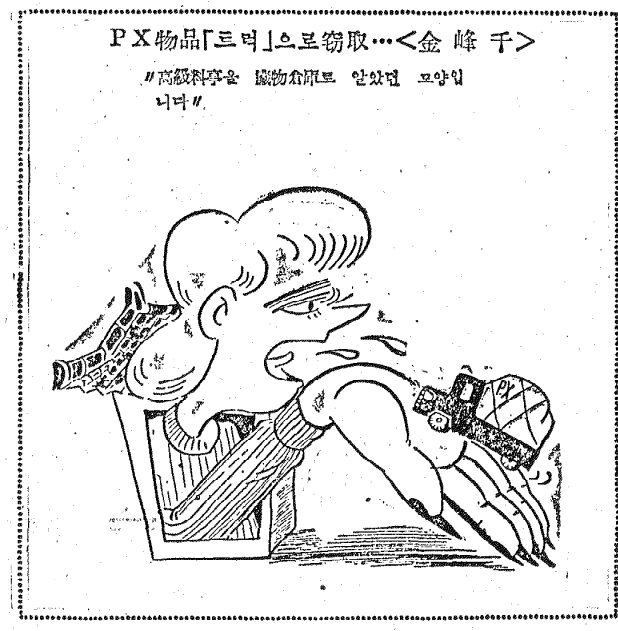
“Since it is said that a malignant disease can be prevented by a forced head-shaving in some countries, it is strange that this damned habit of gluttony and high blood pressure are still incurable, even though I am bald-headed. *Chosun Ilbo*, 9 January 1960.

Figure 18. Latest Gossip on the Women's Head Shaven Incident



“Wishing that the hair as well as the Korean-U.S. friendship will return to the previous state.” *Hanguk Ilbo*, 14 January 1960.

Figure 19. Truck Full of PX Articles Stolen



“They must have considered this warehouse of pilfered properties a high-class restaurant.” *Chosun Ilbo*, 9 January 1960.

## V. “Homecoming” Amerasian Migration from Korea to America, 1970s-1980s

Kim Insoon, better known today as Korea’s popular singer Insooni, held a concert in New York’s Carnegie Hall in February of 2010. She commemorated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War by inviting to the performance 100 Korean War veterans as well as United Nations ambassadors representing the sixteen nations that participated in the war. The Korean news coverage of this event focused on Insooni’s statement: “I have never met my father. I call all Korean War veterans my father. If there are any war vets out there who’ve felt guilty all their lives about children they might have left behind, I want to tell them they can lay down that burden now.” In an editorial in *Donga Ilbo*, a novelist described how Insooni, “the child of an African-American soldier and Korean mother,” represents the “scars” of the Korean War and her words “were a sad confession about her own life and a gesture of forgiveness and reconciliation to the father she’s never met.”<sup>1</sup> Although the editorial portrayed Insooni as a child of the Korean War, she was born in 1957 in North Gyeonggi’s Pochun, north of Uijeongbu and south of the DMZ. The editorial speculated that “Insooni’s own father may have died in battle in Korea, or he may still be living somewhere in the United States,” yet her father knew of Insooni’s existence and exchanged letters with her until she turned 14 years old. Her father was most likely not a Korean War veteran, as implied by the news reports, but rather served in Korea after the armistice in 1953. And the fact that she was born in Pochun near American military camps suggests that she was likely a progeny of a camptown union. These inconvenient truths, however, are overshadowed by the more emotional and sympathetic portrayal of her as a Korean War baby, and her father as a heroic war veteran. In this fabrication, “sins” of the past are absolved; the exigency of war forgives both the American father who abandoned his child and the Korean mother who gave birth to a mixed-race illegitimate child.

The militarized landscapes of camps-camptowns at the “edges” of America’s cold war and Korea’s society also created the “issue” of mixed-race progeny. During the 1970s and 1980s, individuals like Insooni not only occupied a symbolic position in the national memory of the Korean War, but also embodied unwelcome reminders of the postwar camp-camptown landscapes. And in the process of addressing the unintended consequences of the intimate cold war, largely by facilitating the exodus of these “products” of camptown intimacies from their “motherland” to their “fatherland,” “Amerasians” would be positioned as a conciliatory “link” that further entwined the two nations. The migration of “GI Babies” from Korea to the US illustrates the multi-directional migration of institutions and peoples that took place during the cold war.

For Korea, Amerasians posed dilemmas of citizenship, race, migration, and national imaginary. Although Korea conferred *de jure* citizenship upon Amerasians, they lived a marginalized existence in their birth countries. The discrimination experienced by multiracial Koreans – referred to as *Honhyeola*, literally “mixed blood child” or the

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<sup>1</sup> “Insooni, Concert at Carnegie Hall...Deep Emotion,” *Hankyoreh*, 7 February 2010; Han Seung-won, “Insooni and Her Father,” *Donga Ilbo*, 6 February 2010; “Insooni’s New York ‘Love Song for My Father,’” *Chosun* 8 February 2010.

derogatory term *Panjang* meaning “half breed” – relegated many of them into a life in camptowns. Amerasians made up a tiny percentage of the population and if not for the spotlight shown on them by foreign organizations, their social welfare would have been an even lower priority for the ROK government. The Park regime considered the mixed-race population an American responsibility and saw the emigration of these “GI babies” to the US as the only true solution to the “problem.” The existence of racially mixed Koreans also challenged the identity of a nation-state that defined itself as racially and ethnically homogeneous, a *danil minjok*. Besides contradicting this popular rhetoric of homogeneity, moreover, the marginalization of Amerasians also stemmed from their challenge to Korea’s national imaginary. These “GI babies,” as “products” of the American military presence in Korea, reminded Korea of the painful war and the shameful postwar evidence of camptowns’ sexual service.

In the United States, Americans also situated Amerasians within multiple contexts of immigration reform, legacy of its cold war policy, and the nation’s international “prestige.” With the Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982 and the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987, the US government formally joined the effort to facilitate immigration of Amerasians from Asia to their “fatherland.” Reflecting the anti-immigrant sentiments of the early 1980s, however, Americans did not welcome this “homecoming” with open arms. Fearing a “floodgate” of illegal immigrants, the initial legislation set up such stringent conditions of eligibility and financial sponsorship that the bill essentially proved ineffective in easing Amerasian immigration. Moreover, legislators also discussed Amerasians as byproducts of America’s cold war in Asia and the proponents of the bills warned that a failure to act would undermine America’s prestige in the international community. The two Amerasian legislations during the last decade of the cold war forced the nation to address the unintended consequences of American foreign policy, and the passing of these two acts allowed for the reassertion of America’s imaginary as an exceptional nation of immigrants.

Amerasians certainly did not constitute the first “mixed group” for either Korea or the United States. Terms such as *mulattos*, *mestizo/as*, and *hapas* evoke a long history of racial-mixing among Americans. Even in “homogenous” Korea, centuries of foreign invasions from China, Mongolia, and Japan resulted in generations of “mixings.” What was “entirely new” about Amerasians was that this “mixedness” was particular to its place and time; the term, “Amerasians,” denotes persons born to American and Asian parents in the Asia-Pacific region after the Second World War. It was popularly assumed that American military personnel fathered a majority of Amerasians, a generalization that coincided with the reality that the largest numbers of Amerasians were born in nations with an American military presence, such as Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and the Philippines.<sup>2</sup> American troops abroad therefore not only fought wars on the “frontline,” but they also inadvertently created a migratory pathway for those with whom they shared the militarized landscapes of camps and camptowns. Amerasians, from their ambiguous statelessness and marginalization in the “periphery,” would instigate legislative changes at the “core,” in the United States, and subsequently influence migration patterns of the 1980s. Amerasians, thus, not only embodied this mixing particular to American

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Lee, “Mixed Race Peoples in the Korean National Imaginary and Family,” *Korean Studies* 32 (2008): 81.



militarism in Asia, but they also eventually reinforced what Ann Laura Stoler calls the “tense and tender ties”<sup>3</sup> between the US and its cold war allies and enemies in Asia.

### “Confucius’ Outcasts” – *Time* (1965)<sup>4</sup>: The Background

In a December 1968 *New York Times* article, Nobel laureate Pearl S. Buck spoke of her ongoing efforts “to spark interest in the children,” whom she called “Amerasians.” They’re very bitter toward us,” she expressed, “but that is understandable; they are literally stateless persons with no rights whatsoever.”<sup>5</sup> Through a series of advertisements featured in the *New York Times* from 1967 to 1973, Buck claimed that these stateless Amerasians constituted “An Entirely New Group of Human Beings” – the progeny of American servicemen and Asian mothers in the seven Asian countries in which the troops of the United States have been stationed.<sup>6</sup> These ads explained that the Asian tradition of the child legally belonging to the father left Amerasians in a “‘no man’s land’... a citizen of no country... with no rights of any kind.”<sup>7</sup> Buck entreated that “responsible Americans who know something *must* be done for the child of our sons” help Amerasians realize “that his father’s people have not forgotten him!”<sup>8</sup> Buck created the Pearl S. Buck Foundation in 1964, which provided food, clothing, medical care, and educational support for Amerasians.<sup>9</sup> With this assistance, moreover, the Foundation hoped that these children would “grow to become the living examples of the common bond that can exist between East and West.”<sup>10</sup> Along with these soliciting ads, Buck also engaged in lecture tours and wrote children’s books and novels to expose the plight of Amerasians to the American consciousness as well as to promulgate her hopeful message of East and West integration.

Pearl Buck also took to the pages of her fictional works to elaborate the Amerasian issue. In an illustrated children’s book, *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* (1966), as well as a novel, *The New Year* (1968), Buck described the Amerasian “plight” and advocated that Americans welcome them “home.” Abandoned by his mother, Matthew, the protagonist of the children’s book, lives under a bridge in a cave. Mark, another boy who joins Matthew, begs and shines shoes for survival. Two other homeless boys, Luke and John, follow to forge a brotherhood. They are all “one of Those.” The four boys go to the gate of an American military camp one day, where they see a crowd

<sup>3</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 24.

<sup>4</sup> “Confucius’ Outcasts,” *Time*, 10 December 1965, 43.

<sup>5</sup> “Pearl Buck at 76: More Books to Write, More Children to Help,” *New York Times*, 7 December 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Display Ad 110, *New York Times*, June 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Display Ad 407, *New York Times*, 22 September 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Display Ads 110 and 407.

<sup>9</sup> Born Pearl Comfort Sydensticker on June 26, 1892 to Presbyterian missionary parents, Pearl Buck spent the first forty years of her life in China. Buck became famous for her sympathetic portrayals of Asia and Asians in her popular novels. After permanently returning to the United States in 1934, Buck established several organizations including, East and West Association (1942) “to promote cultural exchange and understanding between Asia and the West”; Welcome House (1948), the first international and inter-racial adoption agency; and Pearl S. Buck Foundation (1964), which continues to provide sponsorship for children in Asian countries. Pearl S. Buck International, <http://www.pearl-s-buck.org>

<sup>10</sup> Display Ad, *New York Times*, 25 May 1969.

of children going into the garrison. They are swept in with the rest of the children to what turns out to be a Christmas party hosted by GIs for a local orphanage. Besides gifts of clothes and abundant food, the four boys meet Sam, a GI who eventually adopts Matthew. Sam puts Mark, Luke, and John in the care of his company before a jet plane carries Matthew and Sam over the Pacific. "So Matthew was home at last," yet he did not forget about the three boys left behind in Korea and wished that they, too, could find fathers and mothers like he had. Matthew shares his concern with his parents, who then invite their neighbors on Christmas day and Matthew shares with them about the world which he had left behind. "The people listened, smiling, even laughing" to Matthew's stories, "but at the end they were not laughing. Some of them were wiping tears from their eyes." With the promise that by next Christmas the remaining three boys would be adopted by their neighbors, Matthew sings, "Joy to the world."<sup>11</sup> From a life of abandonment and destitution, Matthew is rescued into a home with compassionate parents. Matthew, furthermore, clearly acts as the bridge that facilitates the transfer of information to Americans of the Amerasian plight and their subsequent migration.

*The New Year* tells a story of Chris, who as a married young soldier in Korea met Soonya and had with her a son, Christopher. Upon his return to the States, Chris resumed his life with his wife, Laura, while abandoning Soonya and Christopher. A letter from Christopher arrives one day, making it impossible for Chris to ignore the past or to conceal it from Laura. Laura embarks on a journey to Korea, where she finds her husband's son, convinces the child's mother to relinquish Christopher, and brings him back to Pennsylvania. As in the earlier story, the racially mixed children are depicted as living in extreme poverty. While searching for Christopher, Laura encounters many "half-breeds" and "half-American" kids "scrabbling in the brown dust and pushing each other like dogs about a bone" in search of coins tossed to them. Unlike the children in the earlier story, however, Amerasians in *The New Year* are also persecuted. Her Korean interpreter tells Laura that "mysteriously many of these children fathered by your men disappeared." The guide also intimates that "some of the male children were castrated. Not only here but also in Japan." He explains that Koreans, "an ancient people, and very proud" took such extreme measures to protect their homogeneity. Both Laura and the Korean interpreter agree that getting Christopher out of this country was "his only safety."<sup>12</sup> Through whispers of murders and rumors of castrations, Buck sensationalized the "plight" of Amerasians in order to convey with urgency of the issue.

In order for these "half-breeds" to exit Korea and be enfolded into America, all those involved – "all remarkable people: the man, the two women, the boy" – had roles to embrace. Buck advocated tying the East to West with the children as the "knot." Buck likened them to "bridging creatures," products of a "special alchemy" – beautiful hybrids embodying elements of the graceful, feminine East and the strong, masculine West.<sup>13</sup> Boys like Matthew and Christopher signified a "treasure" with a "mission to fulfill in the future." On the other hand, the role for the Asian woman, the natal mother, was to sacrifice her connections to the lover and the child. Soonya still worked at the "House of

<sup>11</sup> Pearl S. Buck, *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* (New York: John Day, 1966), 71, 77, 80.

<sup>12</sup> Pearl S. Buck, *The New Year* (New York: John Day, 1968), 115, 149.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-40.

Flowers,” dancing and singing for foreigners at the Walker Hill Hotel.<sup>14</sup> Soonya relinquishes her son to Laura and the only thing that she wants in return is money for a new start in life. “Soonya wants money,” Laura writes from Korea to Chris in the US, “but for a real reason. She wants to rid herself of the life she’s been living. She wants to live alone. She makes me feel guilty because I am your wife, in a position she would so much wish to have for herself. I believe she loves you.”<sup>15</sup> The magnanimous American wife “frees” her husband’s former mistress from a life of entertaining foreign men and gives her a new life by “purchasing” her son. This “transaction” evokes an all too familiar theme of doomed romance between a white man and Asian woman and the sacrifice made by the latter in the resolution of the story. *Madame Butterfly* (a 1904 opera by Giacomo Puccini); *South Pacific* (James Michener’s 1948 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel adapted in 1949 by Rodgers and Hammerstein into a Broadway musical, and then made into a film in 1958); and *Miss Saigon* (a 1989 musical loosely based on *Madame Butterfly*), similarly tell the tale of tragic romance involving an Asian woman abandoned by her American lover. The settings may have relocated from Japan to the South Pacific, and then Vietnam, but these Asian women like Soonya either disappeared or sacrificed for the redemption of the white protagonist.

If the multiracial child was to be the bridge to the future, and the Asian woman was to sacrifice her claims to her former lover and the child, the atonement of American sins came with acting responsibly and overcoming racism. Chris publicly hides Christopher’s existence by sending him off to a boarding school, as he is running for the governor of Pennsylvania. Chris’ redemption comes when he finally shares with the public the existence of his son on New Year’s Eve. Chris begins anew in the New Year with his acknowledgement. Like Matthew, Chris also educates the audience of the “situation”:

Our young men find what comfort they can, wherever they can. I neither blame nor defend them. I was one of them...I was one of those young men, but luckier than most, for what I found, though temporary, was not tawdry...From that brief union, which so often ends in tomorrow’s death, some times there comes a life. It is the life of a child. In those seven countries of Asia where our men are living, fighting, dying today, these children are being born...This—they are the new people, children of the future, born too soon, before the world is ready for them. No one is ready for them, no country, no man, no woman. They are born stateless.<sup>16</sup>

Christina Klein contends that Pearl Buck and other middlebrow cultural figures actively advocated American adoption of mixed-race children because these “hybrid” families “offered a way to imagine U.S.-Asia integration in terms of voluntary affiliation...rather

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<sup>14</sup> Walker Hill, named after the US General Walton Walker, who commanded UN forces during the Korean War, opened in 1963 by the Park government in hopes of attracting tourism and US troops stationed in Korea, and subsequently earn foreign currency. The hotel offered gambling and cabaret-like entertainment for those holding a foreign passport. Koreans were not allowed inside unless they came as guests of foreigners. “The \$5,000,000 Bingo Parlor,” *Time*, 19 April 1963, 46.

