

**CHAPTER 5
ANNEX E**

**EXTRACT FROM
DEFENCE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT—FORCE REDUCTIONS IN
KOREA**

11 MAY 1955

COMMENTS ON UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES VIEWS

7. The Committee agrees with the United Kingdom views. It is however, of the opinion that the United States argument relating to the effect of British Commonwealth reductions on the smaller participating nations, and the ultimate effect that this would have on the international character of the United Nations Command has some validity.

8. It also felt that with the plans for the defence of Malaya being, to a large extent, dependent for success on American co-operation and assistance, it would be unfortunate if, in continuing to press for reduction of forces in Korea, we should suffer a loss of American goodwill.

PROBLEM OF MEETING CURRENT AUSTRALIAN COMMITMENTS

9. The commitments of the Services, both at home and abroad, are steadily increasing. Of these, the agreement to provide a proportion of the British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to be established in Malaya is, in the opinion of the Committee, of overriding importance both for its value, in the long term, to the defence of Australia, and at present, in its relation to the development of SEACDT. The meeting of these commitments gravely affects the capacity of the Services to maintain forces in Korea, and alternately, the reduction or withdrawal of these forces would assist in enabling these commitments to be met.

10. The United States is still considering the Australian request that the R.A.N. Ship in Korean waters should be withdrawn from the United Nations Command. As it has been pointed out to the United States that there would be no objection to an R.A.N. Ship under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief Far East Station being allocated by him for temporary duty in Korean waters in rotation with ships of the Far East Station, a favourable United States reply is anticipated. It is emphasised however, that the Naval contribution to the Strategic Reserve is dependent on the withdrawal of its ship at present serving with United Nations Command.

11. With the current recruiting and discharge rates, the Army will meet its initial commitment for Malaya only by diverting reinforcements originally destined for Korea and by further reducing the strengths of units of the Field Force remaining in Australia. As a result, it will not be possible to maintain the Army contribution to the Commonwealth Division in Korea at strength after about August of this year.

CONCLUSIONS:

12. The Committee concluded that –

- (a) There has been no change in the military situation since the Commonwealth countries had agreed to propose reductions to their forces in Korea.
- (b) There is some validity in the United States view that further reductions in British Commonwealth forces would have an adverse effect on other participating nations, which might ultimately affect the international character of the United Nations Command.
- (c) The withdrawal or reduction of the Australian Component in Korea would be of assistance to the Services in meeting their increasing commitments at home and abroad.
- (d) In present circumstances, it would be unfortunate if, in pressing for reductions, Australia should suffer a loss of American goodwill.
- (e) In view of its ultimate effect on the defence of Australia, and its importance in relation to SEACDT, the Malaya commitment is of overriding priority.
- (f) Failing a significant change in the current rates of recruiting and discharge, the Army contingent in Korea cannot be maintained at strength beyond August, 1955.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

13. It is recommended that the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff proposal to make a further approach to the United States should be supported. However, the importance of retaining American goodwill is stressed and to this end the Commonwealth countries should be prepared to delay the withdrawal of forces as long as possible. So far as Australia is concerned, under existing conditions, the present Army component could not be maintained at strength beyond August 1955.