

# FRUSTRATED ALIGNMENT: THE PACIFIC PACT PROPOSALS FROM 1949 TO 1954 AND SOUTH KOREA–TAIWAN RELATIONS

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*This research deals with South Korea–Taiwan relations from 1949, when the concept of a “Pacific Pact” was first introduced, to 1954, when the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League (APACL) was formed. Thus far, studies on the regional order of East Asia during the early Cold War period have focused on U.S. policies toward East Asia and U.S. relations with individual East Asian states. In contrast, this present work examines the multilateral nature of the international relations in the region at the time. The extended cooperation, conflict, and competition between South Korea (ROK) and Taiwan (ROC) over the Pacific Pact from 1949 to 1954 vividly show how actively the two nations attempted to engage in the international arena to ensure their own security. Certainly, the primary purpose of this pact was not to form an autonomous regional alliance independent of the United States. In post-World War II Asia, the United States sought to reorganize a new regional order in Asia, with Japan at the center of this proposed order. Under these circumstances, Taiwan and South Korea, standing at the front line of the Cold War, were desperate to attract the U.S.’s attention. Once the two new nations had secured U.S. military and economic aid, however, they no longer pursued their former aggressive and expansive diplomatic strategies. After the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty, signed on December 2, 1954, Taiwan discarded the Pacific Pact as an offensive and defensive treaty and concentrated on the APACL. South Korea, for its part, did not further pursue the Pacific Pact after the ROK–U.S. Mutual Defense Agreement was concluded on October 1, 1953.*

*South Korea and Taiwan maintained an exceptionally close relationship even after signing individual treaties with the United States. At times, the two nations competed to play a leading role in the international relations of Asia. Yet, their differences of opinion did not cross the line of cooperation between the two countries until the collapse of the Soviet Union brought an end to the Cold War system: South Korea then normalized relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1992.*

**Keywords:** South Korea; Taiwan; Cold War; the Pacific Pact; South Korea–Taiwan relations

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## INTRODUCTION

Around 1950, when the global tension of the Cold War was escalating, South Korea and Taiwan sought to build a strong alliance. In December 1949, when the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China<sup>1</sup> fled mainland China and secured a power base on the island of Taiwan, South Korea became the first state in the world to recognize the legitimacy of this provisional government vis-à-vis the communist People's Republic of China, and immediately moved its embassy from mainland China to Taiwan. Six months later, in June 1950, when the Korean War broke out on the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan also immediately responded, suggesting that it would send troops to assist South Korea against the invasion of the communist regime of North Korea. This extraordinarily strong alliance between South Korea and Taiwan shows that they had officially discarded their two-millennia-long hierarchical relations and had jointly entered the newly established “modern” international arena. Why had these old but new states so quickly replaced long-standing hierarchical relations with rather practical and strategic ones, and what were the motives behind this exceptional move? One of the key markers in investigating South Korea–Taiwan relations around 1950 is the Pacific Pact.

The idea of the Pacific Pact first emerged in response to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a U.S.-centered collective security system for Europe in 1949. Following World War II, the capitalist world was reorganized under American leadership, and Asian countries also responded to this changed international setting. As a practical means of both containing the Soviet Union and maintaining the capitalist system, the United States promoted regional integration, thus rebuilding the devastated Western nations and binding non-communist nations to the capitalist world. In Europe, this master plan was executed through implementation of the Marshall Plan and the establishment of NATO.<sup>2</sup> The leaders of anti-communist countries in Asia also anticipated the growing role of the United States in regional security and envisaged an Asian version of NATO. However, the U.S.'s non-involvement policy in Asia drove them to seek alternative measures to fill the security vacuum in the region.

South Korea and Taiwan, situated on the front line of the Cold War confrontation, were more desperate than any other Asian countries. This led them to develop a regional security system in the Asian region on their own initiative: the Pacific Pact. The Pacific Pact was one of the major parameters in structuring Asian international relations during the Cold War period. The primary goal of the present work is to offer an in-depth explication of the initial formation of South Korea–Taiwan relations by investigating their collaborative, but eventually unsuccessful, promotion of the Pacific Pact before and after the Korean War.

At present, scholarly interest in South Korea–Taiwan relations has been eclipsed by the rising importance of South Korea–China relations. Works on the international relations of East Asia in the 1950s have also long focused on the roles of the United States and Japan. As

1 For the sake of distinction and convenience, in the current article I use its official title to refer to the Republic of China between 1912 and 1949 and “Taiwan” to refer to the Republic of China after its settlement in Taiwan.

2 Rho 2002, p. 188.

a result, other Asian countries have been relegated to the periphery.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, studies on the relations of South Korea, North Korea, China, and Taiwan have been confined to the issues of division and unification. Therefore, the topic of South Korea–Taiwan relations remains under-examined.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the historical evolution of South Korea–Taiwan relations is integral to understanding the Cold War system in Asia until the 1990s. Although diplomatic ties between South Korea and Taiwan were severed when South Korea normalized relations with the People’s Republic of China in 1992, following the end of the Cold War tension, the two countries have not yet entirely escaped the Cold War’s fetters in their continued confrontations with their socialist counterparts. Furthermore, the questions of division and unification remain unsolved. These issues are essential to unraveling today’s international relations in East Asia. For these reasons, South Korea–Taiwan relations in the 1950s figure prominently in understanding East Asia’s contemporary regional security landscape.

Many scholarly works have already touched on the context and significance of the Pacific Pact, including several on the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League (APACL) of 1954, South Korean President Rhee Syngman’s foreign policy, and regional security.<sup>5</sup> However, because these topics have been approached separately, these studies have failed to explain South Korea–Taiwan relations from the wider perspective of the regional order. That said, some studies have broadly but briefly approached the Pacific Pact from the perspective of how the United States envisioned an Asia-Pacific security system, including Australia and New Zealand.<sup>6</sup> However, no study has approached South Korea–Taiwan relations in the 1950s from the perspective of international relations at the time, or examined the Asian Cold War system in relation to the domestic conditions of the states involved.

To fill this gap, the present work describes how the Pacific Pact proposal of 1949 developed into the APACL after the Korean War, and thus explains how South Korea and Taiwan both cooperated with and competed against each other to form an anti-communist bulwark in Asia. Thus, this article sheds fresh light on South Korea–Taiwan relations from the international and regional perspectives and ultimately uncovers their survival strategies of adjusting to the policies of the United States during the Cold War period.

One of the main reasons that South Korea–Taiwan relations have been relatively neglected is the lack of sources. To date, studies have relied mostly on the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions, called *Foreign Relations of the*

3 For this, see Cumings 1987, Bix 1974, and Lee 1996. Recently, Chang Su-Ya has studied the U.S.’s policies over Taiwan in relation to the Korean War; see Chang 2011.

