

Land Reform in South Korea under the U.S. Military Occupation, 1945–1948

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Near the end of the military occupation of South Korea, the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) promulgated the distribution of formerly Japanese-owned land to tenants. The land redistribution transferred 663,950 acres of farmland to peasants engaged in full- or half-tenancy cultivation of the vested lands. This land reform has long been given short shrift by scholars. Critics of the U.S. military occupation in Korea, for example, have asserted that the land reform implemented by U.S. officials was merely partial insofar as it distributed only 18 percent of all farmland, without touching a single unit owned by Korean landlords. Bruce Cumings has claimed that the reform measure was no more than a half-hearted palliative driven in large part by radical land redistribution in North Korea in early 1946, which Cumings praises as confiscation of lands from landlords followed by free distribution to farmers.¹ According to this argument, the United States conducted land reform solely because of an imminent Communist threat and would not have done so in the absence of the threat.² Cumings thus sees the U.S.-sponsored land reform as driven by geopolitical concerns rather than by an interest in raising the living standards of impoverished farmers or promoting democracy.

1. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1: *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes 1945–1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 416–417.

2. For example, see John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); James Putzel, *A Captive Land: The Politics of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1992); Gary Olson, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Third World Peasant: Land Reform in Asia and Latin America* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974); Saturnino M. Borras Jr., Cristobal Kay, and A. Haroon Akram Lodhi, "Agrarian Reform and Rural Development: Historical Overview and Current Issues," Institute of Social Studies/United Nations Development Program Land, Poverty and Public Action Policy Paper No. 1, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 2007, pp. 1–30; Gi-Wook Shin, "Agrarian Conflict and the Origins of Korean Capitalism," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 103, No. 5 (March 1998), pp. 1318–1339; Byung-shik Shin, "Hankukui Tojikaehyuke Kwanhan Jeongchikyoungchejeok Yeonku [Political economic approaches to land reform in South Korea]," Ph.D. Diss., Seoul National University, Seoul, 1992; and Jong-Sung You, "Land Reform, Inequality, and Corruption: A Comparative Historical Study of Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines," *Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (June 2014), pp. 191–224.

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Indisputably, the land reform enacted by USAMGIK was partial and limited. This article, however, takes issue with Cumings's characterization of the U.S.-sponsored land redistribution program, shedding new light on the motives, process, and impact of the reform. The main findings are threefold. First, the United States was serious about conducting a land-to-tiller program because it served dual purposes: stopping the expansion of revolutionary appeals *and* laying groundwork for democracy to thrive. When World War II ended, New Deal supporters who strongly opposed an excessive concentration of economic power devised policies for implementation in occupied states.³ For New Dealers in Washington, cartelized industries and concentrated landholdings threatened social stability and international peace. Therefore, during President Harry Truman's administration, the United States considered embarking on economic reforms in occupied territories to promote a wide distribution of ownership of the means of production in the belief that economic equity fends off revolutionary sentiment and undergirds democracy.

Plans for decartelization and land reforms in occupied Japan and Germany are good cases in point. U.S.-sponsored land reform policies in South Korea should be understood in the same context, not simply as a palliative to keep peasants from being attracted to Communism. Some may argue that land reform and industrial decartelization in the two war-defeated countries were shaped by punitive motives rather than ideological considerations.⁴ It is true that the U.S.-sponsored land reform and industrial decartelization in Germany and Japan were inspired partly by punitive motives. However, it is also true that U.S. policymakers believed that the dense concentration of economic power had smothered the chance for democracy in those countries. This belief was reflected in U.S. occupation policies for Korea, a liberated country that lacked experience with modern representative government. Post-colonial Korea, especially its southern half, was a heavily agricultural society. To ensure that a newly independent Korea would be democratic, rural landholding inequality and tenancy problems that preceded the colonial period had to be addressed. Many archival documents indicate that, along with establishing an independent and sovereign Korea, the basic objectives of the United States in Korea were to ensure the establishment of a democratic government and to facilitate the emergence of an economy suitable for a democratic

3. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton, 1999), pp. 220–221.

4. Jin-wung Kim, "1945–1948 Nyeon Namhankwa Ilponeseoui Mikukui Nongjijeongchaek Pikyo" [A comparison of postwar U.S. farmland policies in Southern Korea and Japan], *Yeoksakyoyuknonjip* [Review of history education] (August 2012), pp. 403–408.

state.⁵ Accordingly, USAMGIK adopted political, economic, and social reforms.⁶ For example, the document known as State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) 176/18 authorizes “the Commander of United States Forces in Korea [to] take steps to initiate a broad program of constructive economic and educational reforms for southern Korea looking toward the creation of conditions favorable to the development of a strong and lasting democratic system.”⁷ The primary goal was to “replac[e] the Japanese government in Korea with an effective government along democratic lines and rebuild a sound economy as a basis for independent Korea.”⁸ By all indications, U.S. officials sincerely wanted to democratize Korea and resolve its long-standing inequality in landholding.⁹ To use a Korean proverb, land reform was a stone catching two birds in one throw. Why, then, did USAMGIK end up with partial and limited land reform?

For revisionists like Cumings, the partial reform of March 1948 is evidence that land reform was merely a short-term measure to stop the spread of Communist influence in the U.S. zone, driven by the Communist threat and sweeping land redistribution in North Korea in the spring of 1946. However, the influence of these two factors was more complicated than Cumings suggested. Therefore, the second finding of this article is that the partial reform can be explained by exceptionally volatile political circumstances across southern Korea. U.S. officials had to deal with well-organized and subversive indigenous Communists led by Park Hon-yong at the outset of the military occupation, and then later with intransigent conservative politicians affiliated with landed elites. At first, when Communist elements were still present, the Truman administration could not be certain about the future of the Korean Peninsula free from Soviet influence. The security concerns sparked by the

5. “SWNCC 176/18,” 28 January 1946, in HST Papers, Staff Member and Office Files, Korean War File, Box 13, Harry S. Truman Library (HSTL); “Assistant Secretary of State John H. Hildring before the Economic Club of Detroit,” 10 March 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 24, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II; “Interim Directive for Administration of Civil Affairs in Korea,” 5 November 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 21, NARA II; and “Our Mission in Korea,” 14 April 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 25, NARA II.

6. “SWNCC 176/18”; “Interim Directive to the Commander in Chief, USAFEC, and Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces in Korea,” 1 July 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 7, NARA II.

7. “SWNCC 176/18.”

8. “Our Mission in Korea,” 14 April 1947.

9. John Lewis Gaddis, “Korea in American Politics, Strategy, and Diplomacy, 1945–50,” in Nagai Yonosuke and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 279.

Communist threat made it hard for the United States to sustain its commitment to land reform. U.S. officials understood that land reform was useful for fighting the appeal of Communism, but the strong ties built up between U.S. officials and conservative South Korean politicians as a result of the presence of strong Communist groups delayed land reform plans. Archival documents suggest that USAMGIK did not want to disrupt the status quo and promoted conservative landed elites in their domestic political competition against the Left. However, the conservatives eventually became too strong. They also grew bold and intransigent enough to frustrate plans for large-scale redistributive reforms even when the U.S. occupation brought those plans to the table in 1947. Hence, the United States had to settle for only partial land reform by distributing merely the formerly Japanese-owned lands at its disposal.

The third finding of the article is that the significance of the U.S.-sponsored land reform in South Korea should not be underestimated. The land reform program in March 1948 paved the way for further reforms. U.S. officials were hopeful that a similar land program to be implemented by the new government in Seoul and the decline of Communist influence in South Korea would soon follow its disposal of vested lands.¹⁰ That hope was fulfilled. New South Korean legislation proposed that the founding constitution of 1948 include a clause transferring lands to farmers. Concrete plans for land redistribution by the Korean government were officially implemented in June 1950. In addition to setting a precedent for land redistribution, the USAMGIK land reform program determined the basic principles for land reform to come. Different political parties had different ideas regarding the scale and methods of land redistribution. However, the land reform program enacted by USAMGIK concluded the debate. The new South Korean government was to purchase land from Korean landowners, who would receive due compensation. Farmers would pay for the land they acquired; and a ceiling would be imposed on the holding of farmland.¹¹

To provide a complete picture of the motives, process, and impact of the U.S.-sponsored land reform in March 1948, I have scrutinized archival and secondary sources on the topic, including documents from both the U.S. Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK) and the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan. Documents from

10. "ZMGAGR-2 from USAFIK to CSCAD PG," 13 March 1948, in Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP), Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785-24, NARA II.