<sup>15</sup> Buck, *The New Year*, 156.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

than by biology.” American women in particular played the crucial role of maternal integrators and Buck (and other middlebrow writers like Michener in *Tales of the South Pacific*) endorsed “a feminine, maternal love over a masculine, erotic love as the basis of relations between Asians and Americans.”<sup>17</sup> It was Laura, the wife, who sought out her husband’s child from an extramarital affair to realize the new blended family. For Buck, the white mother to the nonwhite child – whether more figuratively through sponsorships or literally as adoptive parents – became the emblem of antiracist commitment and benign global power.<sup>18</sup>

Evangelical farmers from Oregon, Harry and Bertha Holt, also pioneered intercountry adoption in Korea. The Holts first became involved by sponsoring orphans for \$10 per month through World Vision before adopting eight Amerasian children in 1955. They then facilitated adoption by proxy for hundreds of others. By early 1956, 500 couples had requested information concerning adoption. On December 17, 1956, the Holts brought to America their first chartered plane full of 97 children. In their first year, the Holts facilitated 191 adoptions to the US and 287 children in 1957. They built an orphanage in the outskirts of Seoul with the help of the US Army in 1958, and facilitated the sending of a hundred children every two months that year.<sup>19</sup> Bertha Holt lamented that in 1960 they had to change their “method from proxy adoptions to processing through welfare,” which “brought much delay.” Despite this minor “setback,” adoptions increased year by year, and by their “fifteenth year, 1970, this number climbed to 1083, almost 100 a month.”<sup>20</sup> Bertha Holt was recognized as the “American Mother of the Year” in 1966. The Holt organization rapidly developed to dominate the field of international adoption from Korea and other non-Western countries, altogether facilitating over 100,000 intercountry adoptions. Their “success” stemmed in part from questionable practices – disregarding minimum standards for speedy procedures, overusing proxy adoption to make “mail order babies” possible, chartering whole flights filled with children, and accepting couples who had been rejected by other agencies – as well as an evangelical zeal to “rescue” the children.<sup>21</sup> Unlike Buck, who advocated

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<sup>17</sup> Welcome House, an adoption agency that Pearl Buck launched in 1949 revolutionized American adoption practices by placing children with parents of different racial backgrounds. Buck “proposed Welcome House as part of a solution to America’s foreign policy problems: in her view, the mixed-race children available or adoption were ‘key children’ who could facilitate relations between the U.S. and Asia and perhaps prevent further losses of Asian nations to communism.” Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 143-6, 167.

<sup>18</sup> Through sponsorships of Korea’s orphans and Amerasians, American women partook in the global cold war integration project. For instance, the Pacific Palisades Junior Women’s Club members were “foster mothers” to Ah Chin San in South Korea, and since “his adoption by the juniors five years ago, the war orphan has received regularly Christmas and birthday packages, holiday cards and letters, and annual adoption fees.” Such examples of individual or groups of women financially supporting a child in Asia were quite common in the post-World War II decades. “Gifts on Way to Orphan,” *Los Angeles Times*, 19 December 1965. Adoption affirmed “that Americans, despite their nation’s history and their own prejudices, were not irredeemably racist or imperialist,” according to Klein. Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 178, 190.

<sup>19</sup> Bertha Holt as told to Harry J. Albus, *Outstretched Arms: A Summary of Happenings Since “The Seed from the East”* (Oregon: Holt International Children’s Services, 1972), 256-60.

<sup>20</sup> Bertha Holt as told to D. Wisner & H. Albus, *The Seed from the East* (Oregon: Holt International Children’s Services, 1956), 263, 281.

<sup>21</sup> Tobias Hubinette, “Korean Adoption History,” in *Community 2004: Guide to Korea for overseas*

adoptions as a means of East-West integration and American anti-racist commitment, the Holts had an evangelical conviction to “save lives, to get these children into Christian homes,” and to assimilate and Americanize them as soon as possible.<sup>22</sup>

International adoption began as a humanitarian response to the war, especially for those children born to Korean women and fathered by American and European servicemen. Through individual permissions of adoption, military and diplomatic personnel, missionaries, and relief workers brought an unknown number of Korean children to Western countries during the chaotic war years.<sup>23</sup> Concerned with the complete absence of legal frameworks during these initial unregulated years, the South Korean government established the Child Placement Service immediately following the war in 1954. Although the Holt Adoption Agency came to dominate the field, other agencies such as the Seventh Day Adventists and the Catholic Relief Service preceded Holt in setting up placement services for overseas adoptions by 1956. Between 1953 and 1960, around 3,500 Korean children were sent for adoption abroad; children of mixed-race parentage made up more than 90 percent of those adopted from 1953 to 1956. Between 1958 and 1960, 1,588 more mixed-race children left Korea.<sup>24</sup> The Park Jung Hee military government passed the Orphan Adoption Special Law in 1961, Korea’s first modern adoption law, to facilitate international adoption as an alternative to costly institutional care.<sup>25</sup> From 1958 to 2005, South Korea sent 157,145 children abroad via adoption, of which 104,718 went to the United States.<sup>26</sup>

On the receiving end, the United States passed a series of legislative acts to allow Americans to adopt Asian children outside of the numerical national origins quotas set by the Immigration Act of 1924. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 lifted the racial ban on Asian immigration, made available a number of nonquota visas for orphans in 1953, and amendments made in 1957 authorized unlimited orphan visas.<sup>27</sup> And in 1961, the Immigration and Nationality Act incorporated, for the first time, provisions for the international adoption of foreign-born children. Between 1953 and 1963, Americans adopted 8,812 children from Asia, with the majority coming from South Korea. In turn, the adoption of these racially mixed progeny of American fathers and Korean mothers paved the way for systemization of intercountry adoption that created multiracial and transnational families in the US from the mid-1950s. Thus, the American servicemen served their role as GI of Integration, albeit unintentionally, by fathering Amerasians as well as adopting them; GIs also inadvertently advanced intercountry adoption that tied Asia and America into a “knot.”

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*adopted Koreans*, ed. Eleana Kim (Seoul: Overseas Korean Foundation, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Holt, *Outstretched Arms*, 283. For the Holts, these kids were “American” kids and therefore their assimilation into American ways was not questioned. “It is always somewhat of a shock to hear children who look American speak Korean. It just doesn’t seem right,” Harry wrote from Seoul in 1955 and reported that they were “trying to get them off the rice diet. I feel good when I see them eating crackers and warm milk before going to bed.” After their adoption the Holt children continued “to jabber Korean to each other,” which Bertha “fear[d] impedes their progress.” Holt, *Seeds from the East*, 145, 149, 218.

<sup>23</sup> Hubinette, “Korean Adoption History.”

<sup>24</sup> Overseas Korean Foundation (OKF), *2006 International Korean Adoptee Resource Book* (Seoul: Overseas Korean Foundation, 2006) 276, 615.

<sup>25</sup> Hubinette, “Korean Adoption History.”

<sup>26</sup> OKF, *2006 International Korean Adoptee Resource Book*, 612.

<sup>27</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 175.

**“Offspring of GIs, Korean Girls Bitter: NYT Reports,” *Korea Times* (1976)<sup>28</sup>:  
The “Problem”**

American and Korean progeny continued to be born in the 1960s, well after the war, and especially in camptown communities. Speculations on just how many Amerasians lived in Korea ranged from 100,000 in 1954<sup>29</sup> to 20,000 “half-caste children in Korea” in 1965 with 500 to 600 more born each year.<sup>30</sup> The Korean state did not keep an accurate record, but it estimates that the total born since the Korean War ranges between 20,000 and 60,000.<sup>31</sup> The majority of Amerasians lived in camptowns in Seoul and Gyeonggi provinces, regions with the highest concentration of camptowns. The cycles in the birthrates, not coincidentally, correlated with the number of foreign troops stationed in Korea as well as the development of camptowns. The peak years included the war and immediate postwar years of 1950 to 1955, followed by a drop in the birth rates between 1955 and 1958. The number of births climbed again from 1959, coinciding with the systemization of camptowns, and remained high throughout the decade of the camptown’s “heyday.” The years between 1968 and 1970 witnessed another peak period of births, paralleling the heavy rotation of troops and promotion of camptown as R&R destinations during the Vietnam War. The numbers declined after 1971 along with the overall troop reduction. The international adoption records for mixed-race progeny further confirmed this trend. While an estimated 2,270 children of mixed-race parentage were sent for adoption in the wartime and immediate postwar decade of the 1950s, 1,829 more left during the 1960s, indicating that the birthrate continued to be high during the heyday of camptowns. The number of international adoption for mixed-race children began to decline in the 1970s with 1,292, followed by 694 during the 1980s, and 84 between 1991 and 2003.<sup>32</sup>

The majority of postwar Amerasians lived in camptowns. A 1965 *Time* article relayed a story of a mixed-race woman born during the American occupation period, who by the age of 16 “was a full-fledged prostitute working among American soldiers who liked her slim Occidental legs.” She had published a bestselling autobiography, which the article claimed forced “Koreans to think about something they would rather forget—the problem of illegitimate half-castes. And the mixed-blood children remind many Koreans of the shame of widespread prostitution and of the subservient role Koreans have often had to play to the bigger and richer G.I.’s.”<sup>33</sup> The lack of accurate record keeping of Amerasians in Korea and the existence of Amerasians conjuring up shame for Koreans constituted a central discourse of the Amerasian issue in 1960s and 1970s Korea. Together, these problems indicated the official or legal invisibility of multiracial Koreans and their socio-economic marginalization. Moreover, they came to personify the literal and symbolic shame that challenged the Korean national imaginary.

The findings of three studies conducted by two private organizations and the ROK government indicated the legal invisibility of the population, educational and economic

<sup>28</sup> “Offspring of GIs, Korean Girls Bitter: NYT Reports,” *Korea Times*, 4 June 1976.

<sup>29</sup> “GIs’ Exodus Hits Orphans in Korea,” *Los Angeles Times*, 17 December 1954.

<sup>30</sup> “Confucius’ Outcasts,” *Time*, 1965.

<sup>31</sup> Lee, “Mixed Race Peoples in the Korean National Imaginary and Family,” 60.

<sup>32</sup> OKF, *2006 International Korean Adoptee Resource Book*, 615.

<sup>33</sup> “Confucius’ Outcasts,” *Time*, 1965.

disadvantages, and a sense of alienation from the larger Korean society. A majority of Amerasians surveyed also expressed their desire for emigration to the United States. The 1973 study sponsored by the Robert T. Wilson Foundation located 1,692 mixed-race residents. Of those counted, boys made up 56.2 and girls 43.8 percent, 29.6 percent with black fathers and 70.4 percent with white fathers. In general, they had received less education than other Korean children and 61.4 percent lived below Korean average standard of living. More than half of the children (or their parents or guardian) desired emigration, while only nine percent wished to live in Korea. The majority of them lived in Gyeonggi Province (808) and Seoul (449).<sup>34</sup> The 1974 study published by Reverend Moen, the then director of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation Opportunity Center for racially mixed children, reported similar statistical results as the 1973 survey. Of note was how those surveyed considered their relationship with other Koreans; 40 percent answered, “Koreans do not like us.” Moreover, while 40 percent indicated Korea as their “homeland,” 33 percent considered their father’s nation their homeland, and 15 percent felt that they had no homeland.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the ROK Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in October 1977 counted a total of 1,225 Amerasians, with a similar gender breakdown of 59.5 percent male and 43.5 percent female. A majority of them (72 percent) were below the age of 18. This gender and age breakdown suggested two related developments – that the majority of those born in the 1950s had left Korea, and that female children outnumbered males among those relinquished for adoption. The geographic distribution revealed that 53 percent of them resided around camptown communities in Seoul and Gyeonggi province and their livelihood was heavily dependent on US troops. Nearly 600 out of the 708 over the age of eight also expressed that they desired to go to the US. Despite these attempts at officially counting Amerasians living in Korea, various organizations continued to rely on estimates of the total population, which they put between 2,500 and 6,000 total during the 1970s.

The problem stemming from generations of US military and civilian personal siring out of wedlock children in Asian nations, which traditionally held patrilineal practices, translated into a legal absence from the family registry and in turn, official social illegitimacy. At the root of the family registry and legal illegitimacy problems was the common practice of Korean women and American servicemen of setting up temporary homes or “hooches” in the *yeobo* (“sweetheart”) arrangements. According to Reverend Moen’s study, the women who consented to rent a room together with a serviceman and live with him in a half legal marital status constituted the majority of the

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<sup>34</sup> The above figure did not include approximately 1,300 mixed race children of legally established marriages and who held US or foreign citizenship. If including these “legitimate” children, approximately 4,000 Amerasians lived in Korea in the early 1970s. For the gender difference, the report explained that the tendency to relinquish more female than male children for adoption likely played a factor. Robert T. Wilson Foundation, “Report on the Korea-wide Mixed-Race Survey,” 1973, Folder: “Amerasians,” USFK and EUSA Command History Office, Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, Korea (hereafter Yongsan Archives).

<sup>35</sup> And 12 percent expressed indifference. Nearly half of them also indicated that they did not know their fathers. Of the total (2,300), 619 lived in Seoul and 1,171 in Gyeonggi Province; 56 percent were male and 44 percent female; 71 percent were white while 27 percent were categorized as “Negro.” Regarding their perception of relations with other Koreans, besides the 40 percent who answered that Koreans did not like Amerasians, 28 indicated “indifferent,” 22 percent “relationship improved,” nine percent “excellent,” and one percent “treated coldly.” Reverend Sveinung J. Moen, *The Amerasians: A study and research on interracial children in Korea* (Seoul & Los Angeles: Taewon Publishing Company, 1974).

mothers with mixed race children.<sup>36</sup> The US military in Korea affirmed this assessment. A 1977 EUSA report stated the following:

The Amerasian child is usually the result of a “yobo” relationship between an American and a Korean woman. These women will rarely conceive a child unless they believe that the father intends marriage. Yet, all too often, the marriage does not occur. The father returns to the United States and either makes no further contact with mother and child, or makes initial contact which dwindles to nonexistence over time. In some particularly unfortunate cases, the father actually marries the mother but abandons her upon the mistaken belief that his marriage in Korea somehow “doesn’t count.” [...] It is because of situations such as these that the Amerasian child is forced to grow up in Korea.<sup>37</sup>

The mothers often did not register the child with any local census bureau since the birth registration had to be done under the male family registry. Although legislative changes in 1968 allowed women the right to register a child born out of wedlock in her family registry, the stigma associated with this practice prevented some of the women from registering their children. Not registering the children in the family registry or delaying it until the child reached middle-school age as well as the frequency of informal movement in camptown communities made compiling exact figures difficult. Undercounted and/or not registered in family registries, Amerasians constituted an ambiguous sector of legal belonging and citizenship in Korea.

“Legalized” illegitimacy or invisibility had a series of future consequences for Amerasians, such as restricted opportunities for education, employment, and marriage. The titles of 1970s articles in the *Korea Times*, such as “Mixed-Race Children Face Difficult Life,” “Acceptance, Integration Urgent for Mixed-Race,” “Legal Registration Issue—Crux of Hapas’ Problem,” and “Korean War Products: Mixed-Blood Offspring Suffering Ostracism,” indicated the great degree of discrimination faced by Amerasians.<sup>38</sup> Since Korea made primary education universally available and did not require family registry, most Amerasians completed their primary education. Beginning with middle school, however, tuition and other educational expenses caused a financial burden. Required proof of family registry at this time, moreover, and the subsequent registration under their mother’s family registry marked or officially documented the child’s “illegitimacy.” At this juncture, instead of continuing with education, some turned to camptown economies, such as prostitution and black markets, or to menial work. Reverend Moen found that Amerasians, growing up in camptowns and alienated from Korean society, emulated the American military subculture of these borderlands and the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>37</sup> US Command Headquarters, US Forces Korea, EUSA, “Report, The Amerasian in Korea: Present Problems and Future Prospects,” 1977, USFK and EUSA Command History Office, Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, Korea (hereafter Yongsan Archives).

<sup>38</sup> “Mixed-Race Children Face Difficult Life,” *Korea Times*, 10 March 1974; “Acceptance, Integration Urgent for Mixed-Race,” *Korea Times*, 27 October 1974; “Legal Registration Issue—Crux of Hapas’ Problem,” *Korea Times*, 20 October 1974; “Korean War Products: Mixed-Blood Offspring Suffering Ostracism,” *Korea Times*, 28 May 1978.



GIs represented “the incarnation of everything the mixed race child covets” and the “model” for the lifestyle defined by camptown landscape.<sup>39</sup>

Even for those who continued their education or even excelled academically, other obstacles stood in the way of good employment. Exemption from the mandatory national military service, for instance, compounded the employment limitations for the male population. As a result of several “racial” incidents of fighting and one incident in 1972 wherein an Amerasian draftee shot and killed two Korean soldiers, the ROK government exempted Amerasians from the draft. Consequently, Amerasians of draft age had a very difficult time finding employment because they had not completed military service.<sup>40</sup> Although the Korean government eventually began issuing Amerasians a “draft exemption” status card, not serving in the military continued to have employment repercussions. Amerasians could neither earn the “extra-points system” given to veterans in hiring calculations nor establish the personal networks during military service that served as connections to employment. Amerasian males’ non-participation in the mandatory military service excluded them from asserting their male social positioning in Korea’s militarized modernity.<sup>41</sup>

More than just reporting on the structural discrimination faced by Amerasians, studies and news reports on Amerasians also attributed social prejudice to Korean tradition and culture. As the Korean interpreter for Laura in Buck’s *The New Year* claimed, those engaged with the Amerasian issue repeatedly offered a cultural explanation that Koreans were “an ancient people, and very proud” of their homogeneity. A 1977 USFK report also pointed to the “Confucian stratification of Korean society” and how “Koreans pride themselves on being Dan-il Min Jok – one-blooded people, sprung of blood lines largely undisturbed.” Most Koreans showed little sympathy for mixed-blood Amerasians due to this “racial pride” coupled with “a moral consciousness based on still deep-rooted Confucian teachings,” reported the American military in Korea.<sup>42</sup> Korean newspapers concurred with this cultural explanation, along with indicating that the Amerasian presence reminded the nation of the war as well as its continued military and economic dependence on the United States. The following excerpts from the *Korea Times* in 1974 and 1978, respectively, convey these cultural and historical explanations:

There is a new race of sufferers who have shouldered the weight of sins committed by a strange turn of history. Born “by accident” amid the chaos of the Korean War, darker- or lighter-faced Koreans fathered by aliens are coming of age to bear the poignancy of “sins” they never committed. With a long tradition of homogeneity, Korean society is not particularly favorable to alien-looking appearances in its ordinary life.

