WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Political Science

Dissertation Committee:

James W. Davis, Jr., Chairman
John Kautsky
Merle Kling

STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY:

A CASE STUDY OF THE KOREAN CRISIS

(JUNE 25-NOVEMBER 24, 1950)

by

George Howard Poteat

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

December, 1973

Saint Louis, Missouri

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper has a unique history of its own. As soon as I started reviewing background material on the Korean War I discovered serious inconsistancies in the way various writers dealt with the events that led to Chinese intervention. Some condemned the Chinese, others belittled the American intelligence establishment, still others criticized MacArthur and not a few simply ignored crucial facts (which represents, in this case, a remarkable feat of mental organization). I thought the confusion over what had happened could be cleared up with a complete and open investigation of the matter, so I wrote to appropriate agencies of the Federal Government in Washington requesting to study official (public) documents on the crisis. In response, I received a routine package of official information request forms which I dutifully completed and returned to Washington. Then, I waited.

My request evoked a roar of silence from the Federal Government. My application was "mis-filed." My follow-up inquiry was "lost." I was promised documents, and the promises were rescinded. I was told that some documents (on the events now twenty years past) were still secret, while others were non-existent, or stored in places that are non-existent. When I asked for information that would allow me to conduct interviews with some of the people who were involved in the crisis (and who are still alive), I was again told that the government had no records and no information to give out. The more I attempted to investigate the Korean issue through official channels, the less help I got

from the government. Not until I called the matter to the attention of a Congressional committee did government officials lower the volume of their silent objection.

By then my research was over a year old and my files were already full of information gleaned from a wide variety of freely available public documents. By checking, cross-checking, and re-checking numerous names, dates, places, events, etc. I established the validity of a large amount of useful data. As I put it all together, it then became clear to me that if the Korean crisis is at all representative of the conditions which require (or lead to) the need for official secrecy, then I already knew the government's most crucial "national security secrets." Then, I began the lengthy process of organizing and writing (and re-organizing and re-writing) my thesis.

Several people in particular helped me in the process. The members of my dissertation committee, James Davis, John Kautsky and Merle Kling assisted me at various stages in a variety of ways. John Kautsky and Merle Kling read and commented on my rough working papers. I thank them for their patience and for their gracious criticisms. James Davis chaired the committee and read all of my written work. I thank him for his time, his patient support of my thesis and for his insistence on keeping things on paper. His active interest in problems of strategic intelligence and strategic surprise was a constant source of encouragement. He had the first and last word on this thesis, but in the interim he left me free to track down data where ever the trail led and to argue my case to a logical conclusion.

Although the members of my dissertation committee are associated with this study, I am responsible for what is written here. Any errors of fact or interpretation are mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	AMERICAN PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE KOREAN WAR	10
	The Russian Agent Hypothesis	11
	American Intervention in Korea	15
	Sino-American Relations--June, 1950	19
	American Perceptions of Chinese Involvement	31
	Conclusion	39
III.	UNIFICATION PHASE 1--THE AMERICAN PREDISPOSITION TO UNIFY KOREA (July 10 - August 15)	41
	The Evidence and Analysis	42
	Unification--Initial Proposals	46
	Strategic Information on the PRC	57
	Pressures for Agreement	63
	Conclusion	71
IV.	PHASE 2--THE PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO UNIFICATION (August 17 - September 10)	73
	The Public Commitment	74
	The Intelligence Picture	83
	The Offensive Strategy	93
	Conclusion	100
V.	PHASE 3--HEIGHTENED EXPECTATIONS OF VICTORY (September 15 - October 14)	103
	The Chinese Response to Inchon	104
	The American Offensive in September	108
	Chinese Concern about the 38th Parallel	116
	Strategic Intelligence after the October 7 Resolution	126
	Conclusion	137

Chapter Page

VI. PHASE 4--DISCONFIRMED EXPECTATIONS (October 15 - November 7) 139

The Wake Conference 140
The New Enemy 148
The Flood of Information 161
The Air Power Myth 175
Conclusion 178