11. Dae-yeob Yoon, "Keonkukui Jeongchiwa Migunjeong: Keonkukheonbeop Nongjilkaehyuk Chohangui Kyubeomjeok Kiwonkwa Jeongchijeok Hyunshil [Politics of state building and U.S. Military Government: Norm and political reality of the farmland reform article of 1948 Constitution]," *Sabokewahaknonjip* [Social science review], Vol. 41, No. 1 (Spring 2010), p. 128.

SCAP are integral to understanding the whole process of land reform in Korea, insofar as USAMGIK continually reported to SCAP about the obstacles to and progress of the reform. The documents also indicate that SCAP officials were deeply involved in USAMGIK's land reform plan. Collating the two occupation administrations' documents reveals that U.S. officials seriously cared about land reform in South Korea from the early stages of occupation and that the land reform plan was conceived not simply as a palliative to stop the spread of Communism but also as a prerequisite for the establishment of democracy.

Among secondary sources, an increasing number of scholarly works in Korean have highlighted the constructive and progressive role of USAMGIK throughout the process of land reform.¹² These and other recent works enrich discussion of the U.S.-implemented land reform in Korea. I have also made use of publications based on declassified Soviet archival sources, which are useful in gaining a deeper insight into the motives of the Communist organizations in Seoul and the extent of Soviet involvement in political affairs in the southern zone. Incorporating both archival and secondary sources, the article critically examines both conventional accounts and more recent scholarship and aims to present a nuanced and balanced interpretation of the role played by the U.S. military occupation. The article supports the conventional wisdom that USAMGIK cancelled the land reform program in spring 1946 because of direct and indirect opposition from conservative elites, the co-opted partners in military occupation. But it underscores that the coalition between U.S. officials and Korean conservative elites stemmed from the volatile security environment in South Korea, which was defined by the presence of strong Communist organizations. USAMGIK had two clear political objectives for the land reform program in March 1948: stopping the "free land" appeal of Communist ideas and promoting democracy. Preventing the revival of Communist influence in South Korea, which tapped peasants' desire to own land, was an important source of the reform. But the partial reform, disposing only of the vested lands, was not solely a palliative to stop Communism. Equally important was the conviction that democracy cannot grow strong in a society in which inequality is a prevalent norm. The land reform in March 1948 was the second-best option USAMGIK had after its plan to redistribute lands owned by Koreans was frustrated by the intransigence of conservative politicians.

12. For example, Myongnim Pak, "Heonbup, kukkauije, kuriko daetongryung leadership [Constitution, national agenda, and presidential leadership]," *Kukjejeongchinonchong* [Review of international studies], Vol. 48, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 436; and Yoon, "Keonkukui Jeongchiwa Migunjeong."

This article begins by reviewing early plans for land reform in South Korea. It then discusses the distribution of relative strength among political groups in South Korea when the U.S. occupation forces arrived in late summer 1945, showing that strong and subversive local Communists constituted a threat to the occupation and triggered USAMGIK's collaboration with Korean landed elites. U.S. officials' desire to maintain the status quo and their ties with conservative elites contributed to aborting the land reform plan in spring 1946. The third section shows that USAMGIK became more serious about land reform as the time for a U.S. withdrawal drew nearer with the installation of a separate government in Seoul, and as Communist strength in Korea diminished, but that the conservatives rejected the U.S. plan for large-scale land reform when they took the upper hand in South Korean politics. The article concludes with remarks about how these findings contribute to the study of U.S. foreign relations.

Early Land Reform Plan

By 1943, the political future of Korea after liberation from Japanese colonial rule became a subject of discussion in Washington. Assuming that a Korea entirely in hostile hands would threaten postwar U.S. security and that Korea could not govern itself after the liberation, U.S. policymakers decided to conduct a military occupation and put Korea under a trusteeship divided among the victorious Allied powers.¹³ They recommended that the United States participate in both the military government and the interim administration of Korea and help Koreans establish a strong, democratic, and independent state. They also noted the dire agrarian conditions, characterized by a high tenancy rate and the extortionate treatment of tenants by both Japanese and Korean landlords.¹⁴

In line with policy recommendations and planning before the end of the Pacific War, SWNCC 176/8 (the directives to the commanding general of USAFIK), stipulated that the ultimate objective of the United States with respect to Korea was to foster conditions that would bring about the establishment of a free and independent state capable of taking its place as a responsible and peaceful member of the international community.¹⁵ For this purpose, the

13. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, pp. 113–115.

14. See the planning documents in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945, Vol. V, pp. 556–580.

15. "SWNCC 176/8 Basic Initial Directive to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific for the Administration of Civil Affairs in Those Areas of Korea Occupied by the U.S. Forces," 13 October 1945, in HST Papers, Staff Member and Office Files, Korean War File, Box 13, HSTL.

directives required USAMGIK to establish a liaison at the outset with the Soviet Union, its occupation partner; eliminate all vestiges of Japanese control over Korean economic and political life by abrogating all laws, ordinances, decrees, and regulations that would restrict political and civil liberties; foster freedom of assembly, speech, press, and religion; encourage the formation of political parties along with development of democratic organizations in labor, industry, and agriculture; and ensure to the maximum possible extent the equitable distribution of goods and services throughout the area of the occupation.¹⁶

SWNCC 176/8 was primarily about managing the joint occupation with the Soviet Union. It does not constitute evidence that the United States lacked interest in the land problem. While waiting for more instructions about civil and economic affairs from Washington, the commanding general in Seoul declared “Ordinance 9,” prohibiting land rents from exceeding one-third of the value of the annual production.¹⁷ The ordinance marked the first step to alleviate the living standard of farmers, though a measure to address more fundamental agrarian inequality was yet to come, in the form of SWNCC 176/10 in December 1945. This more concrete directive on land reform stipulated that measures designed to permit a wide distribution of income and local ownership of the means of production and trade would be given force.¹⁸

Landholding inequality was such a critical issue in Korea that all major political groups provided their own prescriptions to correct the age-long impoverishment and despair of peasants. For example, the (left-wing) Korean People’s Republic suggested confiscating lands owned by Japanese and by Korean collaborators with Japanese colonialism, followed by free distribution to farmers.¹⁹ The Korean Communist Party proposed to distribute farmland for free after confiscating not only the property of Japanese and Korean collaborators but also the lands of Korean landlords.²⁰ The Korean Democratic Party, the icon of conservative forces, agreed in spirit with the need for land reform, but it consistently called for the purchase of farmland by peasants at market

16. Ibid.

17. Un-Seong Jeon, “Kwangbokhu Migunjeongui Tojijeongchaek Daehan Yeonku [Reappraisal of land policy under U.S. military administration since Korean independence from Japan],” *Sahwoikwa-hakyeonku* [The journal of social science studies], Vol. 34 (December 1994), p. 105.

18. “SWNCC 176/10 United States Policy with Respect to Korea,” 14 December 1945, in HST Papers, Staff Member and Office Files, Korean War File, Box 13, HSTL.

19. Yoon, “Keonkukui Jeongchiwa Migunjeong,” p. 132.

20. “Report on the Communist Party,” n.d., in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 5, NARA II; and Hunjoon Kim, “Expansion of Transitional Justice Measures: A Comparative Analysis of Its Causes,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 2008, p. 110.

prices, after acquisition by the government with appropriate compensation to landlords.²¹

Having recognized that all major political organizations in Korea wanted to remedy the land tenure problem, USAMGIK issued Ordinance No. 33 on 6 December 1945 that gave it custody of all former Japanese properties, not only agricultural lands but also industrial assets, as a signal that the United States did not recognize the Japanese annexation of Korea and as a preparatory step toward restoring Korea's sovereignty and economy.²² However, the U.S. authorities did not push hard to implement specific plans for land reform during the first year of the occupation. The New Korea Company (NKC) was created on 21 February 1946 to manage the vested properties. The plan for redistributing the lands under the jurisdiction of the NKC, arranged by the Korean Economic Mission led by Arthur Bunce of the State Department, became public in spring 1946, but was cancelled after only a few months. Why did it take more than two years for the directive of December 1945 to be implemented? The United States at the time was preoccupied in trying to block the Communist influence that was spreading across the U.S. zone and to prevent the whole of Korea from becoming a puppet of the USSR.