4 South Korea–Taiwan relations are briefly mentioned in official works such as *Guoshiguan bian* 2000. Shao 1980, authored by the first ROC ambassador to South Korea Shao Yulin 邵毓麟, is an important source. Research publications on South Korea–Taiwan relations from the Korean perspective are almost non-existent. Research publications on foreign relations in South Korea and Taiwan primarily concentrate on relations with the United States and Japan, in which South Korea–Taiwan relations are only subsidiarily discussed.

5 Rho 2002 discusses the Pacific Pact. Choi 1999 analyzes the process by which the Pacific Pact transformed into the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League. Park 2006 and Kim 1990 analyze Taiwan’s relations with Japan and the United States around the Pacific Pact. Cho 2008 analyzes the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League from the role and perspective of Syngman Rhee. In addition, Lee 1986 gives a thorough analysis of the relations between South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States at the time the Pacific Pact’s concept first came up.

6 Limb 1951, Mabon 1988. For the changes in the collective security system in the region after the failure of the Asia-Pacific security system, see Matsuda 2003.

*United States (FRUS)*. South Korea preserves almost no diplomatic documents, so most Korean-language sources on the Pacific Pact and other diplomatic relations consist of materials published in Korean newspapers. Recently, Taiwan opened its diplomatic archive from the 1950s to the public. This archive includes documents not only on South Korea–Taiwan relations but also on the foreign policies of the United States on Taiwan and the foreign policies of Taiwan on Asia. Up to this point, no study has used this important source in re-examining South Korea–Taiwan relations. Primarily using this unexplored source, *Waijiaobu dang'an ziliao* 外交部檔案資料 (*Taiwan Diplomatic Documents*), stored in the Archives of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, this article elucidates South Korea–Taiwan relations from 1949, when the concept of the Pacific Pact was first introduced, to 1954, when the APACL was formed. In addition, it examines the different strategic circumstances in which South Korea and Taiwan were placed as they promoted the idea of the Pacific Pact, along with the cycle of cooperation and conflict between the two countries at the time.

## THE INITIAL PROMOTION OF THE PACIFIC PACT AND ITS FRUSTRATION: 1949–1950

At the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the superpowers of the new international order, prompting other countries to seek a security umbrella provided by one or other of these two powerful nations. Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. had a plan to economically reintegrate the Asian region and place Japan at the center of this new network. Yet, it also adopted a policy of maintaining the military status quo of the region, in order to avoid unnecessary confrontations with the Asian communist countries as well as the Soviet Union. In this context, most of the Asian countries belonging to the so-called Free World sought strong alliances with the United States. They also attempted to build up an independent, albeit not purely autonomous, regional security alliance with other Asian countries to fill the security vacuum. This effort, however, was not compatible with the U.S.'s status quo military policy in Asia, so it was not successful. As discussed in the next section, the outbreak of the Korean War galvanized this drive to organize a self-protective security system once again.

In the present section, I examine the background and process of the initial surfacing and eventual frustration of the Pacific Pact as a semi-independent regional security system. More specifically, I investigate the collaboration between South Korea and Taiwan in forging this regional security system and its correlation with their strategic approaches to the United States during the pre-Korean War period between 1949 and 1950.

The idea of the Pacific Pact, first promoted in concert by South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, stemmed from the political realities of the nations involved. After losing control of mainland China and relocating to Taiwan in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek wanted to have a shot at expanding the Chinese civil war into an international confrontation between the communist and capitalist blocs via the formation of the Pacific Pact. The withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the Korean Peninsula on June 29, 1949 strongly motivated Rhee Syngman to seek out an alternative security system. As detailed below, the Philippines also pushed forward the idea for the sake of its own security. Given the absence of strong

foreign support, particularly from the United States, it is no exaggeration to say that the Pacific Pact was an inevitable choice for these countries.

The establishment of NATO in Europe encouraged Asian leaders to establish an Asian version of that collective regional security system with the support of the United States. Even before the official announcement of the formation of NATO on April 26, 1949, President Elpidio Quirino of the Philippines proclaimed the idea of the Pacific Pact on March 20, 1949, and on March 23 President Rhee responded to it, expressing his sympathy for Quirino's proposal.<sup>7</sup> The Philippines was for the pact, given its security concerns that if the United States would not provide it with sufficient military equipment under the military assistance agreement, it needed an extra measure to ensure its security.<sup>8</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, faced with the strong resistance of Mao's Communist Party at the time, was also naturally inclined toward this proposal.

The primary objective of forming the Pacific Pact was not, however, to construct an independent and autonomous regional security system. Chiang intended to avail himself of the discussions on the pact to induce change in the U.S.'s policy on Asian regional security. In light of the U.S.'s non-involvement policy in the complex situations of China and Korea, it seems that Chiang was acting out of strategic considerations, hoping that the Pacific Pact—which would mean a certain degree of independence of Asian countries from the U.S.—would provoke the U.S. into engaging actively in the regional order.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by the formation of NATO in Europe, Rhee also envisioned the Pacific Pact as a collective regional security system under the leadership of the United States.<sup>10</sup> Due to the planned evacuation of U.S. forces from Korea by June 1949, Rhee had already requested military aid from the U.S. in order to replenish much-needed military equipment and create a power balance with North Korea.<sup>11</sup> Realizing that South Korea could barely maintain its domestic security even with the assistance of the U.S.'s planned military aid, the Rhee administration also tried to take advantage of the discussions on the Pacific Pact to induce the U.S.'s written commitment to the defense of South Korea. Rhee believed that, in confrontation with the Communist Bloc in the Cold War system, the United States must take up responsibility as the commander in chief, policing every corner of the "Free World," and that the security of South Korea as well as the Asian region greatly depended on the U.S.'s unflagging commitment.<sup>12</sup>

The design for the Pacific Pact, however, soon faced objections. Postwar Asian nations all had different interests in terms of security. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India immediately dismissed the plan for the Pacific Pact as premature.<sup>13</sup> On May 18, 1949, then U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson also publicly announced that there was a

7 *Collection of President Syngman Rhee's Statements*, p. 144.

8 *FRUS* 1949, vol. 7, part 2, pp. 1123–25.

9 Lee 1986, pp. 303, 305.

10 *Dong-a Ilbo*, September 3, 1949.