VII. PHASE 5--CONSENSUS FOR A CONFRONTATION (November 9 - November 24) 181

The November 9 NSC Meeting 185
The Aftermath 195
The Final Offensive 211
Conclusion 215

VIII. CONCLUSIONS 218

Retrospect 218
Alternative Explanations 226
Findings 242

BIBLIOGRAPHY 255

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of how strategic intelligence is used in policy making. We will define "strategic intelligence," as it applies to national security affairs, to mean processed information relating to the capabilities and intentions of foreign powers.[1] For convenience, we will use the terms "strategic intelligence" and "strategic information" interchangeably throughout our study.[2]

Two questions are central to our topic. What is the relationship between intelligence inputs and policy outputs of decision-making councils? What determines how strategic intelligence is used in decision-making? We will examine one policy making case in depth with the purpose of answering these questions. Although our study is applied to foreign and defense policy, the topic and related questions are relevant to a broad range of policy making activities in complex

---

[1]See Harry Howe Ransom, Strategic Intelligence (Morristown, New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1973), p. 1. Ransom also discusses problems of defining "strategic intelligence" in his books, The Intelligence Establishment (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 7-8; and, Central Intelligence and National Security (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 6-8.

[2]Ransom, in his book The Intelligence Establishment, has noted that ". . . 'intelligence' is used interchangeably . . . sometimes referring to the process, sometimes to the product," and the term has "so loosely expanded" that it ". . . has lost a precise meaning," p. 8.

political and business organizations.[3]

Our case involves the development of American policy during the first five months of the Korean War. During that time, it will be recalled, the American government intervened and defeated North Korea on behalf of South Korea. American intervention technically began on June 27, 1950, two days after the war started. For the first three months U.S. forces fought a defensive "holding" action, but on September 15 launched a surprise offensive, routing the North Korean army and forcing it to retreat back across the 38th Parallel into North Korea. Following this initial attack U.S. forces moved into North Korea to destroy the North Korean army and government and to unify the country. This action lasted until the last week of November, 1950, when the People's Republic of China intervened on behalf of North Korea and forced U.S. troops back into South Korea. Thereafter, the war was stabilized at the 38th Parallel.

Since the American government obviously failed to achieve the objective of unifying Korea, this case is especially relevant to our topic. In fact, a preliminary review of the case suggests that there may be no consistent relationship at all between intelligence inputs and policy outputs of decision-making councils. For example, during the last week of November, 1950 there were significant discrepancies between what government officials knew and what they chose to do.

---

[3]See Harold Wilensky's book Organizational Intelligence (New York: Basic Books, 1967) for a wide-ranging discussion of intelligence problems that affect policy making in business firms as well as governmental institutions.

Briefly, this was the situation.

General Douglas MacArthur (Commanding US troops)[4] flew to American front lines in North Korea on November 24 and announced that he was launching a major offensive drive to the Yalu River, stating publicly that it "should for all practical purposes end the war and restore peace and unity to Korea."[5] Yet, when he did so, he knew that Chinese troops were literally pouring across the Yalu River into North Korea and massing on his front lines. Indeed, the government was fully aware that organized Chinese units, at least equal in size to MacArthur's United Nations forces, occupied strong positions that could prevent unification. Furthermore, it was known that the Chinese units could launch a full-scale offensive of their own and force withdrawal of the United Nations command from North Korea, indeed, from all Korea. Moreover, MacArthur's superiors knew he was operating under other tactical

---

[4]General MacArthur held several command positions and had numerous official titles at this time. He was General of the Army; Commander in Chief of U.S. forces in the Far East; Commander in Chief, United Nations Command; and Supreme Commander of Allied Powers occupying Japan. For convenience, official titles and proper names of institutions, such as the United States, the People's Republic of China, the United Nations, etc., are identified throughout our study by their capital letters without punctuation (e.g. CINCUNC, US, UN, etc.).