A Strong Left and the Marriage with the Conservatives

U.S. occupation forces under the leadership of Lieutenant-General John Hodge landed on the southern Korean peninsula on 8 September 1945. What awaited them were chaotic political conditions created by the receding, yet still present, Japanese control, demands for quick independence from the local population, a zonal occupation divided with the Soviet Union, and fierce domestic political competition between the left and the right.²³ As General Hodge wrote in his first report to General Douglas MacArthur less than a week after Hodge arrived, southern Korea might best be described as "a powder keg ready to explode at the application of a spark."²⁴

21. Yoon, "Keonkukui Jeongchiwa Migunjeong," pp. 129–130.

22. Expropriating Japanese assets abroad and using them to rebuild a new economic structure in Asia was the basic principle of U.S. policy concerning Japanese war reparations for the first year after the end of the Pacific War. For more detail, see Takushi Ohno, "United States Policy on Japanese War Reparations, 1945–1951," *Asia Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (December 1975), pp. 23–45.

23. "Summation of *Non-Military Activities* in Japan and South Korea Sep–Oct 1945," p. 175, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 7, NARA II.

24. "Conditions in Korea," 13 September 1945, in USAFIK, Commandant's Office, Box 21, NARA II.

The Communists were the first to capitalize on this transformative moment. As the imminence of Japanese surrender became apparent, Japanese colonial authorities began to approach influential Koreans about an interim administration to preserve law and order and to protect Japanese servicemen and civilians from the vengeance of the Koreans.²⁵ Lyuh Woon-hyung, a prominent leader known for his center-left political ideology, agreed with the Japanese governor general to form a peacekeeping administration in return for the Japanese acceptance of five demands, among which was the immediate release of all political prisoners throughout the country.²⁶ Right after the meeting with the governor general on 14 August, one day before the declaration of the Japanese surrender, Lyuh gathered several leaders to inform them of these agreements, and they decided to form the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI). Events unfolded quickly. Teams of propagandists were sent to the countryside to form provisional committees. Released prisoners and demobilized soldiers and youth conscripts also became active in organizing local branches and other groups to support the CPKI.²⁷ A peace preservation corps was formed throughout the country, workers' unions were organized, and peasant unions also developed in a few weeks.²⁸

Two days before the arrival of the U.S. occupation forces, CPKI activists announced the formation of the Korean People's Republic (KPR) and chose 87 leaders to staff the interim administration, pending a general election. The aim of this hasty action was to form a pseudo-government that the occupying U.S. forces might accept for short-term expediency and to which they might then transfer sovereignty in the future.²⁹ The formation of the KPR was initiated by Park Hon-yong, the most prominent Communist leader in the south, and the left outnumbered the right in the roster. The KPR was thus a preemptive strike by Communists to grab political power.³⁰ Although the new body superficially appeared to reach across ideological lines—for example, by appointing the pro-American Syngman Rhee as president of the republic—the right began to distance itself from the CPKI and the KPR, pointing

25. Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945–1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), p. 43.

26. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, p. 71.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 74–81.

29. Millett, *The War for Korea 1945–50*, p. 46.

30. For example, Park said in early September 1945 that he had “not been able to keep in touch with all my comrades in the recent period . . . because I have been absorbed in the construction of the People's Republic.” See Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Part 1, *The Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), p. 247.

out that the Communists retained the real power. Later in the year, Lyuh and his followers left the KPR for the same reason.³¹ Despite their failure to form a broadly inclusive de facto government, the KPR and the Communists constituted the most difficult challenges for USAMGIK. From the beginning, the United States had inherited a well-established Communist organization eager to arrogate governing authority from the United States.³²

The Communists were the best organized among the political forces that had popular support. The Korean Communist Party (KCP) was officially created on 11 September 1945. Despite dissension among the different factions, Communists rallied behind the leadership of Park Hon-yong, whose claim was recognized by Soviet officials in Pyongyang.³³ The KCP's exact numerical strength was not known. USAMGIK estimated that the KCP had approximately 3,000 members in the U.S. zone, but that number was increasing rapidly.³⁴ In any case, party membership does not capture the extraordinary influence of the Communists at the time.³⁵ Park was also active in the formation of the KPR, which had already incorporated subsidiary organizations and local branches of the CPKI. Through the KPR the party won control of youth, labor, and peasant organizations.

USAMGIK noted that the Communists were strong in South Korea. One report stated that if elections were held the Communists would receive 35–40 percent of the votes.³⁶ The Christian missionary Horace H. Underwood, an adviser to USAMGIK, made an extensive visit to the rural areas and submitted a report saying that the KPR was the strongest and most active organization throughout the South.³⁷ Following a trip through the provinces in December 1945, a group of USAMGIK officials presented a more ominous analysis:

The strength of the Republic was growing. It was organized into a government at all levels, and no other party was given an opportunity to coexist with it. Without

31. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 95," 10 July 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 77, NARA II.

32. "Orientation for Undersecretary of the Army William Draper by Lt. Gen. Hodge," 23 September 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 29, NARA II.

33. Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1945–1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 303; and Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Part 1, pp. 252–288. According to Scalapino and Lee, the indigenous Korean Communists were divided into three major factions. One group was called the Changan group, the second the Tuesday group, and the third the Reconstruction group. Park Hon-yong was the leader of the Reconstruction group.

34. "An Estimate of the Numerical Strength of the Communists in the American Zone," n.d., in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 29, NARA II.

35. Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Part 1, p. 257.

36. "An Estimate of the Numerical Strength of the Communists in the American Zone."

37. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 95."

Military Government intervention, it was clear that no other parties would be allowed to flourish.³⁸

Some scholars have criticized the U.S. analysis of political conditions in South Korea in 1945 as paranoid, pointing out that the peasants' unions and labor unions were not necessarily Communist organizations. For example, Cumings states that the National Council of Korean Labor Unions (NCKLU), the central organ of the labor unions, which emerged in fall 1945, was reformist rather than Communist, though it supported the KPR.³⁹ Cumings argues throughout the first volume of *The Origins of the Korean War* that the U.S. occupation authorities misunderstood the eruption of mass organizations, which expressed not a Communist-inspired revolutionary thrust but Koreans' will to correct social injustices dating to Japanese colonialism and the precolonial period.

It is true that not all members of labor or peasant organizations were Communists, but during the early Cold War years the United States, which was keeping close track of the political groups that took leadership positions in the mass organizations, worried that Communists could mobilize the rank-and-file to disrupt the economy and social order once they dominated the governing echelon. The emerging leaders of the labor and peasant organizations seemed to justify the U.S. suspicions. During the NCKLU's first general congregation in early November 1945, it elected as honorary presidents Park Hon-yong, the president of the KCP; Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communists in China; a Soviet official responsible for Far Eastern Affairs; and Kim Il-Sung, a Korean officer who had recently returned to Pyongyang under the auspices of the Soviet Red Army and went on to become the all-powerful dictator of North Korea until his death in 1994.⁴⁰ The All-Nation Federation of the Farmers' Union displayed the same political propensity, electing Iosif Stalin and Park Hon-yong as honorary presidents.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, U.S. intelligence described both conferences as Communist political meetings.

Communists were subversive as well. They discredited U.S. occupation policies while hailing the Soviet policies north of the 38th Parallel. Singling out the Soviet occupation for conferring self-rule on Koreans by using people's committees and for repelling the Japanese and depriving them of properties,

38. Ibid.

39. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, p. 198.

40. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 9," 13 November 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 43, NARA II.

41. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 14," 18 December 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 43, NARA II.

Communist pamphlets and posters criticized the United States for treating Koreans as the conquered rather than the liberated and for not giving power to the KPR.⁴² Communists also pretended to be agents of a de facto government. From the beginning of the occupation, the United States had made clear that, under the agreement among the Allied powers, USAMGIK was the only legitimate government in the southern half of the peninsula until independence. The KPR not only defied the U.S. demand that it disband but openly spurned repeated demands from USAMGIK that it drop “republic” from its name in order to lessen confusion among Koreans—the name conveyed the image of an actual provisional government, collaborating with the occupier until the promulgation of independence.⁴³ In many towns KPR members had taken over the municipal administration by force, taking control of the police, collecting taxes, and appointing local officials to replace the incumbents.⁴⁴ Inevitably, the first few months of the military occupation were filled with incidents between U.S. officials who wanted to deprive Communists of governing power and Communists who refused to relinquish it.

Hence, it is hardly surprising that USAMGIK viewed the Communists as a dangerous political group aspiring to take over the government as soon as U.S. forces left. The Communists’ activities in the first year of the U.S. occupation convinced USAMGIK that they were powerful and loyal enough to take over fifth-column action for the Soviet Union.⁴⁵ With northern Korea thoroughly Communist and a strong Communist organization in southern Korea, the Communists seemed to be well on the way to controlling the central government and turning Korea into a “puppet state” that would serve the strategic interests of the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ The political cost of such a loss would not be limited to the peninsula. Korea was an ideological battleground

42. “G-2 Weekly Summary No. 6,” 23 October 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 43, NARA II.