11 Rho 2002, pp. 189–90.

12 Oliver 1978, p. 310.

13 Lee 1986, p. 302.

long way to go before the formation of the Pacific Pact.<sup>14</sup> He argued that, unlike NATO, which had begun with the shared security goal of defending Europe against the Soviet threat, formation of a collective security system in Asia would not be fruitful until Asian nations were able to solve more pressing internal problems, such as liberation from Western and Japanese colonialism and domestic political instability. In response, India's Nehru also added that Asia was not prepared for an anti-communist alliance.<sup>15</sup> Due to the U.S.'s non-involvement policy, the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea were still exposed to the threat of communist expansionism, whereas Southeast Asian nations, which were geographically distant from the Cold War front line, had less interest in the Pacific Pact.<sup>16</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea willingly collaborated on materializing the idea of the Pacific Pact with all possible speed. Three months after Quirino's announcement, a summit meeting between Chiang Kai-shek and Quirino took place at Baguio in the Philippines, on July 10 and 11, 1949. The two leaders agreed that the Asian nations should form an alliance for the sake of national as well as regional security.<sup>17</sup> Rhee Syngman viewed the Baguio summit as a meaningful step toward organizing a regional anti-communist alliance. He also declared that South Korea was ready to be a part of this alliance and, in the same vein, requested both Quirino and Chiang to make a visit to South Korea.<sup>18</sup>

Chiang, desiring a speedy formation of the Pacific Pact, immediately responded to Rhee's request. Chiang visited South Korea on August 6, 1949, and had two rounds of meetings with Rhee in Jinhae, a southern coastal city, on August 7, 1949. On August 8, the two leaders issued a joint statement, declaring that they agreed to pursue the idea of a regional anti-communist security system and requesting that Quirino soon hold a preliminary meeting for it at Baguio.<sup>19</sup>

The nascent South Korea–Taiwan collaboration, however, encountered critical problems from the beginning. On August 4, 1949, two days prior to Chiang's visit to South Korea, the U.S. Department of State published the China White Paper, in which the department announced that Washington would no longer support the Chinese Nationalist government due to its rampant corruption and extreme inefficiency.<sup>20</sup> The publication not only delivered a devastating blow to the Nationalist government's struggle for self-preservation but made it clear that the United States had no intention of joining or backing up the Pacific Pact.<sup>21</sup>

This change in the U.S.'s policy on Taiwan was linked to a new strategic approach in Sino-Soviet relations. The U.S. Department of State predicted that despite the PRC's and

14 Oliver 1978, p. 310.

15 *Dong-a Ilbo*, May 17, 1949.

16 Rho 2002, p. 191.

17 Shao 1980, p. 116.

18 *Collection of President Rhee Syngman's Statements*, 144.

19 *Dong-a Ilbo*, August 9, 1949.

20 Shao 1980, p. 122.

21 Lee 1986, p. 273.

the USSR's shared ideological foundation, Sino-Soviet relations were bound to deteriorate sooner or later, given several potential areas of conflict, such as territorial disputes and competition over leadership in the Communist Bloc. On this basis, the United States speculated that the PRC could become the next Yugoslavia, if the United States continued to promote friendly relations and provide necessary economic aid to it. Washington believed that this new U.S. China policy was a better alternative than the impracticality of military intervention in this region.<sup>22</sup> According to the 1949 China White Paper, Washington believed that the only way to restore the Chinese Nationalist government on mainland China would be to provide enormous economic and military aid to it. The U.S. adopted a more diplomatic strategy, however, because it was convinced that providing such aid would prompt the Soviets to intervene, and also because the U.S. lacked economic and military resources on the scale that would be needed.<sup>23</sup>

Soon after the summit at Baguio, the United States officially stated that most Asian nations were not yet ready for this collective action.<sup>24</sup> In addition to its changed policy on Sino-Soviet relations, the more fundamental reason for this attitude was closely related to Washington's grand plan for an economic regional integration in Asia. The first step of this plan was to economically integrate non-communist Asian nations and place Japan at the center of this integration. The next step was to gradually develop this economic association into a collective security system. On the one hand, this strategy meant that the United States was determined to treat Japan not merely as one of many defeated countries but as one of its strong allies.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the United States maintained democratization and non-militarization as the pillars of its Japan policy so as to avoid the Chinese and Soviet suspicion that it might plan to use Japan as a U.S. military stronghold against the communist alliance.<sup>26</sup>

To forestall the formation of a collective military security system in Asia, the United States also drove a wedge between South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines right before the Jinhae meeting between Rhee and Chiang. To realize its new Asia policy instead, the United States promised Quirino military aid and urged him, in return, to persuade other Asian nations to turn their attention to its plan for an economic regional integration.<sup>27</sup> In response, on August 3, 1949, three days before Chiang's visit to Jinhae, Quirino released an official statement that the primary objective of the Pacific Pact should be the formation of a political and economic alliance among Southeast Asian non-communist nations. This statement not only put a damper on the upcoming Jinhae meeting between Rhee and Chiang but also nullified the statements from the Quirino–Chiang summit back in July at Baguio. Quirino again emphasized before his visit to the United States that the ultimate goal of such alliance was to promote political, economic, and cultural cooperation, not to form a military coalition.<sup>28</sup>

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22 *Ibid.*, pp. 312–13.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 312.

24 Shao 1980, p. 122.

25 Rho 2002, p. 192.

26 Lee 1986, p. 317.

27 *Dong-a Ilbo*, August 6, 1949.

28 Shao 1980, p. 122.



The direction of pursuit of the Pacific Pact changed drastically with the U.S.'s new policy on mainland China and Taiwan, as well as with Quirino's sudden change in attitude toward the pact. A speculative report began circulating that Taiwan and South Korea would be excluded from the future alliance for the pact. Initially, Rhee resolutely reacted to it by claiming that South Korea would take leadership in case the pact did not pan out.<sup>29</sup> As controversies over the pact intensified, Rhee also opted for a more open stance vis-à-vis the Pacific Pact's content, noting that the framework of the organization could be decided by the agreement of the nations directly concerned. He added that if he himself could not attend, he would certainly send representatives to conferences on the pact organized by other nations.<sup>30</sup>

Surprisingly, the changed environment of 1949 did not seriously damage the partnership between South Korea and Taiwan. Following the Jinhae summit, the two countries took a series of actions to put their close relations on view internationally. When the Republic of China publicly announced that it had moved its capital to Taipei on December 7, 1949, South Korea was the first to move its embassy to Taipei, on December 22, 1949. Shin Sukwoo 申錫雨 (1894–1953), the South Korean Ambassador to Taiwan, also visited Quemoy Island, the frontline battlefield between the PRC and Taiwan, and was accompanied on his visit by Shao Yulin 邵毓麟 (1909–1984), the Taiwanese Ambassador to South Korea. Such diplomatic activities by Ambassador Sin gave the symbolic message that Taiwan also had a strong alliance, thus contributing to helping the anxiety of the Taiwanese, who worried about its isolation from the international community, to subside.