[5]New York Times, November 24, 1950, p. 1. Since MacArthur stated also: "I hope to keep my promise to the G.I.'s to have them home by Christmas," his attack is often known as the "home-by-Christmas" offensive. See also David Rees, Korea: The Limited War (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 150. General J. Lawton Collins, War in Peacetime (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), p. 216, has written that General MacArthur's official communique to his superiors in Washington was slightly different from his public announcement. His communique stated in part, "If successful, this should for all practical purposes end the war, restore peace and security to Korea, [and] enable the prompt withdrawal of United Nations Military Forces." [Italics not in the original.]

and strategic conditions to his forces' disadvantage.[6]

Naturally, the offensive failed. The Chinese counter-attacked and within four days General MacArthur announced from his command headquarters in Tokyo that he faced an entirely "new war," ordering the immediate evacuation from North Korea of all troops under his command. The Chinese counter-offensive was a "surprise" to American troops, "as complete as any ever put on an army." According to General S.L.A. Marshall, "there resulted one of the major decisive battles of the present century followed by the longest retreat in American military history."[7] Agony and slaughter resulted for both sides.[8]

The offensive was disastrous in other ways too. The war was prolonged two more years and a twenty year period of unmitigated

---

[6]We could document each point in this paragraph with specific data but since the data are presented in detail in the following chapters it would be premature to do so here. These facts, however, are commonly acknowledged and accepted in literature on the Korean War, and several sources are particularly comprehensive in their treatment of them. For example, see: Roy Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (a volume in the series entitled The United States Army in the Korean War. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1960), pp. 667-776; Collins, op. cit., pp. 172-217; Lynn Montross and Nicholas Canzona, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign (Volume III of a series entitled U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957); Rees, op. cit., pp. 123-152; and James Schnabel, Policy and Direction, The First Year (a volume in the series entitled The U.S. Army in the Korean War. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1972), pp. 233-273.

[7]S.L.A. Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November, 1950, in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 1.

[8]Rees, op. cit., pp. 460-61, lists military casualties in the Korean War that total close to three million men.

hostility between the American and Chinese governments began. In the United States consumer prices skyrocketed, inflation rose sharply and the government declared a national emergency requiring $18 billion to deal with the crisis. In China and Korea also the impact of a prolonged war was costly but cannot be fully stated here.

By examining the American disaster in Korea we may be able to shed some light on the problem of strategic surprise and related issues. In the pages that follow we will examine the political assumptions of US officials in order to show and to explain the kinds of judgments they made about the strategic intelligence they had. Throughout our study we will view decision making as an incremental process of adjusting situations or information to achieve goals and avoid inconsistencies, so that we can distinguish between short term changes and long term consequences.

From this perspective, the Yalu disaster was a long-term outcome of various short-range adjustments by US officials to the military situation in Korea and to the strategic information they had. Given our knowledge of the discrepancy between US action and intelligence on November 24 we will hypothesize that US officials ignored strategic information because it conflicted with their policy goals. Thus, the offensive represented an effort to change the military situation so that it achieved (or became consistent with) US objectives, even though strategic information showed they were not feasible.[9]

---

[9]This hypothesis also draws upon Leon Festinger's seminal work A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Stanford: Stanford University Press,

We will review the American war policy during the first five months of the war, describing how the discrepancy between US action and intelligence developed and, thus, led to disaster. We will evaluate our hypothesis by showing: (1) the extent to which strategic information conflicted with the government's policy goals; (2) whether US officials were aware of the conflicts; and (3) how they adjusted.