43. “G-2 Periodic Report No. 54,” 3 November 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 46, NARA II.

44. “G-2 Weekly Summary No. 8,” 6 November 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 43, NARA II; and “G-2 Weekly Summary No. 10,” 20 November 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 43, NARA II.

45. “General Hodge with Wedemeyer,” 27 August 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 44, NARA II.

46. “G-2 Periodic Report No. 4,” 14 September 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 45, NARA II; “War SVC 6261 Russian Policy in Korea,” 16 November 1945, in SCAP, Adjutant General’s Section, Operations Division, Box 765, NARA II; and “Letter from Ambassador Pauley to President Truman,” 22 June 1946, in Office of the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Army, General Decimal File, Box 9, NARA II.

on which the entire success of U.S. policy in Asia depended.⁴⁷ U.S. political interests in Korea are well epitomized in the a draft report from the War Department:

Korea is a testing ground for the effectiveness of the American concept of democracy as compared to Soviet ideology. If sufficient support is not forthcoming to give our democracy a fair trial in Korea, other peoples and countries throughout the world will instinctively question both the effectiveness and virility of the United States and its form of government. . . . A backing down or running away from the U.S.S.R. in Korea could very easily result in a stiffening of the Soviet attitude on Germany or some other area of much greater intrinsic importance to us. On the other hand, a firm "holding of the line" in Korea can materially strengthen our position in our other dealings with the U.S.S.R.⁴⁸

The situation in southern Korea had created extremely fertile ground for the establishment of Communism.⁴⁹ USAMGIK's first move was to find Koreans who could help the U.S. occupation establish law and order and stop the growth of Communism. What it found was the conservative elite.

In reaction to efforts of the left in general and Communists in particular to organize across the country, the conservatives formed the Korean Democratic Party (KDP), rejecting the representativeness of the CPKI and its successor, the KPR. Including important figures in business and education, the leaders of the KDP were highly educated in Western or elite Japanese universities, and many were serious Christians.⁵⁰ Some members were true patriots, whereas others had tainted records as collaborators under the Japanese colonial regime.⁵¹ Because many were large landowners and wealthy businessmen, the KDP was vulnerable to their pressure to preserve their wealth.⁵² With their education, relative wealth, and social status, the leaders of the KDP appealed to USAMGIK. The

47. "President's Reply to Ambassador Pauley," 16 July 1946, in Office of the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Army, General Decimal File, Box 9, NARA II.

48. "Draft of Report of Special Interdepartmental Committee on Korea," 25 February 1947, in Office of the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Army, General Decimal File, Box 9, NARA II.

49. "TFGCG 190 from CG USAFIK to SCAP," 14 December 1945, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785-2, NARA II; and Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," CWIHP Working Paper No. 8, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, November 1993, p. 17.

50. Millett, *The War for Korea 1945-1950*, p. 48.

51. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, p. 93.

52. Jongsoo James Lee, *The Partition of Korea after World War II: A Global History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 47.

report to the secretary of state written by General Hodge's political adviser expressed relief and joy at finding them: "The most encouraging single factor in the political situation is the presence in Seoul of several hundred conservatives among the older and better educated Koreans. Although many of them have served with the Japanese, that stigma ought eventually to disappear."⁵³

The conservatives looked less aggressive than the leftists and were believed to represent the majority of thinking Koreans. Ultimately, they were perceived to be democratic and pro-American, willing to cooperate with USAMGIK.⁵⁴ They successfully incited the U.S. fear of the KPR by accusing Lyuh's party of being strongly Communist.⁵⁵ Faced with a choice between two broad coalitions of Korean politicians, USAMGIK unsurprisingly opted to accommodate the KDP. As a result, the KDP became the pillar of the right in the first few months after liberation and remained so throughout the occupation.

After ousting Japanese officials, USAMGIK announced in early October 1945 that it had appointed ten outstanding Korean leaders to serve as an advisory committee. Despite USAMGIK's declaration that it had no interest in political parties, religious groups, or groups of any kind—no interest other than in helping Koreans to build a fine Korean nation—six of the ten were members of the KDP, including two founders of the party, Kim Song-su and Song Chin-u; and three others were believed to be affiliated with it. Lyuh was the only committee member who was not tied to the KDP. The advisory committee shortly began to recommend KDP members as Korean high officials in USAMGIK—most notably a faithful anti-Communist KDP officer, Cho Pyong-ok, who became chief of police, the most organized coercive apparatus in Korea following the collapse of Japanese imperialism. During the colonial period the police had been a tool for the suppression of the independence movement and for the war mobilization of the masses. After the arrival of U.S. troops, they were the most loyal forces in the occupation, serving to locate and suppress Communist activities. In addition, by December 1945, the head of the Supreme Court, the attorney general, and the head of the Department of Justice were KDP members.

Second, the United States arranged a return of "Korean exiles" from the United States and China because the KDP wanted to use their reputation as

53. "Benninghoff to the Secretary of State," 15 September 1945, in USAFIK, Commandant's Office, Box 21, NARA II.

54. "Political Movements in Korea," 29 September 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 22, NARA II.

55. "G-2 Periodic Report No. 4," 14 September 1945, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 45, NARA II.

leaders in the independence movement in the struggle against Communist organizations. Accordingly, the United States decided to hasten the return of Syngman Rhee, the U.S.-resident Korean independence activist, and members of the provisional government such as Kim Koo and Kim Kiusik, who had been working in China. These three figures came to play key roles in constituting the Representative Democratic Council (RDC), which functioned in an advisory capacity to USAMGIK, replacing the existing advisory committee. The RDC comprised 28 Korean leaders, at first including Lyuh Woon-hyung and two other leftists, but they pulled out after criticizing the RDC for being dominated by the right. Without the participation of the left, the RDC became another political machine dominated by the conservatives, except for a few middle-of-the-road politicians. The United States soon learned that the police and a significant number of KDP members were unpopular because of their previous collaboration with Japanese colonialism and that the KDP was less democratic than it had expected. However, as long as the Communist organizations remained archenemies of the U.S. occupation and of the KDP and the police, this anti-Communist marriage of convenience would continue.⁵⁶

Suspension of the Land Reform Program in South Korea

On 8 February 1946, North Korea announced its plan for land reform. The linchpin of the program was the free distribution to farmers of land confiscated from landlords who were not compensated for their loss.⁵⁷ The promulgation of Soviet-style land reform was an unexpected strike at the U.S. occupation; it could have aggravated the free fall that U.S. popularity was already undergoing because of the free-market policy for rice (which invited an inflation of the rice price and was later replaced with an at least equally unpopular forcible collection of rice) and because of USAMGIK's accommodation with the police and former collaborators with colonial Japan. The United States had to respond; it did so by announcing its own plan to distribute farmland previously owned by Japanese individuals, firms, and government and vested in USAMGIK since the beginning of the occupation.⁵⁸ The plan had been

56. Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), p. 216.

57. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, pp. 414–418.

58. "TFYMG 941 from CG USAFIK to SCAP," 14 February 1946, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785–2, NARA II.

arranged by Bunce's Korean Economic Mission and had already been reported to MacArthur a week before the proclamation of the North Korean program.⁵⁹ The basic principles of Bunce's plan included the following:

1. The NKC would be established to administer the transfer of the vested lands.
2. Beneficiaries of the redistribution would be tenants or small independent farmers who had cultivated the lands.
3. The sales price would be 4.5 times the average annual production, and the installment payment would be equal to 30 percent (later adjusted to 25 percent) of average annual production in grain over a 15-year period.⁶⁰

Yet, by late April, USAMGIK announced that it had suspended the sales plan. The principal reason was differences of opinion between officials of SCAP in Tokyo and their counterparts in Seoul regarding the scope of redistribution. From the beginning of the discussion on land reform in Korea, SCAP favored distributing both Korean-owned and formerly Japanese-owned land to tenants. The military government in Seoul preferred to limit programs to vested lands—primarily, according to a memorandum from Seoul to Tokyo, because Korean-owned lands were not legally subject to sale.⁶¹ The memorandum also pointed out that public opinion in Korea was too divergent to discern the Koreans' genuine wishes concerning who should conduct reforms and to what extent. Public opinion surveys conducted by Korean interpreters throughout the country at the behest of the military governor showed that the majority of South Koreans favored the suspension of any pending sales of farmland, either Japanese- or Korean-owned, by USAMGIK until the formation of South Korea's own government (see Table 1).⁶²

However, another survey conducted by USAMGIK revealed a more complicated story. The interviews for this second survey indicated that except in

59. "TFYMG 669 from USAFIK to SCAP Suggested Plan for Sale of Korean Farmland to Tenants," 1 February 1946, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Administrative Division, Box 8968, NARA II; and Byung-shik Shin, "Tojikaehyukul Tonghaebon Migunjeongui Kukkaseongkyuk: Kukkajuuijeok Jupkeun [The characteristics of the American Military Government seen through the land reform]," *Yeoksabipyong* [Critique of history], Vol. 1 (June 1988), p. 191.