When Great Britain officially recognized the People's Republic of China of the Chinese Communist Party on January 7, 1950, Rhee again stood on the Taiwanese side. Britain's action astounded Taiwan and South Korea, because Britain was one of the leading members of NATO, which had been organized for the sole purpose of defending the Free World against the potential threat of the Communist Bloc. Rhee publicly criticized Great Britain's action as being irresponsible on the part of one of the Free World's major powers. He asserted that Great Britain was motivated solely by its desire to protect its commercial supremacy in mainland China.<sup>31</sup>

On May 26, 1950, President Quirino of the Philippines called for a preparatory meeting at Baguio under the influence of the United States, thus verifying previous reports about the exclusion of South Korea and Taiwan from the alliance. As expected, the agenda of the meeting focused on economy and culture, and military and anti-communist issues were left out. The meeting was attended by the seven Asia-Pacific nations—the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Australia.<sup>32</sup> Despite the more flexible stance displayed by Rhee Syngman, South Korea and Taiwan were not invited. Believing that South Korea and Taiwan were likely to demand anti-communist

29 *Dong-a Ilbo*, September 10, 1949.

30 *Chosun Ilbo*, March 11, 1950.

31 *Kyunggyang Shinmun*, January 9, 1950. Rhee's criticism of Great Britain also had much to do with the fact that Great Britain limited the territory of South Korea to below the 38th parallel in its recognition of the South Korea government.

32 Shao 1980, p. 123.



and military agendas at the meeting, the United States government pulled strings to persuade the Philippines to exclude the two countries.<sup>33</sup> Despite consensus among the seven nations on economic, cultural, and social cooperation, however, differences in their other respective interests precluded future meetings.<sup>34</sup>

The initial promotion of the Pacific Pact and its eventual frustration demonstrate that, in the rapid restructuring of the international order after World War II, the regional security of the Asian non-communist nations largely fell under the sway of the United States—a fact that also sheds fresh light on the genuine objective of the proposal for the Pacific Pact. Although the United States continued its non-involvement policy in Asia during this period, it availed itself of indirect diplomatic channels to impose its plan on the region instead, as is clear from its interference in the initial collaboration of the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea on the formation of the pact. This raises the question of whether the leaders of those three countries had any sincere intention of organizing a security community independent of the United States in the first place. It is certain that, given the non-involvement policy of the United States, which created a considerable security vacuum in the region, South Korea and Taiwan were desperate for an alternative way to defend themselves from the communist threat. This continued structure of Asian security relations, however, was easily dismantled by the outbreak of the Korean War.

## THE KOREAN WAR AND THE RESURFACING OF THE PACIFIC PACT

The Korean War fundamentally transformed international relations surrounding South Korea and Taiwan. These changes in the international situation, in addition to the war itself, hindered South Korea and Taiwan from making progress on the Pacific Pact and from strengthening their mutual alliance. On June 30, 1950, five days after the outbreak of the Korean War, Taiwan publicly announced that it would, as a first round, aid South Korea with three army divisions and twenty aircraft.<sup>35</sup> This offer, however, was declined both by the United States and South Korea, who worried that it could trigger PRC intervention in the war. Even after China joined the war, Rhee continued to refuse the involvement of Taiwan's military forces for fear that it could provide Japan with a pretext for remilitarization.<sup>36</sup>

The war also substantially altered perceptions about Asian regional security. First of all, the war made the U.S. government realize that it must modify its non-involvement policy, and it also changed public opinion on the U.S.'s role in East Asia. According to a Taiwanese diplomatic report, which was based on an article published in the *Christian Science Monitor* on November 28, 1950, before the Korean War the majority of Americans opposed any potential military attack by the United States against the People's Republic of China, but once the war began, they started to agree that military action might be needed to solve problems in Asia. This report added that, given these changes in the United States, the

33 *FRUS* 1949, vol. 7, part 2, 1162.

34 *FRUS* 1950, vol. 7, part 2, 88.

35 Shao 1980, p. 143.

36 Oliver 1978, p. 549.

resistance of the United States, as well as of neighboring Asian nations, to the idea of a military alliance between Taiwan and South Korea would not be as strong as it had been during the pre-Korean War period.<sup>37</sup>

Second, the Korean War showed that South Korea and Taiwan were natural partners. The war demonstrated that the establishment of a stronger regional or international security system in Asia was no longer a mere option for peace in the region. More specifically, the similarity in the two countries' situations—the threat from their communist counterparts and territorial division—induced both Chiang and Rhee to believe that the survival of their respective nations and the recovery of their “lost territory” were inseparable. This consensus led Chiang to agree with Rhee's policies, such as the objection to armistice and the proposal for northward advance at the end of the Korean War.<sup>38</sup>

Under these circumstances, when the Korean War entered a stalemate phase beginning in mid-1951, both Rhee and Chiang began to hark back to the previous discussions on the Pacific Pact.<sup>39</sup> The war made the primary objectives and scope of the pact clearer and more distinct than they had been in the pre-Korean War discussions.

Rhee, who reaffirmed that the Pacific Pact would be an effective alternative for South Korea's security, continued to work for the formation of the pact. In January 1953, a South Korean newspaper reported that a summit between South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines would soon take place in Taipei for the purpose of organizing a NATO-type alliance in the Pacific.<sup>40</sup> For Rhee, foreign aid was critical not only to national security but also to economic recovery from the devastating Korean War. Chiang, in contrast, was actively seeking international cooperation with other nations in order to escape Taiwan's international isolation since the early 1950s.

This time, Taiwan took the initiative in reorganizing the pact. Although no severe military collisions had broken out between Taiwan and the PRC during the Korean War, the international maneuvers of the PRC in 1951 and 1952 put heavy pressure on Taiwan to seek an alliance with other nations. The PRC responded to the Free World's “peace aggression” by holding the so-called Asia-Pacific Peace Conference. A preparatory meeting was held in Beijing from June 3 to June 6, 1952, at which the PRC decided to invite representatives of thirty-one nations and the World Labor Union across the ideological divide.<sup>41</sup> The official conference was held on September 28, 1952 in Beijing. Ostensibly, due to visa problems, many of the invitees, such as Japan, the United States, and Australia, did not attend. The agenda of the conference included the guarantee of independence, freedom,

37 It was noted that *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 7, 1953) had reported, “President Lee Syngman visited Taiwan and discussed the Pacific Pact” (韓國李承晚大統領訪臺暨擬訂太平洋同盟); *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents* 11 (012.22/0054), p. 118.

38 “An Analysis of the ROK–U.S. Mutual Defense Agreement and the Draft of Taiwan's Policies on Korea (Sep. 1953),” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents* 11 (012.22/0054), p. 18.