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<sup>39</sup> Moen, *The Amerasians*, 43-6.

<sup>40</sup> US Command Headquarters, US Forces Korea, EUSA, “Memorandum for CINC, Orphans and ROK Government,” 10 January 1978, Folder: “Amerasians,” USFK and EUSA Command History Office, Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, Korea (hereafter Yongsan Archives).

<sup>41</sup> Seungsook Moon contends that mandatory military service and industrial mobilization intertwined and contributed to modern gender hierarchy, defining men as providers and heads of families while marginalizing women into secondary economic and class positions. Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 12.

<sup>42</sup> “The Amerasian in Korea: Present Problems and Future Prospects,” 1977, Yongsan Archives.

People call the mixed-races “the sad leftover of the Korean War,” which sounds rather romantic and too sentimental to express the true situation...they experience severe treatment in Korea. Perhaps it is severer in Korea than in any other countries because this country takes pride in its 5,000-year-long history of homogeneity. In addition, people know a large portion of the mixed-races were born out of wedlock of a union between American soldiers and Korean mothers engaged in shady jobs. This is what causes the discrimination. One is reminded of the war whenever mixed-race is talked about. But there are those born during the period of the U.S. military government between 1945 and 1948, though very small in number, and thousands of younger persons who have continuously been born in the vicinities of U.S. military camps since the war.<sup>43</sup>

The alienation of Amerasians therefore stemmed from their ambivalent position in a society that highly valued “pure” racial heritage as a defining national identity. Their existence, which challenged the national imagining as a *danil minjok*, the single ethnic nation, was further conflated with the shame of a proud nation that still had camptowns.

Gi-Wook Shin finds the formation of Korean ethno-nationalism embedded in specific Korean historical experiences of external threats and colonization, which stressed internal solidarity and submission to collectivist goals.<sup>44</sup> With the decline of China, rise of Japan, and increasing presence of the West in the East Asian region, Koreans in the late nineteenth century faced the daunting challenge of finding an identity and vision that could guide their efforts to create a viable modern nation. By stressing the ethnic, collectivist, organic nature of the nation, ethnic nationalism functioned as an anticolonial and anti-imperialist ideology after Korea fell to Japanese rule, employed to counter the colonial racism that denied the distinctiveness of the Korean nation.<sup>45</sup> In the postwar era of the late 1960s and early 1970s, President Park sought to legitimate his authoritarian rule by heightening nationalism by way of an ideology of racial purity.<sup>46</sup> Ethnonationalism served as force of modernization, “a crucial source of pride and inspiration” for Koreans during the turbulent transition to modernity. At the same time, Shin contends, “ethnic nationalism became a totalitarian force in politics, culture, and society.”<sup>47</sup> Amerasians, therefore, challenged this historically constructed national imaginary – created in the exigency of colonialism, territorial division and war, and postwar authoritarianism – as a *danil minjok* and a viable new modern state.

Into this historically constructed *danil minjok*, American popular culture and military presence introduced another form of racialization, that of “white-over-black,” which further complicated the position of Amerasians within larger Korean society as well as within camptown communities. Heinz Insu Fenkl’s autobiographical novel, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, explores growing up Amerasian in a camptown in 1960s

<sup>43</sup> “Mixed-Race Children Face Difficult Life,” *Korea Times*, 10 March 1974; “Korean War Products: Mixed-Blood Offspring Suffering Ostracism,” *Korea Times*, 28 May 1978.

<sup>44</sup> Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 224-9.

<sup>46</sup> Nadia Y. Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 25.

<sup>47</sup> Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 231-2.

Korea. In this fringe/edge borderland between America and Korea, Insu learns early the lessons in American racial hierarchy. As a six-year-old on his way to his first day of an American school, Insu observes in the front half of the military bus sat the white GIs going to Yongsan, while in the back half sat Korean women with their children, KATUSAs, and all the black GIs.<sup>48</sup> The stories told by Insu's neighbors further reinforced Insu's cognition of racialized camptowns. Insu overhears Changmi's mother relaying to the inexperienced women how to navigate the racially segregated camptowns and adapt to the American racial practices. "And you have to decide, before you start, whether you're going to date the Black or white GIs. They won't let you date both," Changmi's mother explains, "The white bastards won't touch you once they see you with a Black man."<sup>49</sup> This transplanted American racial stratification translated into a white-over-black landscape within camptown communities.

American racial ideas simultaneously exacerbated the problems faced by people of black mixed-parentage. Insu comes to realize what it meant that his friend, James, was black: "To both of us, I think his Blackness was lost under the labels we heard—ainoko, chapjong, t'wigi—and that commonness obscured the fact that when people looked at us oddly, they looked at him more oddly than me."<sup>50</sup> Nadia Y. Kim, in her study of racialization among Korean immigrants and their position along America's color line, contends that US military forces and American mass media in Korea played pivotal roles in "spreading American racial ideologies and forging White superiority over Koreans and Black Americans simultaneously" prior to the immigrants' arrival to the US.<sup>51</sup> Beyond Korea, Michael Molasky's analysis of Japanese and Okinawan literature on the American occupation also captures similar themes of how the US military personnel abroad were conduits of American racial ideology. Stories like "An Okinawan Boy," "The Town That Went Pale," and "Children of Mixed Blood" delineates how militarized towns like Koza reproduced American racial segregation that further manifested in "the widespread Japanese preference for those of white/Japanese mixed parentage to black/Japanese."<sup>52</sup>

American servicemen contributed to the "heart of the problem" in the more obvious and fundamental sense by not establishing the paternity and American citizenship of the child. Paternity issues and the near impossibility of establishing this legal connection to the United States reinforced Amerasian illegitimacy from both sides of the Pacific. Those who fathered the child could have registered the birth with the US embassy and secured the child's American citizenship. The majority did not legalize the child's existence since many resulted from unofficial *yeobo*-arrangements of camptowns, however. Even in cases of official marriages, the fathers did not register the birth and in abandoning them with their return to the States, they made the children de facto illegitimate despite being a progeny of a legalized union. An ironic exchange between two Amerasian boys in Fenkl's *Memories* about an American school inside of Yongsan captures this ambiguous line between legitimacy and illegitimacy. As a "legitimate" child of an American father, Insu attends an American school inside of Yongsan installation.

<sup>48</sup> Heinz Insu Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (New York: Plume, 1997), 93.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 121, 210.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>51</sup> Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA*, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Michael S. Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 65.

The “yellow-haired boy” Jani from Insu’s neighborhood, on the other hand, whose father had been killed in Vietnam before his parents could make their union legal, attended a Korean school. “So you met a white-haired guy and a Black guy all in the same day,” inquired Jani, “Do they smell funny like the American soldiers? I’ve never smelled American kids before.”<sup>53</sup> Although both children of American GIs, declared paternity and claimed citizenship distinguished them as “Korean” Jani and “American” Insu. In this grafted subculture of a camptown, boys like Insu and Jani attempted to come to terms with their displacement and identity – caught between not only races, but also national belonging.

An “illegitimate” Amerasian could claim his or her American citizenship, but the process entailed that the child submit a notarized statement of paternity from the father, results of blood tests, a copy of the father’s service record, and proof of cohabitation. Obtaining such substantiation from the father who had rotated out of Korea proved impossible in most cases. Neither the United States nor the American military had legal rights to enforce this proof of paternity or hold the father accountable for the abandonment of his children. Thus, both Korea and America contributed to the Amerasians’ legalized illegitimacy, making them a people without a nation. Although *de jure* citizens in Korea, being registered under the mother meant the assumption that the child was born out-of-wedlock, with prostitution inferred as the mother’s occupation. Their physical and legal distinctions relegated Amerasians to the social margins. Concurrently, the US not holding fathers accountable, while placing the near impossible burden of proof on the mother and child, further reinforced the child’s “illegitimate” American status. Both Korea and the US left the “half-Korean, half-American” in an ambiguous space in-between citizenship.

### *Toward Integration*

Various organizations, the Korean government, the US military, and the “Hapas” advocated two general solutions to the “Amerasian problem” in the 1970s – that of integration into Korea or emigration to the United States. Those who advocated integration criticized the *danil minjok* explanation as outmoded. A 1974 *Korea Times* editorial chastised Korean society for opting out of its responsibility and taking the “Korean pride in racial purity...a bit too far.” “Everything possible [should be] done to integrate them into Korean society,” the writer advocated, “After all they are Koreans, born and brought up in Korea, and should have been prepared to take their part in the community.”<sup>54</sup> Toward the integration of Amerasians, the Pearl S. Buck Foundation along with several other private organizations attempted to facilitate the process by various sponsorship programs. Through education, counseling, and financial support, the Pearl S. Buck Foundation assisted around 900 individuals annually in the late 1970s, with the aim to help the mixed-race child achieve successful self-support.<sup>55</sup> The United World Mission also sponsored 175 children for middle and high school. The educational scholarships provided approximately one-fourth of the monthly educational expense incurred by a child. The International Human Assistance Programs (IHAP) supported six Amerasians in college and 14 in vocational schools in the late 1970s. The IHAP also

<sup>53</sup> Finkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, 106.

<sup>54</sup> “Thoughts of the Times” by Florence J. Murray, *Korea Times*, 2 April 1974.

<sup>55</sup> “Pearl Buck Foundation Stresses Mixed-Race Children Education,” *Korea Times*, 18 June 1978.

financially supported the Hapa Club. In October of 1971, a group of older Amerasians founded their own organization and named it the “Hapa Club” with the objectives of forming unity, protecting each other from discrimination, and helping each other with social adjustments and finding jobs. The club membership numbered 200 in 1974 and 350 by the late-1970s. The Korean government responded in 1978 with establishing a vocational training center for Amerasians. The school opened in October of 1979 and by 1980 a total of 57 youths had enrolled to learn skills in three fields.<sup>56</sup> The Health Ministry also began limited “relief funds” for “needy Amerasians.”<sup>57</sup>

Integration and acceptance in the 1970s appeared limited to token sectors such as in entertainment and sports, arenas where their mixed-race parentage perhaps translated into embodying more American cultural qualifications or superior physical qualities. The media reported small signs of Amerasian integration, juxtaposing the majority who lived in marginalization against the few who had “succeeded” in overcoming their “adversity.” In contrast to 1977 employment data indicating that the majority, 88 percent, worked in the non-skilled labor sector, the visible few that the media spotlighted often excelled in either sports or in the entertainment industries.<sup>58</sup> “So far, the most successful among the half-blood youths is Jang Ho-nam,” reported the *Korea Herald*. Jang had been selected as a member of the national basketball team, and the article also highlighted two more basketball players who played for Korea University’s team.<sup>59</sup> Another *Korea Herald* article, “Yoon and Kim Carve Success Out of Adversity,” spotlighted two popular singers. Yoon Soo-il, born of a Korean mother and an American father in 1955, chose a singing career because he had found singing comforting during his times of depression and social isolation, and perhaps fittingly named his latest album the *Vagabond*. Yoon also advocated that society should try to help others like him “in their efforts to establish themselves as a good citizen.” Singer Kim In-Soon, born to an African American father and Korean mother in 1957, also voiced concern over Amerasians’ social isolation and advocated that, “To fight the inferiority complex, we must take a positive attitude toward life.”<sup>60</sup> Kim also expressed her ultimate hope of becoming a popular singer in the United States. Thirty years later, Kim In-Soon, better known today as Insooni, realized her dream in part by holding a concert in New York’s Carnegie Hall. The Korean media would comment on this occasion as Insooni’s “triumph” despite her struggles of living as a mixed-race Korean.<sup>61</sup>

Besides employment, integration advocates also attempted to facilitate educational opportunities. Dr. Richard F. Wilson of the Robert T. Wilson Foundation found encouragement in “the fact that 130 youngsters received a college education or vocational training and nearly a hundred were placed in jobs under the program,” which he considered signs in “the improvement of their acceptability in Korean society.”<sup>62</sup> Whether the increased number of students in vocational school measured the success of

<sup>56</sup> “Progeny of Two-Cultures: Amerasians Strive for Life of Dignity,” *Korea Herald*, 20 July 1980.

<sup>57</sup> “Vocational Training Sought for Amerasians,” *Shina Ilbo*, 20 June 1978.

<sup>58</sup> Statistics from ROK Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in October 1977, as quoted in “Memorandum for CINC, Orphans and ROK Government,” 1978, Yongsan Archives.

<sup>59</sup> “Success in Sports: Prejudice Against Half-Breeds Problem Needing Solution,” *Korea Herald*, 4 August 1971.

<sup>60</sup> “Yoon and Kim Carve Success Out of Adversity,” *Korea Herald*, 20 July 1980.

<sup>61</sup> “Insooni and Her Father,” *Donga Ilbo*, 6 February 2010.

<sup>62</sup> “More Half-Breeds Accepted,” *Korea Herald*, 23 July 1977.

the various integration projects, however, seemed ambiguous at best. A lengthy feature in the *Korea Herald* in 1980 quoted three Amerasians, all enrolled in the government-established vocational schools for Amerasians. All three expressed their desire for future emigration to the United States and viewed their vocational training as a means to leaving Korea. They shared these following sentiments:

The United States ought to share the responsibility for our future – the future of the mixed-blood children in Korea...I don't want to know who my father is and where he is. What's the use in talking about him? He, an American soldier, left home leaving my mother and his son behind after I was born. Now, I have one wish. I hope to be employed in the United States or emigrate there. In order to realize this single wish of myself and of all my friends in similar situation, I have been receiving vocational training here for nine months, in a vocational training school conducted by the Korean National Red Cross (KNRC). Half-American also is American. We have the right to receive the help from the United States.

But, I have nothing to hope for, except emigration to the United States...Most of us entered this vocational training school last year to seek a way to go to the United States or other overseas countries where we Amerasian people can be easily assimilated into society.

After finishing school, I long to be employed in the United States or other overseas countries. If that goal is not realized in the near future, I will seek to work in the U.S. Army facilities in Korea for the time being.

All those enrolled in the vocational school shared these sentiments. According to a survey conducted by the vocational school, all of them longed for emigration to foreign countries or employment in the US Army facilities rather than domestic industries.<sup>63</sup> Amerasians reinterpreted the purpose of the government-run vocational training centers into springboard of emigration from Korea, rather than the intended means toward better integration into Korean society. Given the marginal conditions under which the majority of multiracial Koreans lived, their desire to leave Korea for an idealized America was not surprising.

This seeming contradiction actually paralleled the Korean government's inconsistent attitudes regarding Amerasians. While it established vocational schools and implemented limited financial assistance, the Park administration also encouraged the emigration by legally easing the restrictions for Amerasians to leave Korea.<sup>64</sup> Like the 1961 Orphan Adoption Special Law, facilitating the exodus of Amerasians also meant an alternative to a costly social welfare system. Although not an official Korean government position, the statement by Kim Young Ja, Director of Women and Children's Welfare Bureau, was widely quoted by newspapers and the USFK reports as summing up the

<sup>63</sup> "Progeny of Two-Cultures: Amerasians Strive for Life of Dignity," *Korea Herald*, 20 July 1980.

<sup>64</sup> In 1975, the ROK government specifically changed the law restricting Korean national travel out of the country to exempt Amerasians from certain requirements. While most Koreans could not leave the country except to study for a masters or doctorate, and only after passing an examination, Amerasians were permitted to leave if they were accepted at an institution of higher education for any level of education.

government position. Director Kim stated, “The only true solution to the problem is for all these children to be adopted by U.S. families or allowed to emigrate to the U.S.”<sup>65</sup> The “only true solution” to the Amerasian “problem” for 1970s and 1980s Korea was to encourage the exodus of those who reminded the nation of the war, postwar camptown landscapes, and racial “impurity” that contradicted the imagined *danil minjok*.

### *Toward Emigration*

From the latter 1970s, Amerasians and their supporters began to campaign for US immigration changes to allow Amerasian migration to their “fatherland.” Father Alfred Keane, a Maryknoll priest who founded the St. Vincent’s Home for Amerasians in Bupyong, returned from a trip to the United States in 1977 with the news that Senator Edward Kennedy promised to help the “half-American children” in Korea. Along with this pledge from a senator, this December 1977 article in an American military publication also described the new military involvement with Amerasians. Although GI aid to Korean orphans had been a familiar on-going interaction, now the military sought out in particular “the kids fathered and left behind by American servicemen.” The article announced that the US Army vehicles would bus 50 “mixed blood children” from St. Vincent’s Home to Camp Coiner for a Christmas party with 120 Korean orphans.<sup>66</sup> Another 1977 report urged, “We who created their plight can help them out of it by donating funds for their schooling, clothing and basic necessities, by adopting those children eligible, and by voicing favorable comments to the appropriate officials for the special immigration bill.”<sup>67</sup>

Four individuals and units initiated organizations within the USFK worked with Amerasians in the 1970s and their activities provided the model that the headquarters could implement. Two Army NCOs had founded an organization called BATS, Black Association of Taegu Service Members, which held fundraising events to provide clothing and Christmas parties for selected 14 Amerasian children in the Daegu (Taegu) area. The NCO wives club donated \$75 per month to Father Keane’s St. Vincents Home and also sponsored a Christmas Party. Camp Casey’s Amerasian Children’s Association, which formed in May 1977, offered more extensive programs for 215 children in the Dongducheon area, including running a pre-school for 30 Amerasian children, sponsoring three in high school, and running an adoption referral service. They also provided an education program for all incoming personnel on the Amerasian problem. Chaplain (Lt. Col) Alfred Brough at Camp Casey emphasized that educating new GIs upon arrival to Korea to practice birth control constituted the foremost goal of the Camp Casey organization. Osan Air base formed a branch of the Amerasian Children’s Association in March 1978, offering similar programs as Camp Casey. For Colonel Oliver Cook, the president of Osan Amerasian Children’s Association, however, despite these various efforts, “the only real hope” was for the Amerasians to migrate “to the home of their father, the United States.”<sup>68</sup>

The United States Forces in Korea joined this push for Amerasian migration to their “fatherland” rather than integration into their “motherland.” The impending US

<sup>65</sup> “Memorandum for CINC, Orphans and ROK Government,” 1978, Yongsan Archives.

