

Thursday January 12, 1950



[Sun rise](#) 0743 1733
[Moon rise](#) 0107 1215
[Moon Phases](#) 34% 24 days

Overview

January 12, 1950 (Thursday)

- The death penalty was partially restored in the Soviet Union, after having been abolished on May 26, 1947. It was retroactively applied to "traitors, spies, subversives, and saboteurs" regardless of when the alleged offense occurred.
- The British submarine *Truculent* collided with the Swedish oil tanker *Divina* in the Thames Estuary and sank, killing 64 people. Only 15 crewmen were able to escape. All of them had been in the conning tower of the sub, which had been cruising on the surface of the Thames.
- U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson delivered his 'Perimeter Speech', outlining the boundary of U.S. security guarantees. South Korea was not included within the area subject to American protection, and would be invaded from North Korea less than six months later.
- Italy's Prime Minister Alcide de Gasperi resigned along with his entire cabinet.
- **Born:** Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Representative for Texas since 1995, in New York City; and Dorrit Moussaieff, Israeli-born businesswoman and wife of the President of Iceland, in Jerusalem

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[\[note\]](#)

In 1950,(1/12/50) [Secretary of State Dean Acheson](#) omitted Korea from the list of critical international zones in which American forces could possibly be expected to fight. Congress did authorize \$11 million in military aid to South Korea that year, but it didn't reach Sōul until after the attack.

While the United States government wanted a unified, free, and democratic Korea No one suggested we should go to war to unify Korea.

U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson at the National Press Club in Washington today simply reiterated what the Presidents had said the week previous in his "hands-off" Formosa speech on the 5th.

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack....

"runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus [chiefly Okinawa]. We hold important defense positions in the Ryukyu Islands, and these we will continue to hold. . . The defense perimeter runs from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands." He continued: "So far as the military security of the United States is concerned" and here he obviously had Formosa and South Korea in mind "it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack.

Should such an attack occur-one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from-the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression."

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U.S. national policy toward Korea became known to the world for the first time on January 12, 1950, when Secretary of State Dean Acheson spoke before the National Press Club in Washington. He

"... declared Formosa outside 'our defense perimeter.' He also excluded South Korea from the American defense outposts."[67]

The defense perimeter was drawn from the Aleutian Islands, to Japan, to the Ryukyus Islands - including Okinawa, and the Philippine Islands.[68] (see Map 5, page 72) Many historians believe this speech, along with the troop withdrawal in September 1949, was misinterpreted to mean that the United States had no interest in defending South Korea. Acheson's statement was seen as encouragement to North Korea, with the Soviet Union's and China's blessing, to invade South Korea.

In his book War in Peacetime, General Joseph Lawton Collins said:

"Why the Secretary of State felt impelled to make this disclaimer publicly, I have never understood. I imagine that, like a batter swinging at a bad ball, he later would have liked to have had that swing back again."[69]

In his memoirs Nikita S. Khrushchev wrote:

"Late in 1949... Kim Ill Sung, the North Korean leader, visited Joseph Stalin seeking approval for an attack in South Korea. Stalin after Mao Zedong gave Kim the green light."[70] Acheson's speech certainly gave more assurance to the North Korean leadership's desire to invade South Korea.

[note]

The withdrawal of American troops from Korea [as of June 30 1949] did not change the objectives of the United States government toward Korea. This government continued to stand for a unified, free, and democratic Korea. These, however, were political objectives, to be obtained through peaceful measures. No statesman had ever suggested that the United States should go to war to unify Korea. In 1947 the United Nations had also accepted the objective that all Korea ought to be united under a free and popularly elected government. The United Nations had sponsored the creation of the Republic of Korea and recognized it as the only lawful government in Korea.

But what did the United States intend to do if the Republic of Korea was attacked by an external aggressor?