39 Rho 2002, pp. 197–98.

40 *JOINT WEEKA*, January 17, 1953; *Chosun Ilbo*, January 11, 1953.

41 “Examining ‘Asia-Pacific Peace Conference’ (Sep. 28, 1952),” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents* 11 (012.22/0054), p. 231. The nations that sought to participate included the Soviet Union, Japan, North Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, New Zealand, Canada, Mongolia, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia, the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

and peace for the Asia-Pacific nations, while the particular and central goal was the prevention of Japan's remilitarization.<sup>42</sup> This conference shows that, just as Asian nations were concerned with the communist threat, so the Chinese Communist Party was concerned with the threat from the Free World.

Since Taiwan was excluded from the security alliance provided by the United States to most other Asian nations at the time, it had to give more attention to the formation of the Pacific Pact. Taiwan thus sped up the revival and reformulation of the Pacific Pact. In the fall of 1953, it presented the draft of a mutual assistance treaty to Pacific Rim countries.<sup>43</sup> At the time, Pacific Rim countries lacked a regional security system, and nations such as the Philippines, Japan, and Australia were individually tied to a mutual defense treaty with the United States. After the Korean War, the United States expressed ostensible agreement with the formation of a regional security system by the nations in the region themselves.<sup>44</sup> Given these conditions, the mutual assistance treaty proposed by Taiwan had a preventative character, in the sense that it was designed to forestall foreign invasions by means of securing military aid among the countries that joined.

The discussions on forming the Pacific Pact had great importance not only for shaping a regional or mutual security system but also for meeting the domestic and international needs of both Taiwan and South Korea. As discussed above, soon after the Baguio summit of July 19, 1949 between Chiang and Quirino, Chiang and Rhee had met at Jinhae on August 7. Chiang's visits to the heads of foreign states were critical to Taiwan's domestic political stability as well as to international recognition of its legitimacy after its loss of mainland China and resettlement on the comparatively isolated small island of Taiwan.<sup>45</sup> Following the Korean War, Rhee also needed foreign aid and international recognition.

After the outbreak of the Korean War, the two nations pursued a summit talk again, and eventually Rhee visited Taiwan, on November 27, 1953. This summit occurred just before the planned visit of U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon to Asia in December. It took place, however, only after a war of nerves. As just mentioned, in July 1949, before the Chinese Nationalist government's full retreat from mainland China, Chiang Kai-shek had visited South Korea and had a summit with Rhee Syngman at Jinhae. According to diplomatic protocol, Chiang expected a reciprocal visit, yet it was practically impossible for Rhee to leave South Korea for Taiwan during the Korean War. In the winter of 1953, when the armistice agreement had brought an end to the Korean War, the South Korean government requested that Chiang again visit Korea, stating that a negotiation between the two nations before Nixon's visit was essential and that Taiwan was in a

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 231–32, 234.

43 "The Draft of Pacific Mutual Assistance Pact (1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), pp. 23–26. The content included clauses for a collective response to threats and attacks by communism, exchanging information on military and political matters, and establishment of a united command for common defense. Ratification instruments were to be exchanged, and additional members could be added only by unanimous agreement among member nations. Such terms indicate the formation of a strong offensive and defensive military alliance.

44 *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 130.

45 "Conversation between Dong Xianguang, and Rhee Syngman," Oct. 29, 1953, *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 37.

comparatively more stable condition.<sup>46</sup> Taipei, however, had recourse to the reciprocal principle in diplomatic protocols and insisted on Rhee's visit instead.

To break this stalemate, Taiwan's Ambassador to Japan Dong Xianguang 董顯光 (1887–1971) crossed the Korean strait in October 1953 to have a personal conversation with Rhee. According to Dong's report after the meeting, Rhee was interested neither in visiting Taiwan nor in collaborating on Taiwan's proposal for the Pacific Pact as an offensive and defensive alliance. Dong added that Rhee had an underhanded scheme to avail himself both of Nixon's visit to Korea as well as of Chiang Kai-shek's for his own prestige.<sup>47</sup> Dong nevertheless persisted in requesting Rhee's visit to Taiwan in the meeting, and in the end, Rhee agreed to Dong's request.

When Rhee arrived in Taipei on November 27, 1953, Chiang personally welcomed him at the airport. The media in Taiwan broadcast his visit widely, and the people of Taipei gave Rhee a grand welcome during his stay.<sup>48</sup> In fact, Rhee was the first foreign head of state to visit Taiwan since its relocation to the island. After this summit meeting, South Korea and Taiwan again began to pursue formation of the Pacific Pact. Recognizing the difficulty of establishing a regional collective security system in Asia, Taiwan preferred to sign a bilateral treaty of alliance with South Korea before inviting other nations to join. Rhee, however, preferred the broader regional security option in order to avoid becoming entangled in the Chinese civil war.

South Korea and Taiwan greatly diverged on the main objective of the pact. On October 29, 1953, when he had met with Rhee to discuss the South Korea–Taiwan summit, Dong Xianguang had proposed that South Korea and Taiwan sign the proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance first, and then extend its membership to other nations afterward. Rhee insisted instead that he and Chiang issue a joint statement advocating the Pacific Rim anti-communist alliance first, and then make a formal agreement with the nations that responded positively to this plan. Rhee also reminded Dong that the United States might oppose the South Korea–Taiwan military alliance out of fear that it would stimulate South Korea to put its “Northward Advance” into practice. Rhee also indirectly refused Taiwan's proposal for the pact by arguing that a written commitment could not be as binding as the tacit understanding and commitment between the two nations from the heart.<sup>49</sup> In the end, they were unable to reach an agreement on the form and objectives of the Pacific Pact at the November 1953 summit meeting.

Both nations had publicly proclaimed that the purpose of the November meeting was to enhance the friendship between the two nations, and that no political motive was involved. Yet, after the summit, newspapers reported as fact the agreement on an anti-communist military alliance between South Korea and Taiwan.<sup>50</sup> Despite the denial

46 “Telegram Sent by Taiwan's Embassy in Korea to the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oct. 24, 1953,” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 34.

47 “Conversation between Dong Xianguang and Rhee Syngman, Oct. 29, 1953,” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 38.

48 *Zhongyang Ribao* 中央日報, November 28, 1953.

49 “Conversation between Dong Xianguang and Rhee Syngman, Oct. 29, 1953,” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 46.

50 “Telegram Sent by Taiwan's Embassy in Japan to the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nov. 6, 1953); *The Christian Science Monitor* (Nov. 7, 1953) Reports,” *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), pp. 69, 118.

of the United States, the Communist Bloc also alleged that an agreement on the alliance had been signed with a silent nod from Washington.<sup>51</sup> Although the alliance never materialized, the Pacific Pact had in fact been one of the main agenda items of the November 1953 summit meeting between South Korea and Taiwan after the Korean War.