1957), in which he proposes that ". . . dissonance, that is, the existence of non-fitting relations among cognitions, is a motivating factor in its own right," and advances two hypotheses: (1) that dissonance is "psychologically uncomfortable" and will motivate people to ". . . try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance"; and, (2) "when dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it . . . [people] will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance," p. 3. He reviews the key propositions and core elements of his theory on pp. 1-31 and tests the theory with data on pp. 32-259. Festinger points out a wide range of behavior that can be explained with his theory but he warns that "if one starts using the concept loosely. . . ." it is easy to lose sight of important theoretic distinctions between motivation and behavior that are essential to understanding and applying the concept in the social sciences, p. 277, pp. 260-79. For an application of the theory see Jack Brehm and Arthur Cohen, Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance (New York: Wiley, 1962). For a more recent study see James T. Tedeschi, Barry R. Schlenker, and Thomas V. Bonoma, "Cognitive Dissonance: Private Ratiocination or Public Spectacle?" American Psychologist, XXVI (August, 1971), pp. 685-95. A critique of the theory is provided by Natalia and Alphonse Chapanis, "Cognitive Dissonance: Five Years Later," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. LXI, pp. 1-22. Our present study is not designed to test or to apply the theory but some of our observations may be better understood in light of it. For instance, psychologist Joseph de Rivera has noted that ". . . dissonance reduction may have been an important factor" in the launching of the November 24th offensive, and goes on to say, "the Commander, having assured the President that the Chinese would not dare to intervene, was fully committed to securing North Korea. To suddenly act as though they might [intervene], would have provoked quite a cognitive reorganization." See his book The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1969), p. 180.

Several kinds of data sources are available for this evaluation. Official government histories of American military units in the Korean War review intelligence documents used by US officials, and other primary sources, such as public news reports and memoirs of government officials, reconstruct the intelligence picture. Memoirs and other written records by official participants in US decision making establish, also, official awareness of policy conflicts, and, along with histories of the Korean War, show the kinds of policy adjustments that were made.[10]

Our study is not intended to confirm or deny the validity of explanations posed by other studies of the Korean War. They stand on their own merits, but do relate to our present investigation by establishing facts that partially support our thesis. It is sufficient to note that the Korean disaster occurred in spite of the professionalization of the Presidential advisory system,[11] the expertise of those

---

[10]Since our data sources are voluminous and are listed in the bibliography we need not take an inventory of them here. It should be noted, however, that they are freely available as part of the public record on the Korean War. Even though we are studying a matter of "national security" there are no classified or secret materials involved. Where we do have access to summaries of government intelligence documents and "inside information" from government officials, it corresponds very closely in content to information that was widely known and reported in the public press at the time these events took place.

[11]See Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: Wiley, 1964), pp. 120-40.

advisors,[12] the accuracy of their information[13] and the rationality of their calculations.[14] Moreover, the evidence shows that the bureaucracy

---

[12]Ibid., pp. 140-45. See also David S. McLellan, "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXVI (March, 1968), pp. 16-39. Biographical profiles of major US officials involved in the decision to intervene in Korea are provided by Glenn Paige, The Korean Decision (New York: The Free Press, 1968), pp. 367-76. Most of the same people listed by Paige were involved in the development of US policy during the first five months of the war.

[13]See Harvey A. de Weerd, "Strategic Surprise in the Korean War," Orbis, Vol. VI (Fall, 1962), pp. 432-52 for a study of US intelligence at the time of the Yalu disaster. He has concluded that available information was accurate and adequate to prevent the strategic surprise, stating: "It was not the absence of intelligence which led us into trouble but our unwillingness to draw unpleasant conclusions from it," p. 451. See Neustadt, op. cit., who has written, "poor intelligence, or poor evaluation, may account for MacArthur's conduct, but it does not suffice to explain Washington's behavior in the days before his victory march," p. 136.

[14]In general, accounts of US policy making in the Korean War assume implicitly that government decisions were "rational." Paige, op. cit., is an example par excellence of a study designed to show the rationality of the initial US decision to intervene. See Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in Harold Stein (editor), American Civil-Military Decisions (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1963), pp. 571-639, for an analysis of American decision making prior to and following the Yalu disaster. See also Alexander George, "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea" (Stanford: Stanford University, May, 1972), 65 pp. (Mimeographed); and Walter Zelman, Chinese Intervention in the Korean War: A Bilateral Failure of Deterrence (Security Studies Paper Number 11. Los Angeles: University of California, 1967), 39 pp. Both studies analyze the calculations of American decision makers prior to the Yalu disaster. McLellan, op. cit., p. 25, takes exception to the assumption of rationality, stating: "The wildly contradictory nature of MacArthur's reports and the inconsistencies between what he said and what he did raise serious questions as to his rationality throughout. . . ." the period prior to the November 24th offensive. For a radical point of view on this issue see Edward Friedman, "Problems in Dealing with an Irrational Power: America Declares War on China," in Edward Friedman and Mark Selden (editors), America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 207-52. See Graham Allison, Essence of Decision (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), pp. 10-38 for a detailed discussion of the rational actor paradigm as a tool of political analysis; and, de Rivera, op. cit.,