In a speech before the National Press Club in Washington on 12 January 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson offered an answer to this question. He said the the defensive perimeter of the United States ran from the Aleutians to Japan, then to the Ryukyus, and then to the Philippines. The United States military forces held defensive positions along this line, and this perimeter of defense would be unilaterally defended by the United States. Should an attack occur in some other area in the Pacific, Acheson stated that initial reliance for resistance to such an attack would be expected from the people subjected to the attack and "then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression."#58

Secretary Acheson's speech was criticized by those who said that it informed the Communists that the United States did not intend to defend Korea or Formosa. In the soft-spoken language of diplomacy, however, Acheson had actually stated that the United States would unilaterally defend areas which were strategically important to it

and would participate with the United Nations to check aggression against other free peoples in the Pacific.#59

Soviet policy toward Korea in the years between 1945 and 1950 can only be surmised from Communist actions in Korea. In 1945 and 1946 the Russians may have intended to honor their commitments. At any rate, shortly after their occupation began, Soviet forces looted many of North Korea's industries. Such capital goods as an entire aviation depot at Wŏnsan and part of the electrical generating equipment at the mammoth Sui-ho hydroelectric plant on the Yalu River were expropriated.#60

Soon, however, the Russians must have realized that they had fallen heir to a major industrial region built by the Japanese, and before long this industrial potential was incorporated into a growing Communist economic complex in the Far East. Electric power, tungsten, high-grade steel, and other economic goods flowed from North Korea into Communist China and the USSR to repay these powers for services and military supplies furnished to the "People's Democratic Republic of Korea."

At the beginning of their occupation the Russians transplanted to Korea political cadres of Communist indoctrinated Korean émigrés, who had been nurtured on Soviet soil during the years of Japanese occupation.#61

A North Korean army began to form around the core of two battle-hardened divisions made up of Korean exiles and refugees who had served in Soviet forces, some of them at Stalingrad.

Later on, when the Chinese Communists triumphed in China, they, too, sent to Korea battle-wise cadres and entire units of the "Korean Volunteer Army," which had seen field service against the Chinese Nationalists.

In 1949 and 1950 the Chinese Communist forces passed to Korean control three complete divisions of Koreans who had either volunteered for service with the Communists or had been conscripted in Manchuria.

[note]

Meanwhile, tension along the 38th Parallel was extreme; the border area was like a war zone. Almost nightly the North Koreans infiltrated South Korea with strong infantry patrols, probing ROK positions, taking prisoners, or simply wounding and killing. The ROKs retaliated with their own patrols. Often the opposing patrols met in the dark and had firefights. Both sides were heavily engaged in numerous clandestine activities, infiltrating intelligence agents, assassins, and political provocateurs into each other's territory. Not infrequently both sides engaged in heavy artillery duels, as if preparing for a full-scale invasion. In the last six months of 1949 KMAG had officially logged an astounding 400 "border incidents." [2-61]

Even so, the ROK Army remained almost casually disposed and ill equipped to meet any threat from the north. While Roberts's KMAG made some progress, by early 1950 it was clear that his training schedule could never be met. Then came a series of public statements - bombshells - from Washington that seriously undermined the morale of KMAG, the Rhee government, and the ROK Army. [on the 5th, 12th and 19th]

The first was President Truman's emphatic declaration, delivered on January 5, 1950, that the United States had adopted the hands-off Formosa policy. To Rhee and his Sŏul government, Chiang represented the most militant indigenous anti-Communist force in this sector of the Far East. Rhee did not doubt that Peking would now soon move militarily against Formosa. Once Formosa had been taken, it was not unlikely that Moscow or Peking, or both, would goad the NKPA into attacking South Korea. In that event, would Washington also abandon South Korea?

The answer to that question appeared to have been contained in a second bombshell, delivered a week later by Dean Acheson. At a press conference, principally called to explain and clarify the hands-off Formosa policy [1/5/1950], Acheson, who tended to be theatrically professorial (and at times patronizing), unwisely digressed to describe publicly the concept of America's offshore strategic defensive perimeter in the Far East. Although he did not specifically mention South Korea, his remarks contained the clear implication that it lay outside the perimeter. [2-62]

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The third bombshell came one week after Acheson's remarks [on the 12th]. In a gesture apparently designed to "punish" Truman (or maneuver for a bargaining position), the China bloc in Congress, which had consistently backed the Rhee government, voted down a small (\$10 million) supplemental economic aid bill for South Korea. This action by his former stout supporters in Congress bewildered and dismayed Rhee. However, it proved to be but a short-lived crisis. After intense administration lobbying the bill was reintroduced - and passed - the following month, after it had been "sweetened" with a rider granting further (but small) economic aid to Chiang.