60. Jeon, "Kwangbokhu Migunjeongui Tojijeongchaek Daehan Yeonku," pp. 102–103; and Yoon, "Keonkukui Jeongchiwa Migunjeong," pp. 143–144.

61. "TFYMG 1717 from USAFIK to SCAP Land Reform Program," 4 May 1946, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Administrative Division, Box 8968, NARA II.

62. "Memorandum for Military Governor Gen. Lerch," 15 May, 23 May, and 4 June 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 29, NARA II.

Table 1. Surveys on the Disposition of Farmlands

A. Public Opinion dated 15 May 1946 (n = 738)	
Question #1: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of formerly Japanese owned lands?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	20.6%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	22.0%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	57.4%
Question #2: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of farmlands owned by large Korean landlords?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	17%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	19%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	64%
B. Public Opinion dated 23 May 1946 (n = 3486, only for Seoul and areas around it)	
Question #1: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of formerly Japanese-owned Lands?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	16%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	7%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	77%
Question #2: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of farmlands owned by large Korean landlords?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	7%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	10%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	83%
C. Public Opinion dated 4 June 1946 (n = 1438 across rural and urban population)	
Question #1: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of formerly Japanese owned Lands?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	27%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	16%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	57%

Table I. Continued.

Question #2: Which policy do you favor in reference to the disposition of farmlands owned by large Korean landlords?	
a. Given to tenants by Military Government	10%
b. Sold to tenants by Military Government	15%
c. Maintain as is for a Korean Government to decide	75%
D. Survey on Soviet Propaganda	
Question #1: Have you heard of the land act in North Korea?	
Yes	70%
No	14%
Don't Know	16%
Question #2: If so, do you believe that Military Government should enact a similar one in South Korea?	
Yes	17%
No	53%
Don't Know	30%

Sources: "Korean Public Opinion on the Disposition of Farmlands," 15 May 1946, 23 May 1946, and 4 June 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 19, NARA II; and "Effectiveness of Japanese and Soviet Propaganda in the Provinces and in Seoul," 20 May 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 29, NARA II.

Seoul—where the conservatives were strongest—the public favored the immediate redistribution of farmland regardless of whether the lands were owned by Japanese or Koreans.⁶³ To complicate matters further, interviews with county chiefs in rural areas conducted by an official from GHQ SCAP in Tokyo showed that peasants favored the prompt redistribution of vested farmland but could wait for the redistribution of large landholdings of Koreans until an independent Korean government was formed.⁶⁴ The only consistent finding was that the peasants were willing to buy land rather than get it for free. From this, USAMGIK concluded that, until the provisional Korean government was

63. "Public Opinion Trends No. 5," 31 March 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 17, NARA II.

64. "Agrarian Reform in Korea," 4 July 1946, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Administrative Division, Box 8968, NARA II.

established, further study on land reform was needed. How did these different approaches to the scale of reforms end in a choice to do nothing? After all, inaction risked exacerbating peasant frustration and making the occupation vulnerable to Communist propaganda.

The answer lies in the governing coalition the United States had built with conservatives and the preference for the status quo triggered by strong Communist challenges. First, awaiting the formation of a government by Koreans to redistribute lands to peasants was the idea mainly of the conservatives and landlords, who feared that equitable disposal of land formerly owned by the Japanese would spur further reforms by the future Korean government.⁶⁵ They expected that once they held power they could suffocate demands for land redistribution or at least change the terms of sale in their favor. Despite SCAP's disagreement, USAMGIK could have distributed the vested lands at its disposal—as it did two years later. But, in 1946, the occupation authorities picked up only the dissenting voices. Even though the public opinion survey had been conducted by Korean interpreters who were close to landlords or other wealthy individuals who opposed any land reform, USAMGIK did not question its objectivity and reliability.⁶⁶ The decision to suspend the land sale program is evidence of the strength of the tie between USAMGIK and the conservative elites.⁶⁷

Second, a preference for the status quo incited by strong Communist movements was also responsible for the delay of the redistribution program. Ambassador Edwin Pauley, a close friend of President Truman and a special envoy, visited Korea in the spring of 1946. After his visit, maintaining the status quo, and thus suspending any programs for the distribution of Japanese property to Koreans, became a basic principle. According to Pauley, Communism could take hold in Korea faster than practically anywhere else in the world. He concluded that rapid disposal of Japanese properties, including railroads, major industries, and natural resources, could end up putting them in Communist hands and enhance Communist power. Therefore, Pauley recommended that the United States not waive its claim to assets until a democratic capitalistic form of government was assured.⁶⁸ President Truman concurred in his reply:

65. "TFYMG 1717."

66. Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary* (New York: William Sloane, 1948), p. 433.

67. Sakurai Hiroshi, *Kankokunochiseidono Saikento* [Reexamination of agricultural system in Korea] (Tokyo: Ajia Keizaikenkyusho, 1976), p. 48; and Jeon, "Kwangbokhu Migunjeongui Tojijeongchaeke Daehan Yeonku," p. 102.

68. "Letter from Ambassador Pauley to President Truman," 22 June 1946.

Now the U.S. aims at broadening the basis for Korean participation in the administration of South Korea by holding elections for key local and provincial posts and by creating a legislative assembly and at assisting the Koreans in initiating a broad program of economic reform such as land redistribution.⁶⁹

Thus, the first half of 1946 passed without any significant movement to address the tenancy problems in southern Korea, in contrast to the radical land redistribution north of the 38th Parallel. The presence of strong Communist groups and the close ties between USAMGIK and the conservatives delayed land reform plans in 1946. But land reform never became a dead letter. Keeping in mind that the spirit of democracy could not flourish where poverty, insecurity, and despair were the lot of a large portion of farmers, the United States decided to discuss land reform issues after forming a provisional legislative body, expecting it to enact measures agreeable to all Koreans through honest democratic proceedings and channels.⁷⁰

The Second Drive for Land Reform

The United States brought land reform to the table again in the summer of 1947, at a time when it had decided to withdraw from Korea after creating a separate government in the south. The distribution of relative strength among political groups was starting to favor the conservatives. Apparently, Communist strength in the U.S. zone was receding after violent peasant uprisings in the fall of 1946. General strikes in all major industries in southern Korea in late September 1946 escalated into peasant uprisings that swept all the southern provinces in the U.S. occupation zone for almost two months. The police and constabulary forces cracked down on violent riots with the support of U.S. troops. (See Table 2 for a partial representation of the violence of the uprisings; no accurate count of participants or casualties exists.)⁷¹ No single factor can explain the massive violence. Some scholars, including Cumings, Jin-wung Kim, and James Matray, attribute it to repeated forcible rice

69. "President's Reply to Ambassador Pauley," 16 July 1946.

70. "Korean Agriculture and Some of Its Problems," 31 August 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 17, NARA II.

71. Gi-wook Shin estimates the number of casualties as at least 1,200, including government forces, mobs, and innocent civilians. See Gi-wook Shin, "The Historical Making of Collective Action: The Korean Peasant Uprisings of 1946," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 99, No. 6 (May 1994), p. 1606.

Table 2. G-2 Reports for Riot Casualties as of December 1946

Casualties	Region			
	North Kyongsang	South Kyongsang	South Cholla	
Police-Constabulary	Killed	80	2	10
	Wounded	96	33	33
	Missing-Captured	145	6	11
Mob	Killed	48	138	54
	Wounded	63	199	61
	Missing-Captured	1,514	703	357
Civilian	Killed	24	64	28
	Wounded	41	14	2
	Missing-Captured	21	12	2

Sources: "G-2 Summary No. 1," 1 December 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 5, NARA II; and "G-2 Summary No. 2," 31 December 1946 in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 83, NARA II.

collection demanded by the U.S. occupation authorities and implemented by a police force that was hated by the public.⁷²

The forcible rice collection and other unpopular occupation policies were in part responsible for the disturbances. When the Joint Korean-American Conferences composed of occupation officials and middle-of-the-road Korean politicians identified fifteen causes for the disturbances, the forcible grain collection took first place on the list.⁷³ However, an opposing point of view exists. In the eyes of U.S. officials and some Koreans, domestic Communists were also to blame. For example, Kim Kiusik reported at the Joint

72. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, pp. 351–381; James I. Matray, "U.S. Economic Policy in Occupied Korea, 1945–1948," *Journal of American–East Asian Relations*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1/2 (Spring–Summer 2001), pp. 36–39; and Jinwung Kim, "A Policy of Amateurism: The Rice Policy of the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea, 1945–1948," *Korea Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 224–226.