functioned effectively. There was no "system malfunction."[15] The system not only functioned efficiently, but there was wide-spread agreement on policy goals and on how they were to be actualized.[16] As will be shown in the following chapters, the Korean disaster resulted from the way strategic intelligence was manipulated by US government officials.

---

pp. 105-154. On pp. 132-49 de Rivera discusses the rationality of US decision making in Korea. In our study we will assume that US decision making was rational.

[15]See de Weerd, op. cit.; and Neustadt, op. cit., pp. 120-45. See also Leslie Gelb, "Vietnam: The System Worked," Foreign Policy (Summer, 1971), pp. 140-67.

[16]The extent of this agreement will be discussed at length in the following chapters, but see Irving Janis, Victims of Groupthink (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1972), pp. 50-74, who argues that the agreement and group cohesion among US policy makers was quite extraordinary and had an adverse effect on government decision making. Likewise, de Rivera, op. cit., pp. 214-222, reaches similar conclusions. It should be noted at this point also that the "Truman-MacArthur controversy" was a political problem separate and apart from the Yalu disaster. For an analysis of that problem see John Spanier, The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War (New York: Norton, 1965); Trumbull Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); and Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965).

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE KOREAN WAR

An understanding of the foreign relations between the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1950 is both useful and necessary in order to explain the Sino-American confrontation in Korea. So, in this chapter we will review those relations and discuss the impact of the Korean War on them. Our main purpose in doing so is to reconstruct the frame of reference through which US officials viewed the Korean conflict and related the PRC to the war. Accordingly, we will attempt to answer two questions: Was the PRC involved in the initiation of the Korean War?; and, How did US officials perceive, or project Chinese involvement?

According to Allen Whiting's authoritative study of Chinese intervention, ". . . there is no clear evidence of Chinese participation in the planning and preparation of the Korean War."[1] But, US officials believed at the time that the Chinese were implicitly involved and adopted a policy offensive to the PRC. Available evidence on the American position supports the hypothesis that US officials misperceived Chinese involvement because of prevailing American preconceptions about the nature and origin of the Korean War itself. The evidence from records of official American statements and actions during the last week of June, 1950 (when the Korean War started) is reviewed below.

---

[1]Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 45.

The Russian Agent Hypothesis

The impact of political preconceptions on US decision making is shown by the American government's belief that the Korean War was precipitated on orders from Moscow. When communist North Korea invaded non-communist South Korea on June 25, 1950, US officials viewed the conflict as the first move of a Russian communist plot to conquer the world, firmly believing that the North Koreans were Russian agents acting out the communist conspiracy. According to President Harry Truman, ". . . the Russians were trying to get Korea by default, gambling that we would be afraid of starting a third world war and would offer no resistance."[2]

The government's hypothesis was clear and simple. The Russian government was viewed as the political leader of international communism committed to destroying capitalism and proselytizing the world to communism by force. The North Koreans were communists and, therefore, subject to Russian control. Indeed, all communist governments, including the People's Republic of China, were presumed to be Russian agents by virtue of their ideological and political alignment with the Soviet Union. US policy makers did not differentiate between the national interests of individual communist governments on the one hand, and their international communist alliance with Russia on the other. On the contrary, US officials stressed the ideological similarities between them and saw the war as a grave international crisis. President Truman

---

[2]Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope 1946-52 (Volume II of his Memoirs. New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 335.

has written, ". . . everyone recognized the situation as serious in the extreme."[3]