## CONFLICTS BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN OVER THE FORMATION OF THE POST-KOREAN WAR PACIFIC PACT

As described in the preceding section, although South Korea and Taiwan maintained a close and cooperative relationship after the outbreak of the Korean War, they could not fully collaborate on shaping a new version of the Pacific Pact. In this section, I examine the reasons behind their sharp division in the post-Korean War reformulation of the Pacific Pact.

The November 1953 summit meeting did not bear fruit. In a discussion in October 1953, South Korea and Taiwan found that although they agreed on the need for the Pacific Pact, they had different ideas on its particular structure. The Taiwan government believed that most Asian nations of the Free World feared becoming entangled in the front line of the Cold War that it and South Korea already faced. Therefore, Taiwan proposed that South Korea and Taiwan should first form the Pacific Pact as a strong offensive and defensive alliance, and then induce other Pacific Rim countries to join the pact afterward.<sup>52</sup>

After the outbreak of the Korean War, South Korea and Taiwan faced many similar problems in terms of national security—loss of territory, national division, a communist threat, the need for international recognition vis-à-vis their communist counterparts, and so forth. Both sides were well aware that international cooperation and support were critical to overcoming these problems. In this situation, they each found the other to be a natural partner, and on the basis of this consensus, the two nations embarked on a campaign for the Pacific Pact once again.

At the time, South Korean politicians were divided on the question of forming an offensive and defensive alliance with Taiwan. Pro-Taiwan politicians believed that because South Korea and Taiwan had a common destiny, they had to strengthen their military ties.<sup>53</sup> In particular, those who had led the Korean provisional government during the period of Japanese colonialism argued that South Korea was indebted to Chiang Kai-shek's government for its enormous support in establishing and maintaining the provisional government. They made the National Assembly pass a bill supporting the pact unanimously, pressing the government to agree to it.<sup>54</sup> However, Rhee objected to the pact consisting

51 "The Christian Science Monitor (Nov. 7, 1953) Reports," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 118.

52 "Pacific Mutual Assistance Pact Draft (1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 21.

53 "The Record of the Meeting between George Yeh (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan) Hongil Kim (Korean Ambassador to Taiwan), May 14 and 16, 1953," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 6.

54 "Hankuk Kwa Chunghwaminkuk ui Dongmaeng Chegyul e kwanhan Gyuleuan (Union Concerning the Resolution between South Korea and the Republic of China)," pp. 3–8. South Korea's pro-Taiwan politicians were those who established the Korean provisional Government in China during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea. When they were in China, the Chiang Kai-shek government provided various means of support to them. They felt indebted to the Chinese Nationalist Party, and they believed in the need to "repay" this debt to Chiang.

initially only of Taiwan and South Korea, and instead emphasized the necessity of broader international participation.

Rhee knew that such an alliance would join together the Korean and the Chinese confrontations with their respective national divisions into communist and non-communist nations, thus entailing the expansion of the front line of the Cold War to all of Asia. In addition, because South Korea had already secured its homeland security through concluding the ROK–US Mutual Defense Agreement earlier in October 1953, Rhee found no reason to be involved in Chiang Kai-shek's fight to regain mainland China. He also cast doubt on the feasibility of Taiwan's plan for the Pacific Pact in the form of an offensive and defensive alliance. Specifically, he predicted that the other Asian nations would not join the pact for fear of sharing the fates of South Korea and Taiwan, which had lost control of their own territories.<sup>55</sup>

Rhee had an alternative design for the Pacific Pact. He proposed holding a preparatory meeting with other Asian countries to collectively decide the principal forms of the alliance as well as its particular rules. At a meeting in January 1954 with Wang Dongyuan 王東原 (1898–1956), Taiwan's Ambassador to South Korea at the time, Rhee explained his plan. As a first step, he suggested Taiwan send a group of people to South Korea for training in anti-communist propaganda and extended this program to the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia in order to galvanize the anti-communist consensus among the people of these nations. In doing so, he desired to spread the idea that South Korea was the leader of the anti-communist movement in Asia. He underlined that the anti-communist campaign in Asia must be organized and managed by the Asians themselves, given the condition that they could not elicit from the U.S. government a full agreement on the proposal for the Pacific Pact.<sup>56</sup>

Taiwan's post-Korean War proposal for the Pacific Pact thus failed to win the endorsement not only of South Korea but also of most Southeast Asian nations. For example, due to its geographical proximity, the Philippines had a great interest in the security of Taiwan but did not want to get involved in the touch-and-go situation of the Korean Peninsula by joining a comprehensive military alliance with South Korea.<sup>57</sup> When Ramon Magsaysay was elected president of the Philippines in December 1953, he maintained an unclear position about the Pacific Pact for reasons of domestic politics.<sup>58</sup> Taiwan concluded that cooperation from the Philippines would not be forthcoming. Before his election, Magsaysay had taken a positive stance toward the Pacific Pact, prompting Taiwan to officially invite him to visit after his election. But according to the UP news on December 3, 1953, Magsaysay made it clear that he had no interest in visiting Taiwan and discussing the Pacific Pact with Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>59</sup>

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55 "Conversation between George Yeh and Byon YoungTae (Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs), Nov. 28, 1953," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 89.

56 "Telegram Sent by Taiwan's Embassy in Korea to the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jan. 18, 1954)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), pp. 135–36.

57 "Telegram Sent by Taiwan's Embassy in the Philippine to the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dec. 10, 1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 109.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

59 "UP Report (Dec. 3, 1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 106.

The divide between South Korea and Taiwan on the Pacific Pact was closely related to Taiwan's plan for recovering mainland China. Taiwan had sought an opportunity to attack the mainland during the Korean War by offering to dispatch troops to Korea. Realistically speaking, the presence of a socialist regime on mainland China was a great threat to South Korea as well, so Seoul basically supported the Chinese Nationalist's claim to recover the mainland. In his meeting with Dong Xianguang on October 29, 1953, Rhee Syngman had stated that South Korea would attack Manchuria if Taiwan launched an invasion of mainland China. Rhee, however, also stated that due to American opposition to the idea, he could not attack Manchuria first, thus making a preemptive attack from Chiang a condition for his own military involvement.<sup>60</sup> He also mentioned the indispensability of U.S. material aid for a Korean invasion of Manchuria. In sum, Rhee carefully avoided any commitment to Taiwan's anti-communist drive against mainland China, by demanding American intervention as a necessary precondition of South Korea's involvement.<sup>61</sup>

This attitude was reaffirmed when Rhee visited the United States. In a speech to the United States Congress on July 28, 1954, Rhee asked for American military assistance in the South Korean forces' fight against North Korea and the PRC. Rhee said that the ground forces for this attack would be entirely composed of South Korean troops, so that the U.S. military would only need to commit naval and air forces. He also asked the U. S. government for a clear and long-term policy to save China from communism. Taipei carefully watched Rhee's speech in Washington. When this speech caused a stir, Rhee explained to reporters that he was not looking for an immediate war against the PRC and that his words instead represented a long-term plan. Rhee then claimed that an anti-communist crusade should be organized to drive communism from Asia. This shows that Rhee approached the issue of South Korea–Taiwan relations from a completely practical perspective; hence his denial of the offensive and defensive treaty proposed by Taiwan can be understood in the same light.