<sup>66</sup> “Amer-Asians: Senator pledges help,” *Defender*, 2 December 1977.

<sup>67</sup> “With Outside Help Amer-Asian Problem Not Hopeless,” *Korea Herald*, 22 September 1977.

<sup>68</sup> “Help sought for Amerasian kids,” *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 2 March 1979.

troop pullout, which under President Carter's directives appeared imminent in the late 1970s, made the Amerasian "problem" in Korea more urgent.<sup>69</sup> The EUSA studies and reports conducted between 1977 and 1978 outlined the directions that the military could take. These reports recommended an orientation program for all incoming personnel as well as contributing to educational and recreational programs for Amerasians modeled on existing activities. The reports, however, concluded that integration was "doomed to almost certain failure" and that the USFK should help facilitate an Amerasian migration.<sup>70</sup> The military, a 1977 report urged, "has the resources and the influence to go right to the heart of this problem, and to solve it. We should do so before we leave Korea." Ultimately, the report concluded that the military should use its tremendous influence in Washington to press for changes in US immigration law, which would permit immigration of Amerasians of all ages. The "solution" to the problem came with the Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982.

### **"To Their Father's Land" -*The Economist* (1982)<sup>71</sup>: Amerasian Immigration Legislations**

Reverend Alfred Keane, the Maryknoll priest and the director of St. Vincent's Home for Amerasians in Korea, spent three months of 1977 and 1978 in Washington D.C. advocating for Amerasian immigration legislation. When the initial bill authored by Stewart McKinney, a Republican Representative from Connecticut, did not garner much support, Reverend Keane went on a speaking tour to raise public awareness. "I went down South," he recounted, "I went through midlands, I talked to anyone who had a local radio station, I talked to two people, I talked to ten people."<sup>72</sup> By November 1981, Reverend Keane's tireless labors seemed to have stirred enough interest. McKinney's

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<sup>69</sup> In January 1977, President Carter announced the intention to withdraw the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, followed by eventual complete withdraw of American ground forces from Korea. The USFK 1977 report on Amerasians concluded that the military "should admit a duty to the children and a responsibility to help them" especially because the problem had "become increasingly acute with the imminent withdrawal of U.S. ground forces." "The Amerasian in Korea: Present Problems and Future Prospects," 1977, Yongsan Archives.

<sup>70</sup> The USFK sought to cooperate with other organizations outside of the military and at the invitation of LTG Cushman, representatives from such organizations as the Pearl S. Buck Foundation to key individuals like Father Keane met at Camp Red Cloud on 17 May 1977. They set out to investigate ways to respond effectively by coordinating activities and developing new approaches. The EUSA praised Father Keane's efforts for facilitating Amerasian emigration. Father Keane's St. Vincent's Home for Amerasians at Bupyong served as a foster home as well as a transitional home for children waiting the completion of their adoption processing. Father Keane also encouraged adoption by obtaining child relinquishments from mothers. During 1976, for instance, 78 of the 127 children living in St. Vincent's either reunited with their fathers (10) or were adopted (68). Moreover, Father Keane sought to introduce a legislation to allow Amerasian "homecoming." The USFK urged that all organizations should work toward "a situation wherein Amerasians of all ages are free to emigrate and to pursue their lives elsewhere [and] press for changes in U.S. immigration law." Richard Bednar, Judge Advocate UN Command, USFK, EUSA, "Memo for Chief of Staff, Legal and Cultural Aspects of the Amerasian," 4 January 1978; "The Amerasian in Korea: Present Problems and Future Prospects" 1977; "Memorandum for CINC, Orphans and ROK Government," 1978, Yongsan Archive.

<sup>71</sup> "To Their Father's Land," *The Economist*, 16, October 1982, 42.

<sup>72</sup> "Priest Fights on Behalf of Half-American Children," *New York Times*, 23 March 1982.



Amerasian Immigration bill (H.R. 808) had 140 cosponsors by the time of its hearing.<sup>73</sup> Early 1980s headlines, such as “Amerasian Boy Pleads for Eased Immigration” and “Bring Home Our Children of War: SHAME,” further suggested that the focus of those involved with Amerasian issues had shifted from seeking monetary contributions for sponsorship in Asia to facilitating immigration of “our children.”<sup>74</sup> Beyond Korea, Amerasian immigration legislative efforts sought to bring “home” Vietnam’s *bui doi*, the “dust of life.”<sup>75</sup> Offering a rare look into post-1975 Vietnam, a seven-page article in the *New York Times* on “the plight of the children abandoned in Vietnam” appeared in March of 1980.<sup>76</sup> Bill Kurtis, a journalist, unexpectedly encountered Amerasians while in Ho Chi Minh City and observed that former girlfriends and wives of Americans and their children lived a marginal existence in Vietnam. Although they desired to leave Vietnam for the United States, frozen diplomatic relations and lingering bitter American sentiments regarding the war hampered this possibility. With the Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982 and the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987, the United States government formally joined the efforts spearheaded by individuals and private organizations to assist these “America’s children in Asia.” And although those in Korea initiated the legislative efforts, Vietnamese-born Amerasians would constitute the majority of those who benefited from the “homecoming” legislations.

American legislators discussed the Amerasian bills within multiple contexts of immigration reform, cold war legacy, and the nation’s international “prestige.” Formulated during a period of economic recession and immigration backlash, the 1982 Act proved too limited and stringent and thus ineffective. The latter half of the decade witnessed an economic growth and lessening of anti-immigration sentiments and subsequently, the 1987 Homecoming Act designed for Vietnamese Amerasians opened up a far more comprehensive migratory pathway. That these acts also specifically applied to Korea and Vietnam forced the nation to address the unintended consequences of its foreign policy; Amerasians represented the “byproducts” of American militarism in Asia as well as cold war clashes and ties with these specific nations. This connection between foreign policy and migration also spoke to the nation’s vision of itself and to its position in the world. The proponents of the bills argued for “rescuing” these America’s children from the backward “Orient” and warned that a failure to act would undermine America’s international “prestige.” This rhetoric of rescue and prestige transferred the blame to Asia, while protecting the myth of exceptional “immigrant America.” As Mae Ngai contends, “Americans want to believe that immigration to the United States proves the universality of the nation’s liberal democratic principles; we resist examining the role that American world power has played in the global structures of migration.”<sup>77</sup> The passing of these two acts allowed for the reassertion of America’s imaginary as a democratic nation of immigrants.

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<sup>73</sup> US House Committee on the Judiciary, *Immigration Reform, Part 2: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 17 November 1981, 899.

<sup>74</sup> “Amerasian Boy Pleads for Eased Immigration,” *New York Times*, 19 November 1981; “Bring Home Our Children of War: SHAME,” *Washington Post*, 22 November 1981.

<sup>75</sup> *Bui doi* is a Vietnamese term for the poorest of its society and commonly used to refer to Amerasians.

<sup>76</sup> Bill Kurtis, “The Plight of the Children Abandoned in Vietnam,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1980.

<sup>77</sup> Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10-11.

### *Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982*

Introduced in the midst of economic recession and major efforts to check illegal immigration, the Amerasian Immigration Act (H.R. 808) embodied a compromise between the concern for immigration control and the pressure to act upon a compelling obligation. Testimony began on November 17, 1981, as a minor piece in the omnibus seven-day “Immigration Reform” hearing. The Amerasian Immigration Act proposed to grant visa preference to “sons and daughters” of US citizens who had served in active duty with the US Armed Forces or the United Nations in Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. The 1982 legislation sought to extend the first and fourth family reunification priority under the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act to Amerasians as “sons and daughters” of US citizens, despite the fact that they were not expected to reunite with their paternal relatives.<sup>78</sup> It also proposed to use evidence such as “photos, letters, proof of past financial support from a U.S. father, local testimony and other pertinent information” to prove paternity “beyond a reasonable doubt.”<sup>79</sup> Finally, the act also required a financial sponsor for five years for each Amerasian arriving to the US. Overall, it sought to “recognize the legitimate and long-ignored immigration claims of certain children of U.S. citizens,” while not increasing the overall immigration limit, as it simply moved Amerasians higher up on the preference list within the 20,000 per nation quota. Moreover, due to the sponsorship requirement, it did not demand a significant financial expenditure from the US government.<sup>80</sup>

The conservative nature of the first act reflected both the public’s anti-immigration sentiment and the on-going legislative efforts to reform immigration law. Following the decade of “stagflation,” an economy troubled by both high inflation and high unemployment, the early 1980s faced an economic recession.<sup>81</sup> Continued legal and illegal immigration accentuated economic frustrations, giving rise to anti-immigration sentiments and demand for immigration reform. In a 1980 Roper poll, 91 percent indicated that they wanted an “all-out effort” on illegal immigration and 80 percent desired reduced legal immigration. According to a 1980 Gallup-Newsweek poll, two-thirds of Americans wanted a complete suspension of immigration until unemployment fell below five percent.<sup>82</sup> The economic frustrations and anti-immigration sentiments of the early 1980s also manifested in rising violence against Asian Americans, targeted as

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<sup>78</sup> Based on the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which abolished the national origins quota and introduced hemispheric quotas, immigration priority was subject to seven levels of preference based chiefly on applicant’s relationship to citizens of American society: 1) Unmarried sons or daughters of US citizen; 2) Spouse of unmarried children of permanent resident aliens; 3) Skilled professionals possessing skills needed in the US; 4) Married children of US citizens; 5) Siblings of US citizens; 6) Unskilled workers; 7) Refugees.

<sup>79</sup> US House, *Immigration Reform, Part 2*, 17 November 1981, 904.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 903.

<sup>81</sup> Michael C. LeMay, *From Open Door to Dutch Door: An Analysis of U.S. Immigration Policy Since 1820* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 14.

<sup>82</sup> Statistics quoted in “Views of Members of Congress on Immigration Reform,” US House Committee on the Judiciary, *Immigration Reform, Part 2: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 19 November 1981, 941.

the “new” groups who dramatically shifted the composition of the immigrant population.<sup>83</sup> Another 1980 poll indicated that only 21 percent believed that Southeast Asian refugees should be encouraged to move into their communities while one-fourth believed that “America had too many Asians.”<sup>84</sup> Given these economic and social contexts, the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill or the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), introduced in 1981, attempted to close the illegal “back door” while slightly opening the legal “front door.”<sup>85</sup> Further reflecting this public sentiment, the Reagan administration argued against the enactment of the Amerasian bill because it was “fraught with evidentiary problems” that could lead to potential “fraud” and it would create a greater problem of “opening a very large back door.”<sup>86</sup>

The proponents of the bill not only refuted the reasons for opposition stated by the Reagan administration, but also challenged the nation to address the ignored ramifications of US foreign policy in Asia. Representative McKinney contended that the required substantiation for paternity limited the potential for fraud, and it would also not open an immigration floodgate since the bill did not propose to create a new quota for Amerasians. McKinney also reiterated that the financial sponsorship requirement would prevent Amerasians becoming wards of the state.<sup>87</sup> Beyond the practical aspects of implementing the bill, the panel testifying on behalf of the bill repeatedly contrasted the American “hypocrisy” to the “French model” in urging the legislators to take action. Reverend Keane contended that “Other great countries which have been active in Southeast Asia, such as France, took these children back with them,” and rhetorically posed, “Are these countries greater than our own?”<sup>88</sup> John Shade, Director of Pearl S. Buck Foundation, also mentioned the French model as the “remedial precedent” that the

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<sup>83</sup> From 1975 to 1979, over 200,000 Vietnamese refugees came to the US. Michael C. LeMay, *Anatomy of a Public Policy: The Reform of Contemporary American Immigration Law* (Westport: Praeger, 1990), 114.

<sup>84</sup> “The United States Civil Rights Commission Report on Violence Against Asians” concluded that increasing numbers of persons of Asian origins, problems in the resettlement process for refugees, and competition between low-income refugees and other groups for jobs and housing contributed to the rise in violence aimed at Asian Americans. US Civil Rights Commission, “Violence Against Asians: The Draft Report,” *AsianWeek* 7 (May 1986), 15-6.

<sup>85</sup> President Carter and Congress created the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy in 1979, which recommended, “closing the back door” to undocumented immigration while opening slightly the front door to accommodate more legal immigration. The IRCA, first introduced in 1981, went through several years of revisions and renegotiations before it finally passed the House and the Senate in October of 1986. Aristide Zolberg sums that IRCA included, “On the one hand, the imposition of sanctions on employers of illegal aliens, and on the other, the grant of permanent resident status to illegal aliens who had become de facto permanent residents by entering the United States prior to some specified date.” Sanctions appealed to organized labor as well as restrictionist appalled at the “loss of control of our borders”; legalization of “amnesty,” as it was commonly termed, appealed to Latinos and to civil rights liberals. Aristide R. Zolberg, “Reforming the Back Door: The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 in Historical Perspective,” in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 320-3.

<sup>86</sup> Statements by Ambassador Diego Asencio, who spoke on behalf of the State Department, and Thomas Simmons, who represented the Department of Justice in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). US House Committee on the Judiciary, *Immigration Reform, Part 2*, 17 November 1981, 859-868.

<sup>87</sup> House Committee, *Immigration Reform*, 882, 897.

<sup>88</sup> Reverend Keane explained that when the French left Indochina in 1954, they took back with them 25,000 “of their children,” put them in foster care, paid for their education, and guaranteed those who chose to remain with their Vietnamese mothers the option of French citizenship until the age of 21. *Ibid.*, 901, 933.

US should consider.<sup>89</sup> “Everybody talks about the discrimination in Asia against these children, but we discriminate against them completely and entirely,” and for Reverend Keane, this hypocrisy was “the American tragedy.”<sup>90</sup> Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-Co) agreed with the panelists and found it “most appalling” that while quick to blame Asians for not recognizing Amerasians, Americans did not “realize that we’re not recognizing them either.”<sup>91</sup> Representative Schroeder found it disturbing that “the military can go into foreign countries and do whatever they want, and they won’t be responsible...It is like imperial America.”<sup>92</sup> She elaborated that the American government’s unwillingness to take responsibility “communicate[d] all the wrong message to the world.”<sup>93</sup> Representative Barney Frank (D-Mass) also implored, “Doesn’t society, doesn’t one of the wealthiest, most powerful societies in the world have some responsibilities for problems created by its citizens who are in another country in pursuance of national policy?”<sup>94</sup> The Amerasian legislation brought to attention the intersection of immigration law and foreign policy, in particular the need to address the unintended consequences of sustained US military presence in cold war Asia.

Soon after the hearing, the media coverage sympathetic to the bill also emphasized the “wretched plight” and similarly argued for American responsibility, while warning of national shame in the international community. A *Washington Post* columnist wrote, “No words exist to justify the shameful treatment this country meets out to Amerasian children. But Reagan’s bureaucrats, following in the footsteps of Carter’s, continue to search.” The editorial also asserted that the contrast with the French actions “shames us most as a nation.”<sup>95</sup> As a special to the *New York Times* from Vietnam, another article reiterated that the “difference between the two countries’ current policies toward the children they left behind are even more closely followed here than in the United States.”<sup>96</sup> By also contrasting the hesitancy of the State Department despite the willingness of the Congress to act, these articles also pressured the Reagan administration. The *Christian Science Monitor* claimed that the proposed legislation was rapidly gaining support by January 1982 due to a “battalion of more than 160 senators and representatives sponsoring the bill, including prominent conservatives and friends of President Reagan.”<sup>97</sup> The bill had enlisted the persuasive support by conservatives and war veterans, such as co-sponsorship of the bill by Senator Jeremiah Denton, a former prisoner of war in Vietnam.<sup>98</sup> By June of 1982, the Reagan administration denied its “indifference” in a *New York Times* article and declared, “It is our fervent hope that this heart wrenching human problem will be solved soon by adoption of this legislation.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 911.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 933-4.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 933.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 876-7.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 883.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 879.

<sup>95</sup> “Bring Home Our Children of War,” *Washington Post*, 22 November 1981.

<sup>96</sup> “Vietnam’s Amerasians Drift in Sea of Indifference,” *New York Times*, 9 June 1982.

<sup>97</sup> “Amerasian Children: Congress may open doors for them,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 January 1982.

<sup>98</sup> “The Leviathan of Government Gets Education in Compassion; Reversal,” *Washington Post*, 22 June 1982.

<sup>99</sup> “U.S. Efforts to Help Amerasian Children,” *New York Times*, 25 June 1982.

With this turnabout of the State Department, the Amerasian Immigration Act appeared to be on the brink of passage by the time of the Senate hearing on June 21, 1982. The Senate companion bill (S. 1698) added a few amendments, such as extending the right to progeny of non-military and non-government American citizens and adding “physical appearance of the applicant” to the list of evidence that could be used to verify paternity.<sup>100</sup> At the Senate hearing, the State Department declared that it “wholeheartedly” supported the legislation and the INS also fully concurred with the State Department.<sup>101</sup> At the request of these two departments, however, the bill limited eligibility from the Korean War (1950) to the date of the enactment of the bill and stipulated that Amerasians from Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand be the only ones permitted to come under the new law. This limitation by time frame and location prevented the potential for “infinite” Amerasian immigration of those born after the enactment of the bill and also excluded claims from Japan and the Philippines—allied nations with continued US military bases and large numbers of Amerasians.