The political relationship between the Soviet Union and North Korea was substantial, however. Prior to the war the Soviets had supplied military advice, training and equipment to the North Koreans, as did the American government to South Korea. Beyond that, the Soviets appeared to have complete political control over North Korea, and Whiting has argued that, "Virtually no decisions, certainly not that of the June 1950 invasion, could be made without Soviet knowledge and, in all probability Soviet advice."[4] But, there is no evidence showing that the Soviets ordered the North Korean attack or started the war. Certainly, the US government had no such intelligence, and, when the American government pressed the Russians to order a North Korean withdrawal from the South shortly after the fighting started, the Soviets claimed that the North had acted independently in self-defense against a South Korean attack. To date, the question of how the war started and who was responsible for it has not been answered adequately.[5]

---

[3] Ibid.

[4] Whiting, op. cit., p. 42.

[5] The initial report to MacArthur on the outbreak of the war stated simply that "fighting with great intensity started at 0400, 25 June on the Ongjin Peninsula . . . ," Schnabel, Policy and Direction, p. 66. Likewise, the report to President Truman from US Ambassador John Muccio stated: "According to Korean army reports which partly confirmed by KMAG field advisor reports North Korean forces invaded ROK territory at several points this morning," Truman, op. cit., p. 333. Within hours the North Korean forces were dominating the fighting and assuming the offensive. Nevertheless, these reports show no evidence about the initiation of the fighting. Most literature on the Korean War

While there was clear Russian involvement, there was very little, if any Chinese involvement in the early stages of the war. Whiting has pointed out that "by contrast, possible points of Chinese influence appear to have been systematically eliminated. . . ,"[6] after World War II

---

assumes implicitly, and in many cases explicitly that the North Korean invasion was a pre-planned Soviet move. Few studies present hard data to support this assumption, although some advance logical arguments in favor of it. See for example, ibid., pp. 40-43. Likewise, de Weerd, "Strategic Surprise in the Korean War," has shown that the United States had intelligence during the Spring of 1950 that portended a North Korean invasion of the south, pp. 435-44. Certainly, the established American position has always been that the North Koreans were acting as "aggressors" and that the aggression was at least sanctioned if not initiated by the Soviet Union. For example, Charles Bohlen (US State Department Counselor) has written:

"There are those who now say that the war was not started by the Soviet Union but by an independent act of the North Koreans. This is childish nonsense. How could an army, trained in every respect by the Soviet Union, with Soviet advisers at every level, and utterly dependent on Moscow for supplies, move without Soviet authorization?" See his memoirs, Witness to History (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 294.

Yet, important questions have been raised as to the role of the South Korean government in the outbreak of the war. See Isidor F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952), pp. 1-66, in which he reviews political conditions in South Korea and suggests that a civil war at this time may have been to the advantage of the faltering Rhee regime, which may have helped precipitate the fighting. See also Carl Berger, The Korea Knot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), pp. 84-102 for background on the political situation, Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 1-38; and Rees, Korea, pp. 3-20. See also George Kennan (State Department Counselor), Memoirs, (1925-1950) (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 512. He has written: "The word that reached us . . . was that an inauguration of military operations from the Communist side in that country was practically out of the question: the South Korean forces were so well armed and trained that they were clearly superior to those of the Communist north; our greatest task, we were told, was to restrain the South Koreans from resorting to arms to settle their differences with the north."

[6]Whiting, op. cit., p. 43.

and formal relations between the North Korean and Chinese (PRC) governments were somewhat strained. In some instances prior to the war the two governments were in conflict over a number of minor political issues and the only significant Chinese involvement resulted from the transfer of ethnic Korean troops from Manchuria into North Korea during 1949-50, which bolstered the North Korean army prior to the war. Certainly, the PRC was concerned with ". . . the viability of the neighboring regime. . . ." and Whiting has written that, "While the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of [North] Korea) emerged within the Soviet sphere of influence, it clearly remained, as throughout its history, within the Chinese sphere of interest."[7] But, irrespective of the different levels of influence which the USSR and the PRC had in North Korea, the American government continued to assume that the Soviets were in control and that all other communist governments were involved as Russian agents. According to James Schnabel,

> No decision on Korea could properly be made without a careful analysis of USSR intentions. The United States believed Russia to be the real aggressor in Korea, in spirit if not in fact. . . .[8]

The validity of the government's hypothesis can be debated at length and in detail, but it is not the purpose of this study to confirm

---

[7] Ibid., p. 42.