73. Those fifteen causes are as follows: forcible gain collection, inefficient grain distribution, corrupt police, agitators inciting people, an unpopular USAMGIK, the failure of the U.S. administration to inform people about policies, the attempt to Americanize Koreans too rapidly, Communists from North Korea, Communists' infiltration into schools, the poor-quality of Koreans working for USAMGIK, dishonest interpreters, unemployed refugees, lack of planning on the part of the police, hatred of the police, and the rumor that the grain collected during the summer had not been distributed to the people. See "Joint Korean American Conference," 14 October 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 26, NARA II.

Korean-American Conferences on 12 November 1946 that “Park Hon-yong plotted strikes and rural disturbances as a revolution for the purpose of earning him prestige and credit in the eyes of his Northern comrades and Soviet Russia.”⁷⁴ In Kim’s view, the disturbances were all-out attempts by the Communists to seize power. A recent study of Soviet sources by Hyun-su Jeon and Gyoo Kahng has confirmed that, although the general strike in September 1946 and the peasant uprisings in October broke out to a certain extent spontaneously under KCP leadership, when the general strike transformed into an armed riot Communist leaders in the south received both advice and monetary support from the Soviet Union: 2 million yen to support the September strike and 3 million yen for the October uprising.⁷⁵

Whatever caused the uprisings, they marked an important shift in the relative strength of political groups in South Korea. After several weeks of bloody rioting, the appalling brutality of the attacks against the police convinced the Korean public that law and order needed to be paramount despite individual grievances against the police and USAMGIK. With the successful suppression of the uprisings, leaders of local and national leftist organizations wound up dead, imprisoned, or underground.⁷⁶ The autumn uprisings had ultimately weakened the political power and organizations of the far-left in general and the Communists in particular, while consolidating those of the conservatives.

The decline of Communist influence accelerated as USAMGIK launched a campaign to round up Communists throughout 1947. Police attacks against leftist leaders and organizations, augmented with terrorism by rightist organizations under police auspices, were so successful that an intelligence report in early September stated, “Leftist activity in South Korea is at one of its lowest ebbs since the arrival of American troops.”⁷⁷ By the end of 1947, the Communists had admitted defeat.⁷⁸ Occasionally they would remind the country of their presence by threatening to wage disturbances, but the U.S. occupiers doubted their strength.

Poor communication channels through which orders would have to be sent, decimated branches in the provinces which have not yet fully recovered from

74. “The Minutes for the 17th Meeting of the Joint Korean-American Commission,” 12 November 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 77, NARA II.

75. See Hyun-su Jeon and Gyoo Kahng, “The Shtykov Diaries: New Evidence of Soviet Policy in Korea,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Nos. 6–7 (1995), pp. 69, 92–93.

76. Shin, “The Historical Making of Collective Action,” p. 1606.

77. “G-2 Periodic Report No. 622,” 3 September 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 46, NARA II.

78. “Corps Staff Conference,” 12 September 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 28, NARA II.

the mid-August arrests and follow-up terrorism by opposing rightists, combined with the lack of counsel from still-hidden leaders—all are contributing factors to the left-wing's probable failure to stir up trouble for some time to come.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the conservatives had been expanding their organizations throughout the country. The climax of the conservatives' ascendancy was their landslide victory in the election of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (SKILA) in late October 1946. In accord with President Truman's call for broadening Koreans' political participation in the important decisions of the occupation, the United States had decided to hold elections to form an interim law-making body, which was expected to determine such vital issues as the collection and distribution of grain, the imposition of taxes, and the redistribution of land.⁸⁰ This was the first election ever held in Korean history, and it fell short of true democracy. The assembly was to be composed of 45 representatives elected across the country and another 45 appointed by General Hodge with Korean consultation. What the United States wanted from this interim legislature was, first, the gradual Koreanization of the occupation to get Koreans prepared for the transfer of sovereignty and, second, the replacement of the existing Representative Democratic Council, which was considered to represent the interests of the conservatives rather than those of the whole population.

The election, however, resulted in a lopsided victory for extreme right-wing groups. Among the 45 elected seats, the KDP won 14 and the National Society of Acceleration of Korean Independence, Rhee's faction, acquired 17. Many of the representatives were accused of being former pro-Japanese collaborators. Only two leftist politicians were elected. General Hodge appointed 20 leftists, though they were not on the far left.⁸¹

The election result was as much a surprise to USAMGIK as it was a bitter disappointment to moderate and leftist politicians.⁸² U.S. occupation officials wondered how political groups considered unpopular could win a majority in the general election. Two factors contributed to the conservatives' success.

79. "G-2 Periodic Report No. 645," 29 September 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 46, NARA II.

80. "Statement by Lt. General John Hodge," 8 October 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 84, NARA II.

81. "G-2 Summary No. 65: Between Dec 1–Dec 8, 1946," in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 58, NARA II.

82. "G-2 Summary No. 60: Between Oct 27–Nov 3, 1946," in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 58, NARA II.

First, leftist organizations in the provinces were unprepared for campaigning because their leaders were under detention by, or hiding from, the police as a result of the disturbances at that time. The left claimed that elections should have been postponed because the provinces were too disturbed to allow for orderly voting. Second, and more important, the KDP had filled the USAMGIK staff with people close to itself, and the administrative preparations for the elections were largely in their hands.⁸³ The successful crackdown on Communist-inspired general strikes and peasant uprisings and the SKILA election thus paved the way for conservative dominance in South Korean politics.

Throughout 1947 the United States launched campaigns for democratization in South Korea. First, it encouraged moderate elements to stand out in SKILA.⁸⁴ After a year's marriage of convenience with the conservatives, U.S. officials had recognized the drawbacks of relying on them. They were not popular enough to garner local support for the occupation because of their members' tainted records as pro-Japanese collaborators. They were also autocratic rather than democratic, and they were as challenging to the occupation as Communists, though they were not anti-American. As the security environment turned much more favorable to the United States, the U.S. occupation decided to back a coalition of center-right and center-left politicians.

From the U.S. perspective, the moderates, who had the most to gain from the success of U.S. proposals for a democratic regime in Korea, were too weak to compete with either the extreme rightists or the extreme leftists.⁸⁵ Without substantial U.S. support, they might not even be able to maintain their identity as a group. As a token of that support, the U.S. occupation chose moderate leader Kim Kiusik as chairman of SKILA. In many ways, he was ideal for the United States. A graduate of Roanoke College in Virginia, he was a liberal democrat and had been one of the prominent leaders of the provisional government that operated in China. The United States expected that Kim could check the unruly Rhee and his followers and also get SKILA to enact the reform programs the United States was going to propose. Another sign of U.S. support for moderate political forces was the establishment of the South Korean Interim Government. By March 1947, Koreans began to fill positions in USAMGIK, replacing U.S. officials. Although the U.S. officials who headed

83. "Minutes from the 6th Joint Korean-U.S. Conference," 30 October 1946, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2 Historical Section, Box 84, NARA II.

84. "Draft of Report of Special Interdepartmental Committee on Korea," 25 February 1947.

85. "Situation Report: Japan and Korea," 1 August 1947, in USAFIK, Office of the Commandant, Box 75, NARA II.

the department remained as advisors and retained a veto over decisions made by Korean officials, they transferred many administrative responsibilities to Koreans. In the spring of 1947, the United States appointed An Chae-hong, another center-right politician, as the chief commissioner of the South Korean Interim Government.

Finally, the U.S. occupation publicly announced that SKILA would discuss the land reform bills that the majority of Koreans had been waiting for. In August, the U.S. occupation authorities in Seoul and the War Department in Washington agreed to push for land reforms in South Korea. The reform principles were based on the plan prepared a year before, with one major difference: the United States would seek to distribute to tenant farmers not only the land previously owned by the Japanese but land currently owned by Koreans.⁸⁶

USAMGIK expected the land reform program to stabilize the Korean economy by solving chronic agricultural problems such as food shortage. U.S. officials also had political objectives. First, they expected the program to suffocate the Communists' appeal in the rural areas. Although the Communists were dormant, USAMGIK still worried that they could gain wide support on the basis of a promise of "free" land to tenant farmers. Second, U.S. officials wanted to strengthen the relative political power of the moderates. Land reforms would not only kill Communist appeals but destroy the power base of the conservatives. If Kim Kiusik as chairman of SKILA successfully exercised his leadership in the passage of the reform bill, USAMGIK hoped, he would earn political credit and prestige among rural people, who accounted for 65 percent of the population.⁸⁷

On 13 September 1947, the military governor of USAFIK sent the chairman of SKILA a letter requesting that urgent action be taken on land reform.⁸⁸ Upon receiving the letter, legislative subcommittees started investigating and drafting bills. For months after September 1947, slow but steady progress was made among South Korean legislative committee members, administrative officials, and U.S. advisers despite reluctance among some members of the assembly to interfere with the holdings of large South Korean landowners. By the end of November, the revision of the draft at the committee level

86. "ZPOL 999 from CG USAFIK to War," 7 August 1947, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785-5, NARA II; and "War SVC 8279 from War to SCAP," 26 August 1947, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785-5, NARA II.