Then came the worst bombshell of all: a published Q and A interview with Democratic Senator Tom Connally, who was a friend of the administration and who held the prestigious position of chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Asked by the editors of U.S. News & World Report if the United States would seriously consider abandoning South Korea, Connally replied: "I am afraid it is going to be seriously considered because I'm afraid it's going to happen, whether we want it or not." In response to a follow-up question asking if Korea was not an "essential" part of America's defensive strategy, Connally replied: "No. . . . I don't think it is very greatly important." [2-64]

The Connally interview caused such great dismay in Seoul that Acheson and Muccio were compelled to make public statements containing implied denials that Washington would ever abandon South Korea. But these statements did little to calm the Seoul government. Rhee bitterly and sarcastically complained privately to the American charge d'affaires in Seoul that Connally's remarks were "an open invitation to the communists to come down and take over South Korea." He wondered how a man "in his right senses" could make "such an irrational statement." [2-65]

[note]

Acheson had apparently not intended to make a public declaration implying a hands-off South Korea policy. His discussion related mostly to America's position toward the two Chinas. The "defensive perimeter" description was only tangential to his main points, and it was hardly noticed - except, of course, in Seoul (and perhaps, as was later charged, in P'yongyang). Rhee and his government - and KMAG - minutely studied the Acheson transcript with mounting anger. However, when the South Korean ambassador to Washington privately expressed his concern over his country's "apparent exclusion" from Washington's "defensive plans" in the Far East, he was reassured and told not to believe everything he read in the newspapers. [2-63]

[note]



On January 12th [1950], in an address before the National Press Club in Washington, Secretary of State Acheson declared Formosa outside "our defense perimeter." He also excluded South Korea from the American defense outposts.

These policies of the Truman Administration received unfavorable publicity, being widely condemned throughout the United States. Under the pressure of public opinion, they were to be completely changed. I felt that the Secretary of State was badly advised about the Far East, and invited him to be my guest in Tokyo. I had never met Dean Acheson, but felt certain that his own survey of the Asiatic situation would materially alter his expressed views. He declined the invitation, saying that the pressure of his duties prevented him from leaving Washington. He did, however, visit Europe eleven times during his stay in office.

In the Philippines, the brilliant and gifted President Manuel Roxas died [15 April 1948]

???? what does this have to do with the above???. At such a critical time, it was almost an irreparable loss. He was succeeded by an old friend of mine who had served his country faithfully both in war and peace, Elpidio Quirino.

[\[note\]](#)

Secretary of State Dean Acheson confirms Korea and Taiwan outside American Far East security cordon

[\[note\]](#)

That Korea was considered of little strategic worth to the United States had scarcely been a matter of public knowledge until 12 January 1950, when Secretary of State Dean Acheson said so in a speech at the National Press Club in Washington. Outlining the defensive strategy in the Far East, he excluded Korea and Formosa from the American defensive perimeter. Referring obliquely to Korea, Mr. Acheson stated:

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack.... Should such an attack occur-one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from-the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression. [03-26]

In the light of Secretary Acheson's remarks, it appeared that the United States had no intention of fighting for South Korea. In the view of many observers, his statement was an invitation to Communist China, North Korea, and Russia that they could invade the republic with impunity.

[\[note\]](#)



USMC
United States
Marine Corps



YH-16 (capable of caring 46 passengers)

evaluation with the initial testing of each company's entry to begin in November .

On 13 October 1949, General Cates approved Carey's recommendation for a joint conference . "The cognizant agencies have indicated their desire to attend the conference" the Commandant's letter stated, "which will be held as soon as practicable after the current transport Helicopter Board has submitted its recommendations. " 18 The joint conference was not delayed by Bowman's board as General Cates received its report the following day . In considering the items before it, the board first determined the general requirements for a transport helicopter which could be procured in 1952–1953 and which would most nearly meet Marine Corps requirements . Based upon specifications submitted over the last two years the assumed general specifications were :

Range : 250 nautical miles

Payload : 3,000 to 3,500 pounds

Capacity : 13 to 15 combat troops @ 225 pounds

2 pilots @ 200 pounds

Stowage : To fit the elevator of a CVE-105-class aircraft carrier and be capable of being stowed and moved about the hangar deck.