The different stances of Chiang Kai-shek and Rhee Syngman on Japan also held back the post-Korean War drive for the Pacific Pact. Given Taiwan's international isolation and domestic instability, Chiang opted for a strategy to strengthen Taiwan's position by concluding a peace treaty with Japan. To speed this up, he decided not to demand compensation for Japan's colonial rule of China and took the position of simply putting aside past affairs. The road to the peace treaty, however, was not smooth. The relocation of the Chinese Nationalist regime to Taiwan in 1949 had produced two regimes, which raised the question of which of the two should be recognized as the legitimate Chinese government in international relations. This generated a host of problems, including representation in the United Nations and concluding a peace treaty with Japan. Although the United States had recognized the ROC government in Taiwan in December 1949, things had become more complicated when Great Britain recognized the PRC in January 1950.

The issue of a peace treaty with Taiwan also made Japan's stance complicated, dividing the nation into pro-Beijing and pro-Taipei factions.<sup>62</sup> Taiwan thought that in Japan at the

60 "Conversation between Xianguang Dong and Syngman Rhee (Oct. 29, 1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 37.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

62 See Tasai 2006.



time, the pro-Beijing group was stronger than the pro-Taipei group, so it hurried to conclude the peace treaty with Japan and thus secure its legitimacy. Following the suggestion of John Foster Dulles (1888–1959), U.S. Secretary of State under President Dwight Eisenhower, Japan eventually concluded a treaty with Taiwan in the middle of the Korean War, on August 5, 1952. On its signing, however, Japan attempted not to recognize the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan as the representative government of all China. Eventually, the Nationalists in Taiwan succeeded in persuading Japan to define the territorial scope of Taiwan as “the current and future territories administered by the Republic of China,” but only on the condition that Taiwan not ask Japan for compensation for forced Chinese wartime labor for the Japanese Empire, as authorized by the Treaty of San Francisco.<sup>63</sup>

South Korea, however, was deeply concerned about the revival of Japan, and not simply because it was haunted by its own colonial experience. Rhee was not content with the American design to make Japan the regional center of Asia, since it was highly possible that this plan would help Japan in its remilitarization as much as in its economic recovery. Rhee firmly believed that once the Japanese recovered from its postwar devastation, Japan would resume its expansionist policies toward Asia.<sup>64</sup>

With respect to the Pacific Pact, Chiang Kai-shek contended that Japan’s membership was necessary. He believed that all Asian nations should unite against communism to maximize the effect of the pact. Chiang therefore strongly urged an improvement of relations between South Korea and Japan. In response, Rhee stated that South Korea could allow Japan to join the Pacific Pact only if Japan would guarantee that it would permanently abandon its aggression toward Korea, return all plunder, and stop demanding the return of pre-1945 Japanese properties in Korea.<sup>65</sup>

Such points of dissension came to the surface as the two countries prepared for the second convention of the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League (APACL), an alternative form of the pre-Korean War Pacific Pact, initially planned to be held in Taipei on October 20, 1954. Believing that the absence of Japan would severely weaken the league’s effectiveness, Taiwan proposed changing the rule that any new member had to be received with a unanimous vote of approval. This rule had been made at the first convention of APACL, held in Jinhae, South Korea, on June 15, 1954. South Korea rigidly stuck to the original rule, whereas Taiwan attempted to amend it so that a new member could join the organization if it could garner votes from two-thirds of the existing members. The result was that South Korea decided not to attend the second convention, which was pushed back to May 23, 1955, and eventually postponed indefinitely.<sup>66</sup>

Realizing that the Pacific Pact in the form of an offensive and defensive alliance among Asian nations could not be achieved in the near future, Taiwan turned its attention to concluding a mutual defense treaty with the United States, as well as to transforming the

63 Guoshiguan bian 2000, pp. 343–45.

64 “Conversation between Dong Xianguang and Rhee Syngman (Oct. 29, 1953), *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents* 11 (012.22/0054), p. 44.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

66 *Gongbochu jubu*, no. 158 (May 18, 1955), pp. 20–23.

system of the Pacific Pact into a comprehensive form of economic, cultural, and political alliance. According to the memorandum of a confidential conversation between Chen Zhiping 陳質平 (1906–1984) in December 1953, then Taiwan's Ambassador to the Philippines, and William Sterling Byrd Lacy (1910–1979), the U.S. Councilor to the Philippines, Chen requested U.S. endorsement of this new form of Asian alliance. He delivered a message from Taiwan noting that, given the fact that Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam all received economic and military aid from the United States, this comprehensive form of alliance would greatly enhance cooperation and effectiveness in the areas of information exchange, anti-communism training, economic development, and commercial trade in the region. Chen also emphasized that such an alliance could be an efficient collective anti-communist organization by letting Asian nations solve minor problems by themselves, thus alleviating the U.S.'s burdens in Asia.<sup>67</sup>

As Taiwan changed its concept of the Pacific Pact after the November 1953 summit meeting between Chiang and Rhee, South Korea began to lead the drive for a pact and redefine its main objective as being that of a Pacific Rim anti-communist alliance instead of an offensive and defensive alliance. Beginning in February 1954, the South Korean government began to give shape to the idea of a Pacific Rim anti-communist alliance as a non-governmental organization. Around that time, Rhee made an international move as well, dispatching a South Korean delegation headed by Baek Nakjun 白樂濬 (1895–1985) to Pacific Rim countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Australia. The tasks assigned to the delegation were to propagate a cooperative anti-communist front in conjunction with local anti-communist associations, and to urge public leaders to go to these countries to organize mass assemblies to spread anti-communism. The Korean delegation was sent three times, but according to a report by Taiwan, most nations that the South Korean delegation visited either openly opposed this idea or displayed a passive attitude.<sup>68</sup>

Taiwan indirectly displayed its basic agreement with Rhee's proposal. Within the nations that the South Korean delegation visited, the groups that echoed the South Korean claim for a Pacific Rim anti-communist alliance were the organizations of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, collectively called Southeast Asian Overseas Chinese (Nanyang Huaqiao 南洋華僑). Well aware of the influence of these organizations in Southeast Asian nations, the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs used its leverage with Southeast Asian overseas Chinese, requesting them to support the activities of the South Korean delegation, particularly by having local influential figures and leaders of local overseas Chinese organizations participate in the anti-communist alliance.<sup>69</sup> This clearly shows that although South Korea and Taiwan could not reach a full agreement on the purposes and structures of the Pacific Pact, they did at least agree on the idea of creating an anti-communist alliance.