87. "ZPOL 999."

88. "ZPOL 1142 from CG USAFIK to War Enactment of Land Reform Law," 13 September 1947, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785-5, NARA II.

was almost completed.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the executive branch of the interim government had been working on various administrative measures necessary to facilitate the sale to tenant farmers of formerly Japanese-owned farms during the coming winter, if the law was approved. A bill designed to strip absentee landowners of their holdings was introduced in SKILA in mid-December.⁹⁰ Its basic principles were as follows:

1. Land owned by one family in excess of 3 *chungbo* (7.35 acres) would be divided and distributed. Compensation for the confiscated land would be made by the government.
2. During the resale of confiscated lands, first priority would be given to the original tenants.
3. The purchase price of the land would be three times the average annual production for the past ten years.
4. Installment payments over a 15-year period would be made for the confiscated land.
5. Free disposal, unless carried out by the government, would be restricted when the law was in effect.⁹¹

The discussion between U.S. and South Korean officials in SKILA shared basic principles with the land reform program that SCAP had sponsored in Japan a year before. The land reform program in Japan limited the size of individual farms and the total amount of farmland individual landowners could hold to 7.35 acres. (The exception was Hokkaido, where individual landowners could hold up to 29.4 acres.)⁹² The Japanese program gave first priority in the transfer of confiscated land to the tenants who were cultivating the land, and it proposed both that the Japanese government compensate the landowners and that the tenants pay the government for the land they acquired.⁹³

As the South Korean land reform bill became ready for consideration, opposition to it grew louder from numerous quarters. First, members of the conservative parties repeated their old claim that land distribution should

89. "Semi-Monthly Economic Review," 25 November 1947, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Administrative Division, Box 8927, NARA II.

90. "G-2 Periodic Report No. 717," 24 December 1947, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 47, NARA II.

91. "Land Reform Bill," n.d., in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 47, NARA II.

92. "Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government regarding Rural Land Reform," 22 June 1946, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Agricultural Division, Box 8968, NARA II.

93. *Ibid.*

be discussed by an independent government to be established later, insofar as land reform was too fundamental a problem for a half-elected legislature to deal with.⁹⁴ Outside SKILA, industry groups such as the Chamber of Commerce threw their support behind the conservative parties, urging that the land reform under discussion be enforced only after the establishment of a South Korean government.⁹⁵ Second, some conservatives in SKILA suggested that the compensation paid to landlords be increased from 20 percent to at least 25 percent and possibly 33 percent of the value of the crops for fifteen years.⁹⁶ Third, some extreme-right elements questioned the economic benefits of reform, pointing out that the new smaller landholdings would reduce the possibilities for large-scale efficiency in agricultural production, thus leaving the peasants more impoverished than before.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the conservatives paid lip-service to the bill, declaring that they agreed with the call for and the spirit of land reform. U.S. authorities were not surprised. Even before the introduction of the bill on the floor, USAMGIK had predicted that the conservatives in SKILA would block it and make excuses in order not to lose political face by appearing to oppose land reform.⁹⁸

For two months after the bill was introduced, SKILA could not take action either on the distribution of the Japanese holdings or on the overall problem of land reform.⁹⁹ Among the conservatives' delaying tactics, especially successful was engineering the lack of a quorum. Clyde Mitchell, a U.S. official who participated in drafting the land reform bill, described the scene:

The bill was not brought up for formal discussion on the SKILA floor because a quorum could never be maintained. All of the major political parties professed to favor land reform, but their members repeatedly left the floor whenever the bill came up. The rightist elements appeared to shy away from responsible legislative assistance; the middle-of-the-road and moderate leftist members failed to arouse enough interest to secure action.¹⁰⁰

94. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 118: Between Dec 7–Dec 14, 1947," in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 59, NARA II.

95. "G-2 Periodic Report No. 751," 5 February 1948, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 47, NARA II.

96. "ZPOL 135 Message from USAFIK to State Dept. and JCS," 6 February 1948, in SCAP, Natural Resources Section, Agriculture Division, Box 8927, NARA II.

97. "Land Reform," n.d., in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 80, NARA II.

98. "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 118: Between Dec 7–Dec 14, 1947," in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 59, NARA II.

99. "Memorandum for General Draper," 5 March 1948, in Office of the Secretary of Army, Undersecretary of Army (Draper), Project Decimal File, Box 22, NARA II.

100. C. Clyde Mitchell, "Land Reforms in South Korea," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (June 1949), p. 148.

Because the landlords and their agents controlled enough SKILA members to block any major land reform by that body, the United States had to go with plan B.¹⁰¹ At least from January 1948, it was an open secret that the former Japanese lands would be sold by USAMGIK if SKILA refused to act.¹⁰² The United States could not wait any longer. Elections to constitute the new South Korean government were scheduled for May, after which the United States was scheduled to withdraw. Because Kim Kiusik and his colleagues refused to participate in the election in protest against the U.S. decision to form a separate government instead of a unified one with the North, the new government was certain to be dominated by the conservatives and was expected to continue delaying the land question.¹⁰³ On 22 March 1948, after SKILA's final session ended without progress toward the enactment of land reform, the U.S. occupation authorities, issued Ordinance 173, which distributed the former Japanese agricultural properties. The basic principles for the sale of the vested lands were similar to those SKILA had prepared for the redistribution of Korean-owned farmland: former tenant households would acquire up to 2 *chungbo* (4.9 acres); the sale price was three times average annual production; and the installment payment was set at 20 percent of annual production in grain across a 15-year period. The stated purpose of the ordinance was to help tenant farmers become independent farm owners in order to strengthen South Korean agriculture by fostering wider ownership of the land.

Three factors account for this action. First, the United States believed the distribution of Japanese land would increase the likelihood of a similar program for Korean-owned farmland. Second, the United States worried that continued delay could give Communists a chance to organize Korean farmers into active opposition to the government in South Korea. Even partial land reform was expected to lessen the effectiveness of Communist propaganda in all of Korea. Finally, the U.S. occupation expected that the accomplishment of basic land reform would promote democracy in South Korea.¹⁰⁴

Concerning the spring 1948 land reform, revisionists have stressed only the limited scale of the reform and the U.S. desire to curb the attraction of Communist ideology across the southern peninsula, a desire driven primarily

101. Shannon McCune, "Land Redistribution in Korea," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (January 1948), p. 18; and "G-2 Weekly Summary No. 122: Between Jan 9–Jan 16, 1948," in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 59, NARA II.

102. "Memorandum for General Draper, 16 January 1948, in Office of the Secretary of Army, Undersecretary of Army (Draper), Project Decimal File, Box 22, NARA II.

103. "ZMGAGR-2 from USAFIK to CSCAD PG," 13 March 1948, in SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Box 785–24, NARA II.

104. *Ibid.*

by the North Korean land redistribution program. The U.S.-sponsored land reform program *was* indeed partial. USAMGIK was unable to resolve the most contentious land issue in Korea—whether and how the property of Korean landlords would be distributed.¹⁰⁵ The U.S. distribution affected only 18.7 percent of the total land targeted, and by early 1949 almost 63 percent of rural households were still involved in tenancy. Nevertheless, the disposal of about 663,950 acres of vested land was a huge step forward. The available historical documents also undermine the revisionist claim that the U.S.-sponsored land reform was driven by a strong fresh wind from the North. Instead, documents show that the United States felt much less threatened by land reforms introduced by North Korean Communists than revisionist scholars have suggested. Although the March 1948 redistribution did not bring about any change in Korean-held lands, the United States was proud of the reform it sponsored, especially in comparison with the Soviet-style land redistribution in North Korea. North Korea distributed land to farmers for free, but no title passed to the farmers. Ownership remained with the state. What farmers had was merely a right to cultivate. Thus, without a right to sell their land, farmers were simply tenants under the rule of a new landlord, the North Korean Communist Party.