[8] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 67. Truman, op. cit., p. 346, has written that ". . . it was our policy to concentrate our attention on the main trend of Soviet intentions." This position was widely accepted and most US officials agreed with it, with two notable exceptions. See Bohlen, op. cit., pp. 292-93 and Kennan, op. cit., pp. 510-17. We are using the term "Russian agent" simply as an antecedent of the government's monolithic communist conspiracy theory.

or deny the government's view. It is sufficient to note that this hypothesis was widely shared by US officials and was seriously believed to be the true and correct interpretation of events at the time, so the government relied on it as the principal rationale for justifying American intervention in Korea. US officials simply saw the war as an ideological conflict which threatened their established policies and values. Therefore, American intervention in the war was largely an outgrowth of preconceptions about the nature of communism that engendered anxieties about the effect of communist expansion on international political alignments.

American Intervention in Korea

There was no time for US officials carefully to examine the validity of their interpretation of events, and certainly, there was no inclination. The North Korean invasion not only surprised but dismayed them, and it faced the government with a military fait accompli. As Truman put it, "There was now no doubt! The Republic of Korea needed help at once if it was not to be overrun."[9] On June 25 the South Korean forces were in full retreat within hours of the initial fighting and within two days their total collapse was imminent. Thus, the American government had to act immediately to preserve South Korea as a non-communist state.

---

[9]Truman, op. cit., p. 337.

On June 27, 1950, the US government announced that American ground troops were intervening in support of South Korea and President Truman stated publicly that US military intervention was in response to the challenge of international communism. As he put it,

> The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war.[10]

So, he justified American action outside Korea as well, stating:

> Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack upon Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done. The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.
>
> I have also directed that United States Forces in the Philippines be strengthened and that military assistance to the Philippine Government be accelerated.
>
> I have similarly directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indo-China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces.[11]

The actual military output by the US in these areas was nominal, however, since US action was essentially a symbolic effort to reassure anti-communist governments that they were being protected and to warn the communists (i.e. Russia and its agent China) that the US intended to oppose world-wide communist expansion.[12]

---

[10] Ibid., p. 339.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See Glenn Paige, The Korean Decision, for a detailed description of American decision making during the last five days of June,

Moreover, the US promoted United Nations involvement, which resulted in three important Security Council Resolutions being passed: on June 25 the UN called for the North Koreans to withdraw from South Korea; on June 27 the UN called on members to assist South Korea against the North; and, on July 7, a joint UN military command was established for Korea under the control of the US. The Soviet delegate was boycotting UN activity in protest over the failure to seat the PRC as the legal representative of China so the USSR had no vote in these UN actions.[13]

Although American intervention was sanctioned by the UN and was designated as a UN action, the actual military units in Korea were predominantly American in personnel, training, planning, equipment and direction. UN involvement was, from the American standpoint, simply a symbol of legitimacy. Indeed, US officials instructed General MacArthur

> . . . to avoid any appearance of unilateral American action in Korea. "For world-wide political reasons," they cautioned, "it is important to emphasize repeatedly the fact that our operations are in support of the United Nations Security Council."[14]

1950. Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), pp. 404-7; Collins, War in Peacetime, pp. 1-75; see also Truman, op. cit., pp. 331-43; and Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman (New York: William Morrow, 1973), pp. 472-77. These and other accounts of the US decision to intervene show that there was an extraordinary level of agreement and unanimity among US policy makers.

[13]See Leland Goodrich, Korea: A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956); and Leland Goodrich and Anne Simons, The U.N. and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1955); see also, Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," pp. 580-3.

[14]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 102.