Those in support of the bill utilized similar arguments as the first hearing, primarily that in light of discrimination in Asia, the US offered a better home for Amerasians. Cosponsor Senator Jeremiah Denton juxtaposed the “cruelty,” “grounded in Asian culture,” experienced by “those abandoned Amerasian children,” to Americans “who were just trying to help others from other nations and love their neighbors as they loved themselves.”<sup>102</sup> Another cosponsor of the bill, Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, concurred that America was “in a better position to accept children of mixed parentage than are the homogenous societies in Asia.”<sup>103</sup> The contrast between the traditional and homogenous “East” with the modern and multicultural “West” afforded the rhetoric to deflect much of the blame. The Senate discussion, as did the House hearing, framed the legislation as having ramifications for America’s image in the world. “The United States is considered barbaric and is ridiculed because we abandon our offspring,” wrote one supporter in a letter submitted during the hearing.<sup>104</sup> Father Keane contended that the “legislation would show the entire world that we are a nation of truth, willing and able to follow truth no matter...how difficult, embarrassing or shameful that truth might be.”<sup>105</sup> Opening the nation’s immigration gates offered America an opportunity to reassert itself as a responsible and respectable democracy. Reasoned as a constructive step in international relations, the Amerasian Immigration Act confronted little resistance by the time of the Senate hearing. In a rush to adjourn for the year, Congress passed the Amerasian Immigration Act and President Reagan signed it into law on October 22, 1982. The *New York Times* declared the bill “an act of both humanity and patriotism.”<sup>106</sup> In signing the bill, the President stated, “Instead of saying welcome to these children, we should say, ‘Welcome home.’”<sup>107</sup> The law went into effect on New Year’s Day of 1983.

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<sup>100</sup> US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Amerasian Immigration Proposals: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 21 June 1982, 8-10.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 34, 37.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>106</sup> “Coming Home,” *New York Times*, 5 October 1982.

<sup>107</sup> “Reagan Approves Amerasian Access,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1982.

Despite such sentimental claims, the 1982 Act soon proved too limited and ineffective. Officials who worked with Vietnamese Amerasians conveyed the skepticism over the willingness of mothers to relinquish their children, as the new law required that the Amerasian be admitted alone without their families.<sup>108</sup> Volunteer organizations also expressed doubt that agencies would cooperate in carrying out the new law if it meant breaking up families.<sup>109</sup> “Some Americans thought the bill would open a floodgate of Amerasians into the United States,” expressed Jim Steele, director of Pear S. Buck Foundation in Bangkok, “But it hasn’t and it won’t. The bill says that if you give up your family and give up your country you can go—alone.”<sup>110</sup> Moreover, a spokesperson from Pearl S. Buck Foundation noted that it would be difficult to find sponsors because it required a considerable financial commitment for five years. The critics also raised concern that as the law only applied to children born between 1950 and 1983, and yet with some 39,000 U.S. soldiers still in Korea, the problem would likely continue.<sup>111</sup> Over a year after its implementation, only three Korean Amerasians, and no Thai or Vietnamese, immigrated under the law. The highly touted law turned out to have little impact – unworkable for Amerasians in Vietnam because the U.S. had no diplomatic relations with Vietnam, and the overly restrictive stipulation meant that few in Korea applied to come under its provisions.<sup>112</sup> By May of 1984, the law’s ineffectiveness became evident even to the bill’s original author. Representative Stewart McKinney admitted that, “While the law does not automatically assuage the plight of Amerasians, the necessary first step has been taken.”<sup>113</sup>

#### *Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987*

Despite its overall failure, the 1982 Act did serve as the “necessary first step” for the far more comprehensive law that followed. The 1982 law had no direct effect on Vietnamese Amerasians, as no formal relations between the US and Vietnam existed to facilitate the process. As an indirect consequence of the 1982 bill, however, Amerasians did begin slowly to leave Vietnam for the United States. They did not emigrate as individuals or had sponsors waiting for them in America. Instead, they left with their families like other refugees under the Orderly Departure Program (ODP).<sup>114</sup> According to this 1979 United Nations agreement, the US accepted 1,000 refugees from Vietnam every month. Counted within this ODP quota, 100-200 Amerasians and their families trickled out monthly from Vietnam beginning in 1983. The 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act,

<sup>108</sup> “Quick Action Vowed on Amerasians,” *New York Times*, 29 October 1982.

<sup>109</sup> “Doubts Expressed on Amerasian Law: Aides with Amerasian Charities Question Its Provision for Admitting Children Only,” *New York Times*, 22 December 1982.

<sup>110</sup> “Twenty Years of Helping Amerasians,” *U.P.I. (BC Cycle)*, 3 February 1984.

<sup>111</sup> “Korean Amerasians Face Uncertain Future,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 November 1982.

<sup>112</sup> Susanna Mc Bee, Walter Taylor, and Robert Kaylor, “The Amerasians: Tragic Legacy of Our Far East Wars,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 7 May 1984, 49.

<sup>113</sup> Stewart McKinney, “Letters to the Editor,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 28 May 1984, 4.

<sup>114</sup> “The ODP was established under a 1979 Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the government of Vietnam to provide a safe and legal means for people to leave Vietnam rather than clandestinely by boat.” US General Accounting Office, “Refugee Program: The Orderly Departure From Vietnam,” *Report to the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives* (Washington DC: US General Accounting Office, 1990), 2.

directed specifically at Vietnamese Amerasians, opened the immigration “floodgate” that the 1982 bill tried to prevent. The new law, besides granting Amerasians high immigration priority, also permitted Amerasians to migrate with their immediate family and extended refugee resettlement services to them upon arrival to the US.<sup>115</sup> Favorable domestic developments contributed to this dramatic shift from the conservative earlier bill. Unlike the hostile environment of the early 1980s, the second half of the decade witnessed an economic growth and lessening of anti-immigration sentiments with the passage of IRCA in 1986.<sup>116</sup> The most striking development, however, was the significant role the Amerasian issue played in establishing formal relations between Vietnam and the US.

The Amerasian dilemma stayed at the heart of early dialogue between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which eventually led to official diplomatic recognition. Initial indirect interactions between the two governments began with discussion of “humanitarian issues,” namely the Amerasian immigration along with talks on refugees, re-education prisoners, and the repatriation of remains of those Missing in Action (MIA). The US wanted to process Amerasians and re-education camp inmates through the already existing ODP program under the auspice of the United Nations, while Vietnam preferred to deal directly with the United States and objected to classifying Amerasians as refugees.<sup>117</sup> “They are not refugees. These are your children,” Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach contended, “I would welcome anyone to come and take them away.” Similar to the ROK government a decade earlier, the “only true solution” to the Amerasians in Vietnam was the exodus to their “fatherland.” Nguyen argued that while Vietnam had cooperated with the US on expediting the repatriation of the remains of Americans, the US imposing such rigorous standards of proof and refugee

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<sup>115</sup> In May of 1987, Representative McKinney, the original author of the 1982 bill, presented the “Amerasian Amendments.” With this new bill, he hoped to reverse the limitations posed by the first act and allow organizations instead of strictly individuals to sponsor, reduce the period of financial support from five to two years, eliminate the cut off date of birth, include the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan, and also permit mothers of any Amerasians 18-years-old or younger to immigrate with the minor. House, Representative Stewart B. McKinney, “Amerasian Amendments,” 100<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., *Congressional Record* (4 May 1987), v. 133, n. 70. Unfortunately, three days after introducing this drastic revision, Stewart McKinney passed away unexpectedly. His “work,” however, continued on with the introduction of the Amerasian Homecoming Act few months later in August of 1987. The new bill had bipartisan support, with Representatives Robert Mrazek (D-NY) and Thomas Ridge (R-Penn) in the House, and co-sponsors Senators Bumpers (D-Ark) and John McCain (R-Ariz) introducing the second Amerasian immigration legislation (S.1601). This bill specifically addressed Vietnam and it proposed to waive numerical limitations, admit Amerasians as immigrants instead of refugees, to allow “face” or physical characteristics as sufficient proof of their ties to the US, permit guardians and half-siblings to immigrate together, and receive assistance with resettlement. Senate, Senator John McCain, “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions,” 100<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., *Congressional Record* (6 August 1987), v. 133, n. 132.

<sup>116</sup> That by the time the Homecoming Act passed, already seven thousand American families had registered to sponsor Amerasians and their families, in a stark contrast to the three sponsors during the first year of the 1982 Immigration Act, further illustrated this change in public attitude. “U.S. Soldiers’ Kids to be Airlifted from Viet Nam” *Toronto Star*, 20 January 1988; “Vietnamese Said Ready to Release Amerasian Kids,” *Toronto Star*, 20 January 1988. This new bill quickly passed through both of the chambers of Congress and President Reagan signed it into law on December 22, 1987.

<sup>117</sup> Three meetings between the two nations took place from October to December of 1984. “U.S.-Hanoi Talks on Amerasians,” *New York Times*, 19 October 1984.

quotas on Amerasians had created a backlog.<sup>118</sup> On January 1, 1986, Vietnam halted the ODP altogether in protest of American conflation of Amerasians with war refugees, thereby deflecting the “responsibility” for the “problem” from American soldiers and immigration policy.

The memory of the war in Vietnam and attempts to shape its still malleable legacy underpinned America’s divergent approaches to addressing Vietnam during the initial dialogue. Some believed that the US should move forward with normalizing relations not only to resolve the humanitarian concerns, but also to begin healing the wounds of war. Others, including the Reagan administration, objected to recognizing the “illegitimate” Vietnamese government and stood firm that doing so would be admitting ultimate defeat.<sup>119</sup> The Amerasian question continued to be at the heart of these emotional reckonings and diplomatic tug-of-war. The fact that “thousands and thousands of people long to leave their own country, because they cannot accept the restrictions on their freedom which have been imposed,” according to Representative Stephen Solarz, exposed the “consequence of Communist tyranny.” In condemning the SRV government for stopping the ODP, he made clear that the US welcomed “in its midst the Amerasian children that are perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of the American presence in Vietnam, and for whom in an ethnically homogeneous society, not without its own forms of racism, their lives are exceedingly difficult.”<sup>120</sup> Representative Robert Dornan of California believed the national memory of the Vietnam War should emphasize not the defeat, but the American victory of championing freedom. The plight of Amerasian children and our “friends who remain in Soviet-style gulags” embodied the “tragic end of that long conflict.”<sup>121</sup> By inextricably and consistently linking the Amerasian issue with other postwar concerns, and by invoking Vietnam’s oppression in contrast to America’s freedom, detractors of normalization deflected the blame for this “tragic” situation away from the US and onto Vietnam.

The proponents of diplomatic normalization also situated the Amerasian issue at the metaphorical center between the two nations and asserted that addressing this issue helped the nation to heal from the war’s wounds. The media criticized the “hard-liners in the Reagan administration” who were “still fighting the war.”<sup>122</sup> Mainstream news programs such as ABC’s *20/20* and NBC’s *60 Minutes* also featured the *bui doi*, the “dust of life,” expressing concern that the US had done little about the problem.<sup>123</sup> Legislators desiring normalization reasoned that resolving the diplomatic impasse would not only facilitate humanitarian matters, but it would also help the nation “overcome the trauma of the war.” Vietnam War veterans and former prisoners of war, like Senators Jeremiah Denton and John McCain, who also happened to be sponsors of the 1982 and 1987

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<sup>118</sup> “Hanoi Asks to End Amerasians’ Issue,” *New York Times*, 20 October 1985.

<sup>119</sup> The White House opposed proposals to “normalize our relations with Vietnam, beginning perhaps by asking another government to represent our interest in Hanoi.” Until the MIA issue was resolved and Vietnam pulled out of Cambodia, it refused any form of official recognition.

<sup>120</sup> House, “Resumption of U. N. Commissioner for Vietnam Refugees’ Orderly Departure Program,” 99th Congress, 2nd ses., *Congressional Record* (2 October 1986), v. 132, n. 134.

<sup>121</sup> House, Representative Robert K Doran of California, “April 30, Anniversary of Our Departure from Vietnam,” 100th Congress, 1st ses., *Congressional Record* (4 May 1987), 133, pt. 70.

<sup>122</sup> “A Father Gets His Daughter Out of Vietnam, Many Others Take Heart,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 October 1987.

<sup>123</sup> “Lives of Amerasian Children Studied on ABC’s ‘20/20,’” *New York Times*, 20 November 1987.



Amerasian Acts, respectively, introduced a bill proposing to “establish ‘interest sections’ in each other’s capitals.” Senator McCain reasoned that, “thirteen years after the fall of Saigon, the time has come for increased efforts to resolve the legacies of the Vietnam War.”<sup>124</sup> Clumped together with other postwar concerns, the Amerasian “problem” became an “opportunity” – a vehicle through which a dialogue ensued between the former warring states that eventually helped pave the way toward diplomatic normalization.<sup>125</sup> Even though the United States did not officially lift the economic embargo until 1994 during the Clinton Administration, the “first step” towards formal diplomatic relations began in 1988 with the “Amerasian Transit Center,” the first US government office in postwar Vietnam.

### Conclusion

As Pearl Buck had hoped, Amerasians did “become the link” across the Pacific,<sup>126</sup> reinforcing the “tense and tender ties” between the US and Asia during the last decade of the cold war. The migration east to America of Amerasians from Vietnam and Korea stood in the intersection of transpacific migration and unintended consequences of cold war policies of containment and integration; the Amerasian immigration spoke to the link between an empire of bases and the multidirectional migration of institutions and peoples. Concurrently, Amerasian migration both challenged the assumptions of race and its correlations to citizenship for both the “sending” and the “receiving” countries. In both sending off the “GI-babies” for Korea and receiving the “half-American kids” for the United States, the Amerasian issue ultimately “reconfirmed” their respective national imaginaries: For Korea, Amerasians personified the nation’s modernity conditioned by dependency and challenged its identity as a homogenous nation; the Amerasian exodus from Korea thus enabled the nation to rid itself of the glaring contradiction of this constructed self-image. For the United States, Amerasian legislations reinforced America’s national imaginary as a non-imperialist, nation of immigrants that welcomed “home” those persecuted. At the same time, although the Amerasian immigration acts provided a solution to the issue of the unintended consequences of cold war alliances and wars, these transpacific migrations of the 1980s certainly did not constitute the “end” of Amerasians’ place in Korea’s history. Multiracial Koreans in Korea like Insooni continue to personify the living history of the intimate cold war.

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<sup>124</sup> John McCain, “It’s Time for Better Ties With Vietnam; Thoughts of an ex-POW who’s now in the U.S. Senate,” *Washington Post*, 21 March 1988.

<sup>125</sup> Senator McCain-sponsored S.1601 reflected the acquiescence to demands made by Hanoi to Washington: that Amerasians be processed outside of the ODP monthly quotas; they not be considered refugees and thus all negotiations concerning this matter be conducted bilaterally instead of via the UN; and they leave as a family unit and not as individuals.

<sup>126</sup> Display Ad 827, *New York Times*, 31 May 1970. In commemorating her death, a 1973 memorial requested contributions to the Foundation “to continue Miss Buck’s work.” Display Ad 60, *New York Times*, 9 March 1973.

## VI. Conclusion: Living Legacies of the Intimate Cold War

Kim Ki-Duk, one of the most influential, controversial, and prolific Korean directors today, situates his 2001 film, *Address Unknown* (*Suchwiin bulmyeong*), in a *gijichon* and depicts the lives of three deeply alienated youths.<sup>1</sup> Ji-Hum represents the weak and tormented Korean male while Eun-Ok is the scarred Korean woman who prostitutes herself as a “GI girl” to James, a young white US serviceman maladjusted to his life in the army and life stationed abroad; and Chang-Guk, the traumatized black/Korean youth, embodies the legacy of war and prostitution in his body. This constructed “family” is an allegory for a “contaminated” nation, reminiscent of the fractured family in *The Stray Bullet* (1961). The characters are physically weak, marked, and scarred to “[ruminate] on the history from the Korean War back to the time of Japanese imperialism” and its lasting legacies on individual lives, according to Kim.<sup>2</sup> Chang-Guk’s single mother continually writes letters to her son’s father, a black-American soldier, enclosing pictures of Chang-Guk, but her letters are always returned, stamped with “Address Unknown.” Chang-Guk and his mother, the “Amerasian” son to the former “GI-prostitute,” are abandoned by both the American father/American dream as well as by Korea, ostracized to the nation’s peripheral-edge. Chang-Guk ultimately commits suicide and it is implied in the final scene of the film that his mother eats the flesh of her dead son. By devouring her son’s body, Chang-gook’s mother symbolically “unbirths” him, not wanting to leave “any trace of him on the land that refused to accept him,” contends Myung Ja Kim.<sup>3</sup> In this shocking manner, Kim Ki-Duk challenges the nation to face its history. For the living legacies of the past cannot be “un-birthed” or “devoured” to leave no trace behind as in the resolution of *Address Unknown*.

The year 2010 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. Although often referred to as America’s “Forgotten War,” the Korean War is certainly not forgotten in Korea. The continued stationing of the American military sixty years after the war, for one, reminds Koreans of the war. Recent events, such as the massive candlelight vigils protesting the death of two middle-school students due to an American military accident in 2002, the pitched clash over Daechuri and Doduri from 2004 to 2007, and rapes and attempted rapes of Korean women by American servicemen in two of Seoul’s most popular districts in 2007, keep fresh the continuing legacies of living amongst foreign military troops. And these “spillovers” indicate that this foreign military presence have not stayed contained in their camps and even in the peripheral edge of Korean society, the camptowns. Although the United States Forces in Korea is still

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<sup>1</sup> Kim wrote, directed, and produced 15 films between 1996 and 2008. He is also considered one of the most influential directors today, having earned a long list of international awards. In Korea, his films are rarely commercially successful, but they do provoke polarized reaction from critiques. Kim Ki-Duk is an “outsider,” with no formal institutional education or training and comes from the working-class unlike most of his film-contemporaries, and his films all narrate the lives of the socially marginalized.