Date Required : 1952-1953

The board studied characteristics of existing helicopters and formed an opinion that none of the current models would be of sufficient improvement over the Piasecki HRP-1 to justify procurement, nor would they even approximate the board's assumed required general specifications. Further investigation by the board disclosed that only one —the YH-21 Air Force Arctic Rescue model— had the potential of closely approximating the desired specifications . The main variation, though, existing between Air Force and Marine Corps requirements, was that the former had a greater range demand where the latter had a requirement for larger troop capacity . It was felt that favorable results of the forthcoming Air Force evaluation would have a direct bearing on the Marine Corps' ability to procure a suitable production model in the 1952–1953 period. It also appeared that the most effective means of obtaining money would be to select an existing type helicopter which could be modified with production funds— since the availability of research and development funds was extremely critical . Other significant opinions reached by the board were : 1. That " the XH-16 did not meet the restrictions imposed by operations from escort carriers [CVEs and CVLs] and would not be procurable in 1952–1953 ." 2 . "That the minimum requirement for the Marine Corps is two assault transport helicopter squadrons each capable of lifting one reinforced rifle company, " 20 an opinion appearing for the first time in any helicopter study .

Other recommendations contained in Bowman's report urged the Commandant to request that the CNO examine the feasibility of modifying an existing helicopter and that the aircraft meet the general characteristics specified in his report . In addition, he stated, the CNO should "provide for two assault transport helicopter squadrons in 1953–1954 without reduction of Marine squadrons then in existence." Finally, that HMX-1 " be directed to prepare and submit [to HQMC] a tentative **table of organization** for the future assault transport helicopter squadron ." 21

Lt. Col. George S. Bowman:

The First Six Months of 1950

A vast amount of work remained for the Marine Corps at the **beginning of 1950** if the prospects for continued advancement of the helicopter program were to be realized. Complete fulfillment of the original goal was impossible to achieve. The helicopter program was already two years behind the 1948 date established in 1946 for the commissioning of the first tactical helicopter squadron , and it was drifting even further behind schedule with the 1953–1954 dates proposed by General Smith's board. The pace had to be quickened.

But how was the Marine Corps to accomplish this infusion of helicopter units into its aircraft wings while at the same time it was carrying out a schedule for a reduction in other areas of its wing forces?

For example, during the past two years the Marine Corps had been required to decrease the number of **its active combat squadrons** from a July 1948 strength of 23

to 12 aircraft units by 1 July 1950—a reduction made necessary due to a lack of appropriations.[22]

Research and development funds, production funds, as well as operational money for fleet squadrons had all been equally hard hit by the paucity of money. The complete spectrum of naval aviation, which includes Marine aviation, had felt the pinch, and the idea of forming new combat helicopter squadrons caught aviation planners at a time when they were being forced to think in terms of reducing strengths and expenditures rather than increasing them. Nevertheless, with no end in sight to the unfavorable fiscal trend, the Marine Corps continued with tenacity to pursue for its fleet forces the one new type of aircraft which it knew would be the key to success in maintaining world superiority in the field of amphibious operations.* * As an indication of the effect of the appropriation's cut, the Marine Corps was reduced from its peak strength of 485,000 in 1945 to 156,000 by 1 July 1946. Within another year the number had declined further to 92,000 and by June 1950 the total had dropped to a fraction under 75,000—of which only 28,000 were serving in the FMF. The remaining men were serving on board ships, at posts and stations, and in administrative billets at various locations throughout the world.[23]

[\[note\]](#)



HRP

Photo # 80-G-420949 HO3S helicopter aboard USS Philippine Sea, Oct. 1950



HO3S



HTL

On 12 January 1950, the Commandant made a request for the 13- to 15-man assault helicopter .

General Cates asked that the CNO procure for the Marine Corps a helicopter with the characteristics identical to those drawn up by the Bowman Board.

He pointed out that employment of helicopters from the CVE-105 class carriers was entirely feasible and practical. It was a rigid requirement that the aircraft not only be capable of operating on the flight deck, but also be able to move to the hangar deck for storage and maintenance.

General Cates made it known that the "helicopters employed by HMX-1 [the HRP's , H03Ss, and the HTL] did not possess the required minimum range, payload, and troop capacity for Marine Corps employment as assault helicopters."

The XH-16's lengthy development period was seen as seriously retarding the Marine Corps helicopter program and although it was not desired to divert funds for its support, "emphasis should be placed on allocation of funds toward the proposed helicopter...and given number one priority."

In respect to the number of air - craft assigned to assault squadrons, the Commandant increased the number in each of the two squadrons from 12 to 15 aircraft and urged that the squadrons "be provided for in addition to other Marine squadrons then in existence ." [24]

[note]

Press Release: [Jacob K. Javits](#) (R-L, NY) today introduced a resolution calling for a Select Committee to investigate segregation and discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, color or national origin in the armed services.

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