Furthermore, installment payments for farms in the South were less than the taxes paid by North Korean farmers for the right to use their land. Farmers in the North had to pay a yearly land tax in grain amounting to 27 percent of the crop, as much as 7 percent higher than the South Korean land payments.¹⁰⁶ In addition, northern farmers had been forced to sell to the government, at extremely low prices a large additional portion of their crop—as much as 50 percent in some cases—in a “patriotic” rice-collection drive.¹⁰⁷ U.S. officials were confident that the USAMGIK program would better satisfy peasants’ desire to be independent owner-farmers, and their confidence remained unchanged even when, during the Korean War, they heard that North Korean forces were imposing land reform on the occupied south: “The Southerner’s familiarity with the unfavorable aspect of Northern land reform, however, will probably restrict the amount of genuine support gained by the Communist regime through this maneuver.”¹⁰⁸

105. Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation-Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 20.

106. “The Present Economic Status of South Korea,” n.d., p. 4, in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 32, NARA II.

107. Mitchell, “Land Reforms in South Korea,” p. 150.

108. “Memorandum for President,” 10 July 1950, in HST Papers, Staff Member and Office Files, National Security Council File, Central Intelligence File, Box 2, HSTL.

Table 3. Disposition of Tenanted Lands

Distributed by Reforms	1,440,600 acres (40.6%)
Vested lands sold by Military Government	663,950 acres (18.7%)
Korean lands sold by Korean Government	776,650 acres (21.9%)
Sales by Landlords*	1,724,800 acres (48.4%)
Remaining Tenanted Lands	387,100 acres (10.9%)
Exempted from the reforms**	181,300 acres (5.1%)
Illegally Hidden	205,800 acres (5.8%)
Total	3,552,500 acres (100%)

Sources: Sung-ho Kim, Kyong-sik Jeon, Sangwhan Chiang, and Sukdu Park, *Nongchikae-hyuksa yeounku* [Research on land reform history] (Seoul: Korean Institute of Agricultural Economy, 1989), p. 1,152.

*Sales before the promulgation of the land reform bill in June 1950.

** Estates belonging to temples or churches.

The land reform in March 1948 expedited the collapse of traditional landlordism in Korea. After the disposition of the vested lands, how to distribute the property of Korean landlords became the top political agenda when the new South Korean government was inaugurated. Increasing numbers of landlords began to sell farmland directly to tenants as the newly created Korean Assembly inserted a clause for land redistribution in the founding constitution. Fearing that a similar program by an independent Korean government would be inevitable, they began to sell off their lands voluntarily.¹⁰⁹ The farmland sold by landlords amounted to 1,724,800 acres, or 48.4 percent of total land distributed to farmers after the land reform in 1948 (see Table 3). The fact that the amount of land sold directly by landlords is larger than that distributed by the South Korean government should not negate the significance of the land reform efforts undertaken by USAMGIK and by the Korean government. The disposal of the vested lands, the voluntary sell-off by Korean landlords, and the land reform by the new government all constituted important steps leading to the collapse of landlordism in South Korea.¹¹⁰

The new South Korean government was also quick in transferring land from landlords to farmers as shown in Table 4. In June 1949 the new government drafted a land reform bill proposing to eliminate absentee landlordism

109. Myongnim Park, "Heonbup, Kukkaujie, kuriko Daetongryung leadership," p. 436.

110. Il-young Kim, "Nongjikaehyukul doollussan shinwhai haechae [Unraveling the myths on the land reform]," in Jihyang Park et al, eds., *Haebang chunbusai chaeinshik* [Revisiting the history of the liberation period] (Seoul: Chaeksaesang, 2006), pp. 323–324.

Table 4. Changes in Farm Households by Type

Year	Total	Type		
		Owner Farmers	Half Owner–Half Tenant Farmers	Full Tenant Farmers
1945	2,011,000	285,000 (14%)	716,000 (36%)	1,010,000 (50%)
1947	2,106,000	358,000 (17%)	834,000 (40%)	914,000 (43%)
1949	2,474,000	925,000 (37%)	1,023,000 (41%)	526,000 (22%)
1951	2,184,000	1,763,000 (80%)	336,000 (15%)	85,000 (5%)

Sources: “Tenants Households by Type,” n.d., in USAFIK, XXIV Corps, Historical Section, Box 42, NARA II; and Sung-ho Kim, Kyong-sik Jeon, Sangwhan Chiang, and Sukdu Park, *Nongchikaehyuksa yeounku* [Research on land reform history] (Seoul: Korean Institute of Agricultural Economy, 1989), p. 1034.

and transfer all landholdings exceeding 7.35 acres. The bill required that the government compensate landlords at 150 percent of the confiscated land’s average annual production from 1940 to 1942. Installment payments for farmers were set at 30 percent of annual production in grain for five years starting in the fall of 1950.¹¹¹ The South Korean government had inherited the basic principles of land reform developed by USAMGIK throughout 1947 and 1948: government purchase of land from landlords who received due compensation and resale to farmers with payment in grain over a set number of years. Thus, USAMGIK’s March 1948 land reform contributed to the collapse of the age-long landholding inequality by setting a precedent of land redistribution and guidelines for further reform to come.

Conclusion

The conventional wisdom pertaining to land reform in Korea undertaken by USAMGIK is that it was a partial and short-term palliative driven primarily by the imminent Communist threat from North Korea and its free land redistribution program. But examining the process from inception to implementation offers a new interpretation of the motives, process, and impact of the land reform program under U.S. military occupation.

The conventional account has made unwarranted mistakes by focusing only on the U.S. desire to contain Communism. Historical documents suggest

111. Brazinsky, *Nation-Building in South Korea*, p. 20.

that land reform was an important part of the U.S. program for promoting democracy in southern Korea. U.S. officials experienced disappointments in South Korea. During its tenure, USAMGIK failed to install democracy and to carry out large-scale land reform by redistributing the property of Korean landowners. However, historical documents attest that the U.S. intention to lay the economic groundwork for a new democracy to survive in South Korea after the military occupation was much more serious than critics believe. Scholars need to distinguish between intent and effect.

Throughout the process of land reform, the influence exerted by the Communist threat and by the sweeping land reform in North Korea was more complicated than Cumings's account suggests. On the one hand, the chance for a revival of Communist influence across South Korea gave USAMGIK a strong incentive to contemplate and carry out land reform. On the other hand, the presence of strong Communist groups induced USAMGIK to prefer the status quo and promoted ties with the conservative elites who relentlessly opposed U.S. land reform plans from 1946 through 1948. For the first year of the occupation, land reform was impossible because the strong and subversive Communists, with the Soviet Union behind them, preoccupied the United States with maintaining law and order. As the United States made a coalition with the conservatives and the police to curb Communist expansion, the U.S. occupation became vulnerable to voices from the accommodated elite. Once the United States saw the threat lessening and realized that its partners were unpopular and undemocratic, it searched for alternative allies. However, during the first two years of the occupation, its old partners had grown strong enough to block the joint U.S.-Korean land reform measure introduced in fall 1947.

USAMGIK's unilateral disposition of formerly Japanese-owned land in March 1948 was a partial measure, but its significance should not be dismissed. The disposal of about 663,950 acres of vested lands facilitated a similar program undertaken by Koreans themselves. With the transfer of the vested lands to farmers, the redistribution of property held by Koreans emerged as the most politically significant issue faced by the new government. The transfer of Korean landlords' farmland to farmers became an irreversible tide. The reform program in March 1948, which contributed to the collapse of landlordism and suffocated the Communist appeals (just as the retreating Americans had expected), also served as a reference point for future reform.

What does an analysis of the Korean land redistribution reveal about U.S. foreign relations? It helps to correct misunderstandings about the nature of the U.S. military occupation, which is often characterized by a far-reaching asymmetry of power. Although asymmetries existed, the occupying powers were

not automatically able to produce whatever outcomes they desired. Unfamiliar terrain, environment, and culture challenge military and civilian operations for political and economic reconstruction, making local political groups' assistance to the occupation indispensable and, consequently, weakening occupying powers' dominance. Inevitably, the military occupation and the reconstruction of society involve political processes inside the country, in which all relevant actors never cease to struggle against or bargain with one another to produce outcomes as close as possible to their own objectives and interests. Identifying and tracing the process through which the United States had to cut back its aims in Korea is a reminder of something often overlooked about the nature of military occupation: the occupied territory is not a blank slate upon which the occupying power writes at will. An appropriate understanding of the nature of military occupation may help prevent a recurrence of the blunders the United States and other Western countries have recently committed.

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