<sup>2</sup> Kim Ki-Duk’s interview, as quoted in Myung Ja Kim, “Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-duk’s *Address Unknown*,” in *Seoul Searching: culture and identity in contemporary Korean cinema*, ed. Frances Gateward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 246.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-260.

“invited” by Korea, there have been efforts on both sides to lessen the military “footprint” in the recent decade. On one hand, with troop reductions and base consolidations, the physical space occupied by Americans will decrease and with the building of state-of-the-art “super hubs,” these new camps are slated to become more insulated “Little Americas.” On the other hand, the financial “burden sharing” has increased for Korea, as indicated by the billions of dollars spent by the ROK to accommodate the land and building requirements of the new Camp Humphreys. And those near the military camps still live with crimes, pollution, and accidents, albeit with increased rights and legal recourse via the revised SOFA. Beyond the camps and camptowns, GIs venturing into the heart of Seoul continue to remind the nation of the foreign military presence amongst them. In the everyday, Koreans live among legacies of the unforgotten war and the intimate cold war with the United States.

### **From “Remote” Tours to “Enduring” Installations**

Although the built environment and material amenities have significantly improved, the ways in which American troops are stationed in Korea has changed little in the last sixty years. The United States Forces Korea are deployed on two types of tours – accompanied or unaccompanied. In 2006-2007, of the approximately 29,500 US military positions in Korea, those on command-sponsored two-year tours that permit service members to bring their families at government expense and receive a full range of benefits made up about 2,800 (around 10 percent). The remainder consisted of unaccompanied tours, also known as “non-command sponsored” or “remote” tours. Command-sponsored families have full access to post and base exchanges, commissary, medical care, schools, and other facilities, as well as live in government housing or receive financial assistance with their rent.<sup>4</sup> Those on accompanied tours and their families tend to live in large installations reminiscent of a city or town in the United States. Yongsan, the headquarters of EUSA, is a prime example of a self-contained “American town” in the middle of a foreign land, occupying 640-acres within the city of Seoul. The sprawling horizontal landscape of Yongsan Garrison continues to resemble an American suburb, in stark contrast to the dense cityscape of Seoul with its soaring skyscrapers that lurk just outside of the compound walls (Figure 20). Not only governed by US military laws and regulations, “Little Americas” also support their own systems of education, transportation, and communication. The transplanted American education system through the Department of Defense Schools (DoDDS), for instance, offers a wide range of programs for thousands of military-dependent children in Korea. The Army Continuing Education System (ACES) also provides programs and tuition assistance for undergraduate and graduate courses. Large bases also have internal transportation systems of shuttle buses and taxi services, with drivers who speak English and the fares paid in US dollars. Yongsan has its own hospital, dental clinics, veterinary service, variety of religious services, retail outlets, US Postal Service, legal and tax centers, military banks, and Boy and Girl Scouts, among numerous other social services.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> US Forces Korea, “US Forces Korea's Welcome Guide for 2006-2007.”

<http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/welcome/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Sgt. Eric Foltz, ed., “2003 8<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army Welcome Guide” (Seoul: Eighth US Army Public Affairs Office, 2003), 15-27.

Even if not stationed in one of the large bases such as Yongsan, recreation, transportation, and communication resources connect remote bases with central installations. Troops can partake in activities and sporting events offered by United Service Organizations (USO) centers, take tours of Korea or outside of Korea, as well as enjoy military clubs, arts and crafts centers, libraries, bowling centers, movie theaters, and golf courses throughout Korea. US military buses link almost every installation, opening up access to these amenities for those not stationed in a large base. A media network – American Forces Network-Korea (AFN-K) radio and television stations, newspapers such as the *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, and American cable television services – reach an audience of more than 60,000 DOD members and their families throughout the peninsula.<sup>6</sup> This network of bases on the peninsula is further connected regionally with similar installations in the Pacific. In Okinawa, for instance, 23,000 Americans live and work on Kadena Air Force Base, the largest air base in the Pacific Command, which covers 12,000 acres with similar facilities found on Yongsan. Kadena had an estimated operations budget of \$1.45 billion in 1999, a figure higher than the annual city and county budget of Honolulu, Hawai'i.<sup>7</sup> Although Korea is still categorized as a “remote” or “hardship” tour for those on unaccompanied tours, the already available amenities as well as the super-hubs being built certainly suggest much comfort and familiarity of home on these “Little Americas” clustered throughout the Asia Pacific.

Americans deployed to Korea on an unaccompanied tour can choose to bring their families at their own expense or be housed in bachelor government quarters along with single service members. Even if not command-sponsored, unaccompanied personnel receive financial assistance if their families accompany them; they are authorized Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and receive housing allowance allotted for their pay grade and dependency status. And as of October 2005, non-command sponsored families receive the Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) at the with-dependent rate as well as the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) at the without-dependent rate. In 2008 for instance, General B.B. Bell, the then Commander of the USFK and the Korea-United States Combined Forces Command, disclosed that about 2,000 military families had set up independent living in Korea, near the bases where their spouses were stationed.<sup>8</sup> Unaccompanied and/or single troops are deployed for a much shorter tour of a year to Korea. As it had been practiced for the past sixty years, the younger and single troops on short one-year tours to Korea have been largely concentrated in bases closer to the DMZ in Uijeongbu-Dongducheon areas. Camp Casey in Dongducheon occupies 3,500 acres and Camp Hovey, adjacent to Camp Casey, sits on nearly 4,000 acres; this military complex housed for decades as many as 13,000 soldiers per year. In nearby Uijeongbu, the 2ID headquarters, Camp Red Cloud, and a group of bases such as Camp Stanley is part of the Uijeongbu Enclave. Although historically lauded as money-saving policy that did not require accommodating of military families, troops cite unaccompanied tours as one of the foremost reasons for the unpopularity of deployment to Korea, unlike the large percentage of accompanied tours in neighboring Japan and Okinawa as well as in

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<sup>6</sup> “US Forces Korea's Welcome Guide for 2006-2007”

<sup>7</sup> Sheila A. Smith, *Shifting Terrain: The Domestic Politics of the U.S. Military Presence in Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii East-West Center Special Reports, 2006), 22.

<sup>8</sup> “Plan to Let U.S. Troops Bring Families to Korea,” *New York Times*, 10 March 2008.

Germany. Studies over the years have also identified that families provided stability and wellbeing for the troops.

In the near future, however, Americans deployed to Korea will live concentrated in strategic hubs as outlined by the 2004 Land Partnership Plan, with the possibility of a greater percentage of accompanied tours. Military authorities predict that the new installations being built in the Pyeongtaek area will provide an opportunity to upgrade the service members' quality of life with the improved housing conditions as well as the increased proportion of accompanied tours. Beyond the strategic aims of relocating USFK to the two super-hubs, General Bell, before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2006, testified that "Our realignment to two enduring hubs will allow us to focus on improving living and working conditions at our enduring installations," and sought continued Congressional support for family housing construction in Korea.<sup>9</sup> Along with creating more "enduring" camps, military leaders expressed their hope to "change that shortened, solitary assignment into a three-year stint with orders to bring family members along." The *Stars and Stripes* reported in December of 2006 that the military predicted that the percentage of accompanied tours "may go up to 20, 30, 50 (percent) or whoever wants to bring their families." "The key to keeping the troops and their families happy," according to the interviewed military engineer, "[was] to let them feel like they're still living in the States when they're within the camp's perimeter."<sup>10</sup> The construction of the new hubs clearly indicated that the USFK will remain on the peninsula for the foreseeable future, despite the reduced numbers, occupying more centralized and "enduring" installations, in contrast to the "temporary" or "semi-permanent" bases of the cold war period. And the aims and designs of these super-hubs offer even more familiar comforts and amenities to Americans deployed to Korea; so much so that a military service member and their families will feel as if "they're still living in the States" and not in the middle of South Korea.

South Koreans also have expressed their desire for more US troops to bring their families, hoping to decrease the social impact and the potential for clashes with the local communities. Areas with the largest numbers of young, single American troops on unaccompanied tours, most notably the Dongducheon-Uijeongbu areas where the 2ID has been stationed, also constitute the most negatively stigmatized regions among Koreans. Frequent contact as well as accidents and crimes often occurred near these more remote camps and their camptowns. Unsurprisingly, Koreans still strongly associate camptowns with violence and vice, as a "foreign" land on the peripheral-edge of their society. When asked in 2006 about the move of the 2ID from the Dongducheon-Uijeongbu areas to Camp Humphreys, nearly one in four Pyeongtaek residents said they strongly disliked the move, citing US soldiers as rude and heavy drinkers.<sup>11</sup> To address the Pyeongtaek residents' concerns of the impending move of thousands of young and single American troops to Camp Humphreys, and believing that married troops on accompanied tours will

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<sup>9</sup> Senate Committee on Armed Services, "Prepared Statement of General B.B. Bell, Commander, United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command and United States Forces Korea" submitted for *Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal year 2007*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 7 March 2006, 36-8.

<sup>10</sup> "USFK briefs contractors on housing bids / S. Koreans learn how to submit bids for build-to-lease projects," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 10 August 2006.

<sup>11</sup> "South Koreans in Pyeongtaek mixed on U.S. realignment plan; Poll shows 1 in 4 worried about influx of young GIs," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 12 December 2006.

impose a far less negative impact, the local Gyeonggi Province government is studying ways to encourage more troops to bring their families along for long-term assignments. In late 2006, the Gyeonggi officials also indicated a planned trip to Okinawa to study examples of US military families living abroad.<sup>12</sup> Even General Bell announced to the locals in a Gyeonggi Province forum that “Family accompanied tours will not only mean investment into one’s well-being, but will help to prevent crimes.”<sup>13</sup> Both the US military and Korean local governments desire that these new hubs will become more “perfect” American towns, transplanting along with it a greater number of military families. If these plans for increased accompanied tours are realized, the future of the USFK stationed in these new super-hubs promise to improve the wellbeing of the troops while lessening the potential clashes and tensions with the locals. Conversely, however, these more insulated “Little Americas” will also mean even more isolation of American personnel and greater disconnect from their host nation. And whether “containing” the troops is a desirable or even a feasible solution to enforce remains to be seen.

Base consolidation and relocation will not only impact the areas destined to host the new hubs, but will carry long lasting ramifications for the communities left behind after the American troops move out of their former camps. Local and national governments will have to address the cleanup of toxic chemicals and other environmental problems associated with the US military camps and the potential impact on public health before the land can be deemed safe for civilian use.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, troop reductions and relocations have already impacted the local economy. A July 2010 report in *Yonhap* claimed that the once vibrant “Yankee Market” in Dongducheon, which has sold American products since the Korean War and witnessed its prosperous heyday in the 1960s and 70s, is now “walking an enfeebled road.” Mr. Hwang, an owner of a store that sells everything from military cots to beer, perfume, lotion, chocolate, and canned foods – all American products that most likely originated from the nearby foreign military camps – wonders whether these stores will survive the next few years.<sup>15</sup> The novelty of American consumable goods once eagerly sought by Koreans has significantly decreased since the lifting of national restrictions on foreign imports in the late 1980s. And with the impending relocation of American military camps in the Dongducheon-Uijeongbu areas to Pyeongtaek, the “origin-source” of these goods also soon will disappear. Stores catering to American customers are not faring any better. The Bosandong Special Tourist District, with about 350 businesses ranging from clubs, clothing stores, and restaurants for American soldiers, also faces a similar “downward path” as the Yankee Market. Far from the “heyday” of the 1960s, this once notorious camptown has been impacted by the decreased number of troops with large redeployments to the Middle East. Mr. Heo, a clothing storeowner in Bosandong, also predicted gloomy prospects for storeowners like

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<sup>12</sup> “South Koreans want U.S. troops to bring families,” *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 12 December 2006.

<sup>13</sup> “General Bell ‘Family Accompanied Tours to Expand for Entire USFK,’” *Yonhap News*, 18 April 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, *Shifting Terrain*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> “Dongducheon’s ‘Yankee Market’ Walking an Enfeebled Road; Bosandong Special Tourist District also on a downward path...Decrease of American soldiers and changing of an era,” *Yonhap News*, 18 July 2010.

himself. “But base relocation must happen speedily,” Mr. Heo explained, because “Dongducheon has already sacrificed too much.”<sup>16</sup>

The past sacrifice that Mr. Heo refers to is the stigma of a *gijichon* / camptown that has overshadowed Dongducheon for nearly 60 years. The “Yankee Market” and Bosandong are byproducts of the high concentration of foreign troops and American military camps occupying 43 percent of Dongducheon’s land; with the under-development of other industries in the area, Dongducheon attracted and fostered an economy based on the buying and selling of foreign military goods. Dongducheon also gained notoriety for American military crimes ranging from frequent rapes to gruesome murders, as well as a staging ground for anti-American military protests and shouts of “Yankee go home!” Today, the stigma of Dongducheon as a *gijichon* is dissipating with the decrease of Americans stationed in the region and the subsequent development plan of the northern Gyeonggi Province. Some of the smaller camptowns have already shut down. With the closure of Camp Kyle in late 2005, Kim Yeong-Hui, a bartender who had worked in the US Base Area I in Uijeongbu since 1969, planned to work at another bar near Camp Stanley<sup>17</sup>; by 2007, the empty main street of *Bbatbul*, near the rear-gate of Camp Stanley in Uijeongbu, was also lined with boarded-up clubs and shops (Figure 21). Despite these changes, however, storeowners and the municipal assembly of Dongducheon agreed to erect a large sign demarkating “Yankee Market” in December of 2008. When the new controversial sign came under criticism, a municipal assemblyperson asked, “Why should Dongducheon hide the fact that it was a *gijichon*?” and claimed, “We have to tell the truth of our city.”<sup>18</sup>

While the “Yankee Market” in Dongducheon attempts to survive as a historical relic of some sort, attempting to prevent its fade into obscurity with neon-signs, Itaewon in Seoul hopes to revamp its image into an international shopping district. Unlike the more “typical” camptowns that largely catered to American military personnel, Itaewon has occupied a unique socio-cultural position in Korea, attracting an odd mixture of foreign soldiers, diplomats, tourists, as well as locals. While it developed the characteristic camptown economies of prostitution, black market, and apparel and souvenirs popular among military personnel, Itaewon also offered shops and restaurants that drew foreign non-military residents and tourists as well as Koreans seeking “American culture.” Itaewon has also been the central residential place of foreigners in the postwar years, with tall apartment buildings and multi-story mansions housing UN families, OEC employees, ambassadors, and foreign embassy employees. Itaewon has also been an important locus of “Americanization,” with American music and fashion filtering out through the radio and the television of the American Forces Network-Korea. Korean professional singers adopted lyrical styles of American mainstream singers, and some popular Korean singers of the 1960s began their careers singing on the Yongsan base or at clubs in Itaewon entertaining the Eighth United States Army.<sup>19</sup> The infamous red-light district called “Hooker Hill” has also occupied the heart of this district. From

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> “Camp Kyle nearly empty as last U.S. forces depart,” *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 20 October 2005.

<sup>18</sup> “Yankee Market, Dongducheon = Criticism of Its Adherence to Gijichon-ization,” *Gyungi Bokbu Shimin Shinmun*, 22 December 2008. [http://www.simin24.com/?doc=news/read.htm&ns\\_id=10480](http://www.simin24.com/?doc=news/read.htm&ns_id=10480)

<sup>19</sup> Choi, Jongil, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space,” (master’s thesis, Seoul National University, 2002), 26-7.

the late 1980s, however, Itaewon's economies declined due to the changes in the composition of the American forces in the peninsula as well as Korea's own war against crime targeted at pleasure quarters. Hooker Hill subsequently shrank to one street, and the foreign residential population also dispersed after 1995.<sup>20</sup> Ever since the announcement of the EUSA's impending move from Yongsan, moreover, the city of Seoul and Itaewon business owners have vigorously promoted the transition of this district into a gentrified international shopping and restaurant area, in order for it to leave behind its image as a place once dominated by PX goods, GIs, crime, and "Hooker Hill." That Itaewon is also the center of Islamic churches, gay clubs, as well as shops and residents of migrant laborers from Asia and Africa further indicates both the significant changes that have taken place in the last few decades, as well as the continuation of the "motley" socio-cultural contours of this place.

At the same time, the dissolution of camptowns as well as American personnel choosing to bypass altogether these borderlands has meant increased visibility of GIs venturing into the heart of Korea's mainstream. Two rape and attempted rape cases in 2007, incidents that occurred in Seoul's popular entertainment districts, reminded Koreans that they lived their everyday among the foreign military presence. In the early morning of January 14, 2007, a member of the 2ID stationed in Camp Casey in Dongducheon, repeatedly raped and beat a 67-year-old Korean woman for a 40-minute period in Hongdae, a lively district popular among university students and the younger generation. She had been on her way home from an early morning cleaning job when the 23-year-old soldier attacked her in a parking lot. Korean patrol officers captured him upon hearing the woman's screams. General Bell immediately made a statement of apology and soon placed the Hongdae district off-limits. Tried in the Korean courts, the judge sentenced the US soldier to four years in prison. At his sentencing, a Korean protester stated, "We came out here today to let USFK know that each Korean individual keeps an eye on your bad conduct and protests against it. We are aware that this rape case is just the tip of an iceberg; there must be plenty of undisclosed crimes committed by USFK."<sup>21</sup> Not even a month after the sentencing of the January rape case, two more 2ID soldiers stationed in Uijongbu were accused of attempting to rape a woman in Gangnam, another popular entertainment district in Seoul. According to the South Korean police, the two American soldiers beat and dragged the woman as she walked out of a stall in a coed bathroom, then locked the door and attempted to rape her. The woman's screams alerted a nearby business owner, and the Korean police quickly apprehended them. A week after the alleged incident, an estimated 100 to 200 protesters were to gather outside of Camp Red Cloud's main gate to ask for the handover of the two accused soldiers to Korean custody.<sup>22</sup>

These two incidences in the early months of 2007 revealed the intersection of changes that had occurred in Korea regarding the stationing of foreign military personnel.

