

greater historical significance".* For the first time a United Nations force was operating under a unified command to carry out resolutions of the Security Council directed toward the suppression of an act of aggression and the restoration of peace and security.

The United States was in the best position to assist the Republic of Korea because it had forces nearby in Japan. The Government and people of the United States assumed this new responsibility willingly and promptly. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was informed on July 6 that, in addition to United States air and naval support, the President had authorized the use of certain supporting ground units. The President also authorized the United States Air Force to conduct missions on specific targets in Northern Korea wherever militarily necessary, and had ordered a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast. United States troops fought a courageous rearguard action down through Korea alongside the remaining South Korean forces. This action made possible the build-up in the Pusan bridgehead for the ultimate counter-offensive. In the first two months of bitter defensive action the United States assumed almost the whole burden of supporting the Republic of Korea in fulfilment of the Security Council resolutions.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations sent communications to all members on June 29 asking for a report on what assistance they would be in a position to supply in compliance with the Security Council's resolution of June 27. Prompt replies endorsing the action of the Security Council, and offering material or moral support, were received from an overwhelming majority of the members. Only three—the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia—opposed the Council's resolution. The United Kingdom was the first to offer military assistance. On June 28 Prime Minister Attlee announced that United Kingdom naval forces in Japanese waters were being placed immediately at the disposal of the United States authorities to operate on behalf of the Security Council in support of South Korea. Australia made available its R.A.A.F. fighter squadron stationed in Japan and two naval vessels. New Zealand despatched two frigates. The Chinese National Government offered three divisions but, on the advice of the Unified Command, these were not accepted. France and the Netherlands sent a naval vessel each. Bolivia offered 30 army officers. Other countries offered medical assistance, transportation and various commodities. Many replies were of a preliminary and general character and were made more precise later.

The Soviet Union, which had been boycotting meetings of all United Nations organizations because the majority of members had not been willing to seat Chinese Communist representatives in place of the Chinese

*See Appendix 17
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