67 "Conversation between Chen Zhiping (Taiwan's Ambassador to the Philippines) and William S. B. Lacy (the U.S. Councilor to the Philippines), Dec. 14, 1953," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), p. 130.

68 "Telegram sent by Wang Dongyuan (Taiwan's Ambassador to South Korea) to Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dec. 9, 1953)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), 122; Rho 2002, p. 206.

69 "Telegram sent by Taiwan Embassy in South Korea to the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dec. 3, 1953 and Feb. 5, 1954)," *Taiwan Diplomatic Documents 11* (012.22/0054), pp. 156, 186.

## CONCLUSION

Thus far, studies on the regional order of East Asia during the early Cold War period have focused on U.S. policies on East Asia and the U.S.'s relations with individual East Asian states. They have thus provided us with a macroscopic view on the shaping of a new East Asian regional order during the period. The leadership of the United States in reshaping the regional order is beyond question. Nevertheless, this approach has not paid due attention to the importance of the roles played by the East Asian states in this process, but has instead seen the new regional order only as the consequence of the implementation of U.S. policies on East Asia.

As Michael Handel has pointed out, the simplest and most common way for a weak state to get a great power to commit to supporting its interests is to persuade the great power to sign a formal defense treaty, or to make an unambiguous promise of support in case of military attack.<sup>70</sup> This remark aptly explains the cooperation and competition between Korea and Taiwan during the early stage of the Cold War period, which had no choice but to rely on the great powers for their own survival. In a nutshell, Korea and Taiwan took advantage of this situation and obtained the cooperation of the United States.

Certainly, the primary purpose of the Pacific Pact was not to form an autonomous regional alliance independently of the United States. In post-World War II Asia, the United States sought to reorganize a new regional order in Asia, with Japan at the center of this proposed new order. Under these circumstances, the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan and the South Korean government, which were standing at the front line of the Cold War, fell short of becoming the U.S.'s full-fledged security partners in Asia. As a result, they were desperate to attract the U.S.'s attention. Once South Korea and Taiwan secured the military and economic aid of the United States, however, they no longer pursued their former aggressive and expansive diplomatic strategies. After the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty signed on December 2, 1954, Taiwan permanently discarded the Pacific Pact as an offensive and defensive treaty and concentrated on APACL. South Korea, for its part, lost its motivation to further pursue the Pacific Pact after the ROK–U.S. Mutual Defense Agreement was concluded on October 1, 1953.

From a different angle, however, the similarities shared by Rhee Syngman and Chiang Kai-shek were one of the key factors in explaining the initial formation of a cooperative relationship between South Korea and Taiwan from the late 1940s on. The two leaders, despite their devastating losses in armed conflicts with their communist counterparts, maintained the integrity of their states, albeit in a reduced form. The two also had a similar view on the critical role of the U.S. in containing communism in Asia. Instead of a democratic process to gain popular support, both Chiang and Rhee relied on military and policy means, as well as on U.S. aid, to hold onto their power. By responding to international and domestic challenges throughout their rule in a similar fashion, they developed and maintained a deep sense of sympathy and cooperation.

From the standpoint of the U.S., both Chiang's aggressive policy against mainland China and Rhee's calls for a northward advance were unwanted obstacles to its

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70 Handel 1981, p. 122.

pre-Korean War status quo policy in Asia. Chiang and Rhee's aggressive positions made the U.S. even more passive in response. For South Korea and Taiwan, however, rivalry and confrontation with North Korea and the People's Republic of China, respectively, were critical to their security. When the much-needed American commitment to protection and intervention was not forthcoming, South Korea and Taiwan sought to elicit American interest in and intervention for their security by forming a collective security system—namely, the Pacific Pact.

From 1949 to 1953, the loss of mainland China much intensified Chiang's aspirations to achieve a collective security regime. After the Korean War, Rhee's calls for a northward advance became even louder than before. Given the ongoing Cold War tension with the Soviet Union and the PRC, stability in East Asia was crucial to the United States. For the United States, the aggressive policies of Chiang and Rhee were a major factor that might destabilize the regional order. In this context, the U.S. used its leverage to forestall South Korea and Taiwan from drawing in some Southeast Asian states, including the Philippines, and thus creating an uncontrollable regional alliance. In other words, it was in the American regional interest in East Asia to protect and contain South Korea and Taiwan via bilateral mutual defense treaties, rather than allowing South Korea and Taiwan to assume an aggressive stance toward North Korea and PRC and increase instability in the region.

Taiwan no longer held the power it had formerly wielded. Its fate was largely subject to the rapidly changing international environment. Its relations with the United States were not reciprocal but nearly unilateral. Under these circumstances, Taiwan tried to elicit support from the United States by being compliant with U.S. policies, which Michael Handel has called the "affiliation strategy."<sup>71</sup> In this vein, Taiwan also tried to reverse the U.S.'s negative recognition of Chiang Kai-shek by portraying him as an anti-communist leader of Southeast Asian Chinese and the Southeast Asian region.

Taiwan took advantage of the Korean War to change its relations with the United States. The Taiwanese government was aware that the expansion of the Korean War could provide it with great advantages for its security. Its propaganda campaign against mainland China provoked the PRC into participating in the Korean War, thus impeding normalization between the U.S. and the PRC for a long time. Consequently, Taiwan became once again one of the most important allies of the United States, particularly with respect to curbing the growing influence of the PRC over the region.

The restoration of the partnership between the United States and Taiwan can be best explained by the altered policies of the United States on East Asia. However, it should not be overlooked that Taiwan also played a significant role in this restoration by adopting timely domestic and foreign policies in accordance with the changing international relations in the region.

Nevertheless, South Korea and Taiwan maintained an exceptionally close relationship even after their respective treaties with the United States. At times the two nations did not hesitate to maximize their own national interests, and thus competed against each other to play a leading role in the international relations of Asia. However, despite the fact that

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71 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

significant differences of opinion were uncovered during such processes, these differences did not go so far as to disrupt the ongoing cooperation between the two countries, at least until the collapse of the Soviet Union brought an end to the Cold War system. South Korea then normalized relations with the People's Republic of China in 1992.

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