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<sup>20</sup> In 2000, over 40,000 foreigners lived outside of Yongsan district in Seoul, while about 5000 lived in Yongsan. Ibid., 35-44.

<sup>21</sup> "Cops: Soldier raped woman three times in South Korea attack," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 18 January 2007; "Hongdae district is placed off-limits to SOFA personnel at night," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 3 February 2007; "Soldier given four years for raping elderly Korean," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 11 March 2007.

<sup>22</sup> "Protests to call for handover of U.S. troops," *Stars and Stripes Pacific edition*, 13 April 2007.



Foremost, transportation developments that better connect more remote outskirts with the Seoul metropolitan area have enabled greater physical mobility of troops. With the May 2006 lifting of the ban on American troops from Hongdae (a ban initiated by the USFK command in December 2002 because of “force-protection concerns” during the height of anti-American sentiments in Korea), and with the opening of a subway line connecting Dongducheon and Uijeongbu with Seoul, soldiers increasingly sought recreational activities in Korea’s capital. These incidences also suggested that the violence, especially toward women, perpetuated by American military personnel no longer were “contained” in the borderlands of camptowns; that both happened in the vibrant heart of Seoul compounded the shock of the crimes. While these incidences confirmed the worst images of the unruly, single, unaccompanied soldiers especially from the Dongducheon-Uijeongbu area, it also questions whether “isolating” the troops on bases is even possible. On the other hand, active Korean citizen awareness and protests surrounding both incidences and the actual trials having been carried out in Korean courts indicated both the rise of civil society and the jurisdiction changes under the revised SOFA agreements.

Even if camptowns disappear or successfully transform themselves, their historical impact in establishing and altering the bilateral agreement, SOFA, as well as the development of Korea’s civil society will have an enduring legacy. Although relegated to the peripheral-edge of national importance, clashes in these borderlands have from time to time not only garnered national attention, but also catalyzed demands for change in the greater bilateral relations. As the hair-shaving incident of 1960 in Dongducheon discussed in a earlier chapter illustrated, camptown injustices came to symbolize Korean national humiliation and indignation vis-à-vis the US and were utilized to pressure Washington to negotiate a SOFA. But the initial SOFA of 1967 lacked substantive change, as it did little to eliminate the extraterritorial privileges of the United States. Demonstrative of the initial SOFA’s weakness was the fact that the first criminal case to be tried under the Korean judicial system was not until 1992. It would take another “incident” in the Dongducheon camptown – the horrific murder of Yun Geum-i in 1992 by a private, Keneth Lee Markel III, in Bosandong<sup>23</sup> – for an American military crime to be finally tried under the Korean judicial system. Moreover, Koreans galvanized by this particularly gruesome crime demanded a SOFA reform, once again symbolizing this camptown violence as evidence of the unequal bilateral relationship and American militarism and imperialism. A decade later, the revised SOFA of 2001 expanded Korean jurisdiction, explicitly acknowledging the ROK government’s right to place the accused military personnel under Korean custody upon arrest in some of the most egregious murder or rape cases and also upon indictment in other serious cases.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) played an instrumental intermediary role of bringing to national attention, and in turn to the bilateral negotiation tables, the violence

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<sup>23</sup> On October 28<sup>th</sup> 1992, Keneth Lee Markel, III assaulted Yun’s head with a cola bottle, then penetrated her rectum with an umbrella and inserted two beer bottles into her vagina, before spraying her body with laundry detergent. Keneth Markle was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment after a long trial that reached the Supreme Court, and was imprisoned in Chun-an Youth Prison in May of 1994. Yun was 26 years old at the time of her murder, working as a prostitute in Bosandong. Lee Sohee, “Understanding the United States through the Crimes Committed by its Troops in Korea” (Seoul: Pamphlet by National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea, 2004). The gruesome details of Yun’s 1992 murder was even fictionalized in *Jade Lady Burning*, a novel by Martin Limon, a US Army veteran who served in Korea for ten years. Martin Limon, *Jade Lady Burning* (New York: Soho Press, 1992).

and grievances of the “periphery.” Conversely, camptown crimes and accidents, in particular the 1992 murder of Yun, galvanized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to exposing and preventing American military crimes. Yun’s murder initially brought together in 1992 a coalition of 23 organizations to form a joint commission. After working together for 10 months, this coalition disbanded to inaugurate the organization, “The National Campaign for Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea” (hereafter National Campaign) on October 26, 1993. By establishing the National Campaign, the coalition sought to bring military crimes to the national attention as well as to campaign to revise the SOFA.<sup>24</sup> As Katharine Moon contends, Yun’s murder served as a crucible for organized criticism of US policies and the terms and operations of the bilateral alliance; Yun “posthumously became a nationalist symbol of South Korea’s powerlessness and ‘victimization’ by the United States” and her death “a catalyst for organized activism on issues related to the U.S. troop presence.”<sup>25</sup> Other organizations such as Duraebang (My Sister’s Place, established in 1986 in Uijeongbu next to Camp Stanley) and Saeumteo (Sprouting Land, established in 1996 with centers in Dongducheon and Pyeongtaek) not only provide counseling services, education, and shelter for camptown women, but also draw attention to the local impact of the foreign troop presence by documenting and reporting local women’s experiences with violent crimes, prostitution, and economic deprivation. A nationwide umbrella organization established in 1994, the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, further connects the periphery with the center, representing local cases and personal costs at the level of national and bilateral policy dilemmas.<sup>26</sup>

Korean NGOs and CSOs are also connected to an international network, cooperating with organizations in Okinawa, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico with similar pasts and continuing challenges of living near America’s military installations. This transnational collaboration is even more relevant in the light of the trend that camptowns have become more “globalized,” with women from economically weaker nations replacing the local women in military entertainment industries of Okinawa and Korea. Both Durebang and Saeumteo have established outreach programs for foreign women working in Dongducheon and Pyeongtaek. The Korean government today and the United States Military in Korea no longer “unofficially” sanction “entertainment” and prostitution for the GIs. South Korea, in fact, has illegalized prostitution and passed anti-trafficking laws. The USFK also has a zero tolerance policy towards prostitution and human trafficking and “initiated a four-pronged approach focusing on awareness, identification, reduction, and enforcement” of this policy.<sup>27</sup> Despite these official efforts, camptown entertainment and prostitution industries still exist, albeit in perhaps more reduced and certainly altered form. Whether the proposed decrease of the US military footprints in this region along with more stringent SOFAs will also significantly alter the camptown economies still remains to be seen. What is certain is that the tensions between national governments and new citizen interest groups, who view the impacts of US

<sup>24</sup> Lee Sohee, “Understanding the United States through the Crimes Committed by its Troops in Korea.”

<sup>25</sup> Katharine H.S. Moon, “South Korean Civil Society and Alliance Politics,” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004) 51.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>27</sup> Statement of General B.B. Bell, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 7 March 2006, 37.

military forces deployed in the Asia Pacific more in terms of their social costs than their strategic value, have helped recast the issue of the US military presence in national politics.<sup>28</sup> Although camptowns and the women have occupied the national peripheral-edge, these organizations and their regional/transnational connections have raised the consciousness of national and international audiences regarding the consequences of a sustained foreign troop presence.

According to a 2006 East-West Special Report by Sheila Smith, complex social and political changes in the countries that have hosted US forces, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, has meant policy changes regarding how the American troops are stationed in these countries. In contrast to the decades past, when the US government negotiated its security interests with a far less contentious single political party or an individual, all three of these nations have become democratic societies, leading to far more complicated and tense bilateral negotiations today. The Philippines, for instance, where the US military presence dates back to the 1898 Spanish-American War, offers the most conspicuous example of the changing political climate toward the American military presence. In the early 1990s, the Philippine Senate rejected renegotiating the terms of the US military presence, with “the halls of the Senate... charged with emotion regarding the meaning of the U.S. military presence for Philippine identity.” As a result, the US Air Force and Navy had to abandon Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Facility, two of the largest US military bases in the Asia Pacific region.<sup>29</sup> National policy makers also must contend with a civil society that vocalizes the localized impact of the bilateral security agreements. The Japanese government, for example, faced intense citizen criticism for the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Okinawa Prefecture by three American Marines. Tens of thousands took to the streets of Okinawa in protest, and then Governor Masahide Ota argued before the Japanese Supreme Court that the national government disproportionately burdened Okinawa for the maintenance of the US-Japan security treaty. Crimes and accidents reverberate nationally and have changed the complexion of anti-base sentiments in these societies; new citizen interest groups are advocating for protections and rights of women and environmental conservation. In light of these political and social changes, the 2006 report recommends that as the process of realigning America’s overseas military forces proceeds,<sup>30</sup> Washington must consider these new domestic influences on governments that host US forces, must give greater attention to developing policies that mitigate the local impacts, and will need to conform to domestic laws and meet public expectations for government accountability.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Smith, *Shifting Terrain*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> The Department of Defense’s 2004 Global Posture Review announced the plans to increase the mobility and flexibility of US forces, to have fewer military deployed abroad, and to deploy them differently. Subsequently, the number of American military personnel in the Asia Pacific region reduced to 82,742 by 2005, which numbered 25,000 less than in the year 2000. These reductions mainly reflected US strategic goals, but they also coincided with growing calls for fewer US forces within these societies. More than 7,000 American military troops stationed in Japan and South Korea were redeployed to the Middle East; US military forces in Japan and Korea reduced from 40,127 in Japan and 36,754 in Korea in 2000 to 34,928 and 34,803 respectively in 2005. *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 19.

### **“We Go Together”<sup>32</sup>: ROK-US Alliance in the Global World**

In Korea, the 2002 SOFA and the 2004 Land Partnership Agreement indicate some of the ways in which increased attention to local impacts of US forces helped shape the ROK-US alliance. The years from 2002 to 2004 witnessed both the height of anti-American sentiments in Korea and the transition in the bilateral security relations from that of a cold war “brotherhood” to that of a “partnership” in the global era. The protests and negative public opinions of 2002 were a culmination of built-up anger and resentment for earlier incidences, beginning with George W. Bush’s cold reception of Korea’s then President Kim Dae-Jung in 2001. The Bush administration dismissed Kim’s “sunshine policy” of unconditional engagement of North Korea during the Bush-Kim Summit in Washington, garnering negative views of the US among Koreans who had had surged enthusiasm for thawing tensions with the north.<sup>33</sup> Further raising concerns that Washington could precipitate a crisis on the peninsula as part of its global war on terrorism, the majority of Korean legislators and public opinion polls also disapproved Bush’s State of the Union address in January of 2002, during which he singled out North Korea as a part of the “Axis of Evil.”<sup>34</sup> Civilian and military accidents, especially the death of two middle-school girls, crushed to death by a tank driven by men of the 2ID on a remote highway in June of 2002, further inflamed national grievances and resentment. With the subsequent statement that “no one was at fault” by a US military spokesperson, an outburst of popular anger toward the US exploded onto the streets with massive candlelight vigils in central Seoul, along with shouts of “Yankees, go home!” Koreans viewed the acquittal of the two servicemen by the US military tribunal as an extension of American arrogance. At the height of this anti-American sentiment, South Korea elected in December of 2002 Noh Mu-Hyun (Roh Moo-Hyun) as its new president, a former human rights and labor lawyer who asserted that he would not “kowtow” to the Americans and called for new independence in Korea’s foreign policy.

Public opinion polls in 2003 indicated a divided Korean society in its basic views toward the United States. A March 2003 poll showed that 54 percent disliked the US and 51 percent believed that North Korea’s nuclear intransigence was the result of the Bush administration’s hard-line policy.<sup>35</sup> In a September poll, 50 percent claimed they had a

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, *“We Go Together” (Gatchi Gapshida) ROK-US Alliance and USFK* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2002).

<sup>33</sup> President Kim Dae Jung, a former dissident, committed his government to a policy of dialogue and engagement with the North, referred to as the “sunshine policy,” and sought a negotiated settlement to the division on the Korean peninsula. The Korean public support for this new approach to relations with the North has been high. The Clinton Administration’s engagement with the north, such as the promise of a joint communiqué signed on October 12, 2000 by Secretary of State Madeline Albright and Vice Marshal Jo Myong-rok quickly dissipated with the inauguration of President George W. Bush. Kim Seung-hwan, “Yankee Go Home? A Historical View of South Korean Sentiment toward the United States, 2001-2004” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 25.

<sup>34</sup> Korean legislators issued a “Statement of the Ruling and Opposition Party Members in the National Assembly over President Bush’s State of the Union Speech” on February 4, 2002 that “Bush and his hawkish foreign policy advisers were heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula and expanding the war on terrorism in an attempt to justify an increased U.S. defense budget, detract from the Enron scandal, and lay the groundwork to win the November elections.” A report by *Sisa Journal* on March 1, 2002, also indicated that 6 in 10 registered voters disapproved of axis of evil statement in South Korea. *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> “Opinion Poll: Mutual Feelings between the U.S. and Korean Peoples,” *Chosun Ilbo*, 10 March 2003, as

favorable view of the US while the other 50 percent had a critical view; the views were even more polarized when considering 18.5 percent mentioned the US as the country they liked most, while 23.7 percent mentioned it as the country they liked least. Favorable opinion of the US-ROK bilateral relationship also decreased to 32.5 percent in 2003 compared to the 60 to 80 percent range recorded by Gallup Korea for the US Department of State from 1996 to September 2001. Eighty-seven percent, however, still acknowledged the importance of the US military to Korea's security, especially in light of the heightened nuclear tensions with North Korea; 73 percent wanted continued US military presence and 45 percent indicated North Korea as the country most threatening to the security of South Korea, followed by the United States with 26 percent.<sup>36</sup> By the following year, a poll conducted in January of 2004 indicated that the United States (39%) had replaced North Korea (33%) for the first place among countries considered most threatening to the security of South Korea.<sup>37</sup> After fifty years of alliance, South Koreans expressed deep division and ambivalence toward the United States, perhaps most ironically indicated by the contradiction that Koreans considered the United States indispensable to the security of South Korea as well as its greatest threat.

The polarized public opinions indicated fundamental changes in Korean society, beyond the resentment triggered by the series of 2001-2002 developments and from growing difference in perspective toward North Korea. The discontent with the state of US-ROK relations reflected historical grievances combined with a maturing civil society and increasing political participation of the younger and politically progressive 3-8-6 generation.<sup>38</sup> Foremost, the historical mistrust of US policy intentions that suggested compromising Korean interest for American regional aims – from the Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905 to dividing the peninsula in 1945, and the continued support of authoritarian regimes in exchange for cold war security alliance – partly explains the root of anti-Americanism. In more recent decades, the Nixon Doctrine and President Jimmy Carter's announcement in 1979 of intention to withdraw all troops further reminded South Koreans of their keen vulnerability to uncoordinated US initiatives.<sup>39</sup> Until the early 1980s, however, most Koreans still viewed American influence positively with a 1982 poll showing that Koreans chose the United States (61.6%) as the most liked country.<sup>40</sup> The Gwangju massacre of May 1980, however, galvanized the anti-American movement. As the government-suppressed information regarding Gwangju began to circulate underground, Koreans debated over whether the United States had implicitly or explicitly supported Chun Doo-hwan's so-called "creeping" coup d'état in 1980 and his

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cited in Kim Seung-hwan, "Yankee Go Home?"

<sup>36</sup> Eric Larson, "Analysis of the September 2003 JongAng Ilbo, CSIS, and RAND Polls" in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 94-105.

<sup>37</sup> "Number One Threat to South Korea's Security is the United States," *Chosun Ilbo*, 12 January 2004, as quoted in Kim Seung-hwan, "Yankee Go Home?"

<sup>38</sup> 3-8-6 generation refers to those who turned 30 in the 1990s, attended universities and participated in the student anti-US oriented democratic movements of the 1980s, and was born in the 1960s.

<sup>39</sup> Derek J. Mitchell, "Findings" in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 109-110.

<sup>40</sup> 1982 poll by *Donga Ilbo* as quoted in Gi-Wook Shin, "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective" *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (Aug., 1996): 793.

subsequent violent suppression of the Gwangju democratic uprising.<sup>41</sup> After the Gwangju massacre, dissident intellectuals and activists no longer considered the United States a supporter of democracy, but rather its hindrance.<sup>42</sup> Although initially an intellectual movement, anti-Americanism then permeated into the broader society.<sup>43</sup> Generational change and its factors of age and education level also explained in part the pronounced polarization, with the older and less educated holding more favorable opinions versus younger and or more educated expressing less favorable views on the US and the bilateral relations.<sup>44</sup> In sum, a study put forth in 2004 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. suggested that “the growth of democratic values, development of civil society, economic development, generational change, and an overall growing sense of national confidence and pride—might be changing the orientation of South Korean society and affecting its view of its long-time protector and ally, with potential detriment to the long-term health of the relationship.”<sup>45</sup> Reflecting these social changes, the study contended that the heightened tension in the fifty-year alliance stemmed in great part from South Korea “no longer accept[ing] the notion of a ‘big brother/little brother’ relationship.”<sup>46</sup>

Did the Korean discontents toward the United States in 2002-2003 and diverging policy directions concerning their mutual cold war enemy, North Korea, indicate the end of the alliance in the post-cold war era? The December 2002 election of Noh and the early 2003 American response certainly seemed to suggest that the half-century-old “brotherhood” stood at a crossroad. Critical of anti-American protests and deeming South Korea as ingrates, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld blindsided President-elect

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<sup>41</sup> David Kang and Paul Chamberlin, “A History of U.S.-ROK Relations to 2002,” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 12-9.

<sup>42</sup> Intellectuals and activists “began to articulate explicitly their belief that national liberation from U.S. dominance was a prerequisite to Korean democratization,” according to Gi-Wook Shin. William Gleysteen, the US ambassador to South Korea at the time, has admitted that the 20<sup>th</sup> infantry division under the U.S. commander moved to Gwangju from Seoul with American consent. Shin, “South Korean Anti-Americanism,” 794.

<sup>43</sup> Anti-Americanism permeated particularly among the youth, educated, middle class, and college students. Growing American economic pressure to open up Korean markets, when Korea achieved trade surplus with the United States in the mid-1980s, further contributed to popularizing anti-Americanism. The US demanded greater domestic market access for American products, including agricultural crops and capital goods, which pushed even otherwise conservative and pro-American farmers to take anti-American stances. *Ibid.*, 801-2.

<sup>44</sup> The poll of September 2003 revealed that 35.4 percent in their twenties chose the U.S. as the least-favored country, while only 4 percent chose North Korea. On the other hand, 25 percent of those in their fifties chose North Korea as the least-favored while 5 percent chose the U.S. Moreover, more than one-third of those in their twenties and thirties supported the withdrawal of USFK, while only 8.5% in their fifties or older supported the withdrawal. Lee Sook-jong, “Generational Change in South Korea: Implications for the U.S.-ROK Alliance” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 43-6.

<sup>45</sup> Derek J. Mitchell, “Introduction” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 2.

<sup>46</sup> Derek J. Mitchell, “Does Popular Sentiment Matter? What’s at Stake?” in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 6.

Noh by unilaterally announcing in January 2003 the plans to relocate American troops away from the DMZ and Seoul.<sup>47</sup> Following this peak of tensions, however, the spring of 2003 also witnessed the beginnings of reconciliation with both sides softening their hard line stances. During the Noh-Bush Summit in Washington in May of 2003, President Noh announced his decision to dispatch South Korean noncombatant units along with \$200 million of aid to Iraq and acknowledged the importance of the US forces in Korea for its peace and stability. In light of this decision, Seoul asked Washington to soften its position on North Korea, to which Bush offered to provide guarantees of multilateral security to North Korea in exchange for ending its nuclear weapons, reiterating his intention not to seek a military solution.<sup>48</sup> Korean protests of 2002-2003 as well as the Noh administration's support of the American "war on terror," in contrast to Korea's participation in America's war in Vietnam, further indicated the recent changes within Korea as well as between the two nations. The more "dependent" Korea of the cold war benefited economically and the Park Jung Hee government gained political legitimacy for its involvement in Vietnam, but Noh lost political credibility for his acquiescence to American demands and the more "independent" Korea now had to financially support its former beneficiary's new war in the post-cold war era. By late 2003, the outmoded cold war alliance began to be reconfigured into an evolved "global partnership."

Even in this call for renegotiations, the historical foundation of the alliance had not been forgotten. Evoking the relations "forged out of blood" during the Korean War, Washington and Seoul advocated that both had more to gain than lose from maintaining the bilateral relations. Korea's Ministry of National Defense published a booklet, "We Go Together" (*Gatchi Gapshida*), in a public relations effort amidst the growing anti-Americanism of 2002 "to put various current issues into proper perspective." The booklet highlights the half-century of "a staunch alliance" between the two nations, a "blood-forged" bond from "the first major confrontation between the free world and the communists in which...the spread of communism in Asia was stopped and the foundation for democracy laid."<sup>49</sup> It reminds readers that the war should not be forgotten, and despite the recent conflicts, the Ministry of Defense claims that the relationship has been reaffirmed into a "global partnership" that "recognized the need to elevate our blood-forged relationship in alliance that could better take on the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." It cites Korea's participation in "Operation Desert Storm," United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations, and "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan as proofs of Korea's greater contribution to the global challenges.<sup>50</sup> The United States, in a 2002 Annual Report to the President and the Congress, also classified Korea, along with Japan and Australia, as "Core Partners" in the Asia Pacific "in maintaining and promoting market economies and democratic values, while sharing the responsibility of the world peace."<sup>51</sup> The 2004 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies also

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<sup>47</sup> Kim Seung-hwan, "Yankee Go Home?" 30.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 33-4.

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of National Defense, ROK, "*We Go Together*," forward, 42, 9.

<sup>50</sup> The pamphlet states, "As a beneficiary of the UN's support during the Korean War, it is Korea's duty to reciprocate what we have received through participating in various peace-keeping operations. Additionally, since the US is the main contributor behind the PKO [Peace Keeping Operation] activities, it is natural that Korea participates in PKO activities as its ally." Ibid., 44-5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 46-7.

reiterated that Korea and the US still had more to gain from maintaining the alliance, in terms of mutual economic benefits as well as security interests, and recommended ways to adapt the outdated alliance into a new, more evolved partnership. It warned that the steady deterioration of the bilateral relations would have the “profound cost” of the “two strong and proud societies, which have stood together as blood brothers through hot and cold wars for more than half a century, would sacrifice their relationship just at the point when the mutual benefits, combined capabilities, and common interests might be at their apex.”<sup>52</sup>

To reflect this more “equal and balanced” partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the two sides agreed to a revised SOFA that expanded Korean jurisdiction rights over American troops stationed in Korea while also increasing “burden sharing” on the part of the ROK for the cost of stationing the USFK. In essence, increased “rights” accompanied increased (financial) “responsibilities” for South Korea. Although the first revision of the Status of Forces Agreement since its initial 1966 agreement took place in 1991, it took another round of revisions to agree on noticeable changes. This second SOFA revision, with negotiations begun in 1995 and changes formally signed in 2001, features the following: new environmental provisions that stipulates the US respect relevant Korean environmental laws and standards as well as Environmental Governing Standards to be reviewed biennially and updated<sup>53</sup>; criminal jurisdiction that allows Korea to retain custody of a US service-member accused of a heinous crime of murder or an egregious rape, without handing the accused over to the US authorities<sup>54</sup>; requirement that labor services by Korean employees within US bases conform with domestic labor laws and regulations<sup>55</sup>; and established provisions on non-criminal proceedings that laid the legal framework for Korean nationals who have suffered damages or injuries due to US military operations or traffic accidents. These revisions addressed some of the major

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<sup>52</sup> The report claimed that, “the stability engendered by U.S. alliance relationships in East Asia has benefited the United States in a full range of its political, military, economic, and strategic interests, all of which would be placed in some jeopardy by an end to its alliance with South Korea.” The study suggested that the US understand that South Koreans’ call for a “‘more equal and balanced’ relationship with the U.S. is a cry for respect,” that the US should not make unilateral decisions on matters affecting Korea without first consulting South Korean leaders, and that the two countries should “reinvigorate the SOFA Joint Committee process for handling bilateral disputes.” South Korea, on the other hand, should “back up its demand for equality and respect as a developed and mature power by agreeing publicly to engage in a broad range of international security matters in partnership with the U.S.” Derek Mitchell, ed., *Strategy and Sentiment*, 5-10, 14, 114-121.

<sup>53</sup> USFK and ROK Ministry of Environment agreed to mutually request information on issues that can impact the environment as well as establish review and renewal procedures for the USFK’s Environmental Governing Standards (EGS). “Environmental Information Exchange and Access Procedures” was produced and adopted at the SOFA Joint Committee on January 18, 2002, to mutually notify “imminent and substantial endangerment to the public safety, human health or the natural environment” on a USFK facility or the surrounding ROK territory. Ministry of National Defense, “*We Go Together*,” 80.

<sup>54</sup> “The timing of the transfer of custody from US to Korean authorities was brought forward from “the conclusion of a trial” to the “time of indictment,” for crimes including murder, rape, kidnapping for ransom, trafficking in illegal drugs and manufacturing illegal drugs, arson, robbery with a dangerous weapon, attempts to commit the foregoing offenses, assault resulting in death, driving under the influence of alcohol resulting in death, and fleeing from the crime scene after committing a traffic accident resulting in death. *Ibid.*, 67-8.

<sup>55</sup> SOFA revisions in 1991 and in 2001 addressed for the first time the lack of any legal protection for those employed on foreign bases. For one, they now cannot be terminated without “just cause.”



contentions that had existed in garrisoning American troops in Korea for the past fifty years, especially the grievances and concerns of Koreans who came into everyday contacts on the ground with the foreign troops – communities near American installations impacted by the environmental pollutions or dangers of accidents and damages, those employed on foreign bases who had had no labor protection, and the people, mostly women, of camptowns who had been the most frequent victims of heinous crimes of rape and murder at the hands of America’s soldiers. The new SOFA certainly did not guarantee an end to the problems, both small and large, arising from coexisting in these borderlands. The 2007 arson and robbery of a hair salon in Dongducheon by a 2ID private stationed in Camp Casey is but of one example of continued conflicts (Figure 23). For another larger instance, the treatment of on-duty crimes and accidents, including negligence, remains under the jurisdiction of the US military. Therefore, despite the fact that the 2002 tank accident that killed the two girls happened on a civilian road, the terms of the SOFA precluded any accountability by the Americans under Korean law.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the locals now at least have legal protections and channels of recourse while Americans have to abide by increased regulations and accept responsibilities and repercussions. It took fifty years of countless conflicts in these borderlands of American camps and their Korean camptowns before both governments finally acknowledged and addressed the grievance in official legal terms. The 2002 SOFA revisions finally “balanced” somewhat the unequal treaties that allowed American wielding extraterritoriality privileges in the stationing of its troops in Korea for half a century.

Along with this revised SOFA came greater responsibilities for Korea, namely in the rise of “burden sharing” of maintaining American troops, expenditures for international organizations, and commitments to global conflicts. As aforementioned, the ROK has contributed to the UN Peacekeeping forces as well as American military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, Korea shares a certain part of the total stationing cost of the USFK, such as wages of Koreans employed on American bases, military construction, aircraft maintenance and other logistics support, under the Special Measures Agreement (SMA) of 1991. According to the 1999 data, Korea’s direct and indirect support totaled \$721 million, which comprised 35 percent of the total stationing cost of \$2.06 billion.<sup>57</sup> Korea is covering a growing percentage of the stationing costs of the US troops, with its commitment for 2007-2008 amounting to 41 percent of the USFK’s non-personnel stationing costs, according to the US calculations. The Korean Ministry of Defense, however, contended that the ROK’s commitment had already reached 53 percent in 2007. This calculation discrepancy was in part due to the USFK not including indirect ROK payments, such as uncollected land-rent and tax exemptions, as well as manpower benefits of KATUSA inclusion into the USFK (which means less salary expenditure for the USFK).<sup>58</sup>

The 2004 Land Partnership Plan, along with the 2002 SOFA, further indicated the convergence of America’s global defense posture change and Korea’s own

<sup>56</sup> Sheila Smith, *Shifting Terrain*, 33.

<sup>57</sup> In comparison, Japan’s “burden sharing” amounted to 79 percent (\$5.181 billion out of \$6.558) of the total, making Japan the greatest burden sharer among nations hosting the American military. *Ibid.*, 70-1.

<sup>58</sup> “Consistent Contradictions: the Mismatch between an Imagined North Korea and the Real Role of the USFK” (Seoul: Special Report by the National Campaign for Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea, 2007).

democratization resulting in the dramatic American troop reconfiguration on the peninsula. General Bell testified about the changes on the Korean peninsula before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services in April of 2007:

Republic of Korea is a terrific ally. We've had some issues with our ally certainly in the last 10 years. We've worked through all those. They have become a first-world country...with all the trappings of the most advanced nations in the world. And so they've been expressing a level of independence, and God bless them for that. This is a great success story for the United States of America and coming to the aid of an ally who was war-ravaged and helping them for the long haul to get on their feet and to become a major world power. So, in that regard, it is now time for us to turn over more and more of the security responsibility of the Republic of Korea to the Koreans...Part of that is an agreement...to move our forces from north of Seoul and in Seoul to south of Seoul, thus ensuring that the South Koreans are responsible for dealing directly with the threat along the DMZ. And second, getting our forces literally out from under artillery range. And last, allowing us to consolidate at efficient hubs, instead of these often-times pathetic little enclaves where we are still living and working.<sup>59</sup>

Bell conveyed both patronizing pride for America having helped the once hapless Third-World ally into becoming today's "first-world country" as well as the need to change the contours of the American military presence in Korea to better reflect these circumstantial changes of the host nation. As discussed in the introduction to this study, in the context of contestation over the farming villages of Daechuri and Doduri, this relocation and consolidation of the American military presence in Korea served both Korean and American purposes; the majority of Koreans welcomed the removal of American troops from Yongsan in Seoul for economic and symbolic motivations while Washington sought to increase the mobility and flexibility of US forces under its global posturing review of 2004. The reduction of US military forces deployed in Korea from around 37,000 in 2000 to 28,500 today as well as the upcoming transfer of wartime operational control to the ROK military constituted a significant assertion of Korean independence and subsequently, the shift of America's military role in the Korean peninsula from that of a leading to a supporting role.

The anti-American protests of 2002-2003 thus were situated in the juncture of historical resentments against the United States as well as that of Korea's political and social changes – its growing democratic participation and confidence that asserted greater independence vis-à-vis their former "older brother." This dialectic of grievances and confidence triggered a bilateral renegotiation that better addressed the post-cold war world and its concerns. And these "growing pains" further reflected the changes in American global defense posture that faced negotiations with an Asia Pacific region calling for a more "equal and balanced" partnership. Finally, the living legacies of the intimate cold war – both the changes, such as the galvanization of Korean civil society, as

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<sup>59</sup> Transcriptions of Senate Armed Services Committee, *US Military Command Authorization Requests for Fiscal Year 2008: Hearing before Committee on Armed Services*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 24 April 2007.

well as the unchanged, or unresolved camp-camptown grievances – continue to influence the ways in which Korea and the US will “go together” into the post-cold war world.

Figure 20. Horizontal Yongsan, Vertical Seoul



American athletic field and hospital surrounded by towering buildings of Seoul.



One-story officers' homes replete with lawns juxtaposed to Korean apartment homes bordering Yongsan compound.

Photographs from 2007

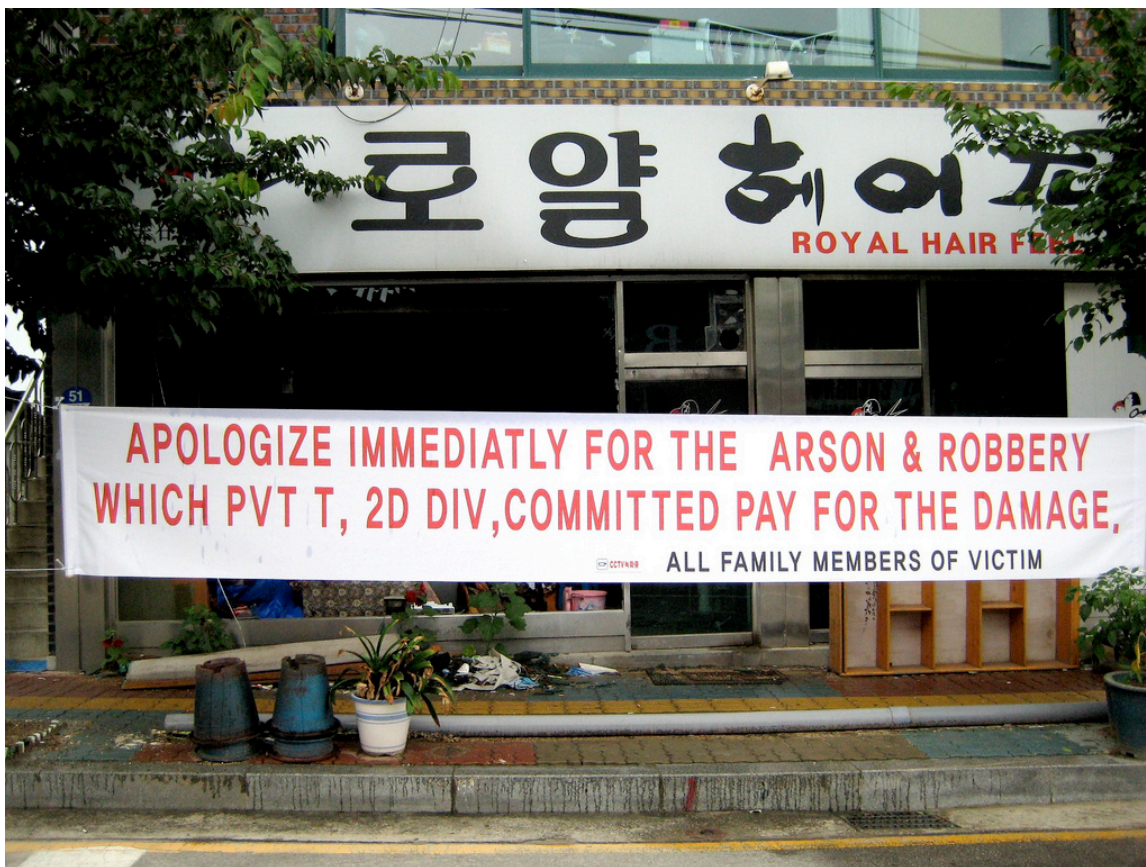
Figure 21. Camptown Closings



Closed shops and silent streets of *Bbatbul*,  
located adjacent to the rear gate of Camp Stanley, Uijongbu

Photographs from 2007

Figure 22. Camptowns Continued



Dongducheon, near Camp Casey

Photograph from 2007

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