But, as James Schnabel, in his authoritative study of American policy in Korea, has pointed out, "The United Nations actions resulted mainly from U.S. initiative. . . ."[15]

Within the American government, of course, there was full support for intervention and the US initiative represented widely shared sentiments. Indeed, US officials "were immediately, strongly, and unanimously agreed"[16] on the move in the Far East, and President Truman has written, "We let it be known that we considered the Korean situation vital as a symbol of the strength and determination of the West."[17] Likewise, General MacArthur ". . . decided to visit the country as immediate, symbolic proof of American backing."[18]

In sum, US intervention was an ideological response to what US policy makers thought was an international communist conspiracy headed

---

[15] Ibid., p. 105. This is not to say that UN involvement in the war was inconsequential or unimportant, but that the UN role was secondary to American action. The Korean defeat was as much a United Nations disaster as an American one, but it is commonly acknowledged that US officials dominated and controlled UN policy making during the time period we are covering. See Goodrich, op. cit., pp. 137-8; Neustadt, Presidential Power, pp. 120-3, 134; and, United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on the Military Situation in the Far East and the Facts Surrounding the Relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, 82nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), p. 10. Hereinafter this document will be identified as the MacArthur Hearings.

[16] Paige, op. cit., p. 143.

[17] Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 339.

[18] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 74.

by Russia, and the American action was taken to ". . . add to the caution of the Soviets in undertaking new efforts of this kind [italics not in original]."[19] Most US policy makers felt that, as General MacArthur put it, ". . . winning in Korea would slow down worldwide communism more than any other single factor."[20] In this context, the US became "fully committed"[21] in Korea, and in the Formosa Straits.

Sino-American Relations--June, 1950

The American intervention in the Korean War, as well as US action outside Korea, was consistent with the government's ideological view of events. The official rationale for the sweeping military move announced on June 27 was that armed hostilities should be limited to the Korean peninsula while other possible communist moves outside Korea could be deterred simply with a show of force. But, by including the PRC in the conflict the American government actually widened the area of hostilities, rather than limiting it. As will be shown below, the US move in the Formosa Straits "abruptly changed"[22] Sino-American relations in a way that may have contributed to the Yalu disaster. This

---

[19]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 340.

[20]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 107.

[21]These are Secretary of State Dean Acheson's words. See Acheson, op. cit., p. 413, and pp. 402-413 in which he describes the American decision to intervene in Korea.

[22]This is Allen Whiting's characterization. See Whiting, op. cit., p. 49.

point may be clarified through a brief comparison of Sino-American relations prior to and immediately following the outbreak of the Korean War.

Prior to the Korean War there were substantial conflicts between American and Chinese foreign policies. In general, the American government sought to create a strong military perimeter around the eastern most areas of the Pacific and hoped to maintain political influence in the developing areas of Asia. The US sought several goals that reflected these general interests, especially a peace treaty with Japan. After World War II General MacArthur had effectively controlled Japan under his military government of occupation, while at the same time minimizing the influence there of America's war time allies, including the British, French and Russians. Thus, a treaty at this time would secure a lasting American influence in Asia.

The US government's aim was to consolidate American interests in Northeast Asia. Under the guidance of John Foster Dulles (America's chief envoy to the Japanese peace talks) and General MacArthur, the American goverrment was working to conclude a peace treaty with the Japanese in 1950, preferably before the Russian and Chinese communists were capable of exerting any significant influence on the terms of settlement.[23]

---

[23]See William Sebald, With MacArthur in Japan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), pp. 37-150 for a first-hand account of American efforts to formulate a Japanese peace treaty at this time. See also Acheson, op. cit., pp. 428-35; and Whiting, op. cit., pp. 35-6.

Another goal of the United States was to disentangle itself from the Chinese civil war. By 1949 it had become apparent even to many of Chiang Kai-shek's supporters that nothing could be done to prevent the defeat of his Kuomintang Party as a viable political force in China. The United States government acknowledged the fact that Chiang's party was corrupt and his leadership inept, while noting that the Communist Party had won widespread political support in China. Consequently, the government considered the civil war a lost cause, and, on January 5, 1950, President Truman publicly announced that the United States would no longer support Chiang Kai-shek, and in the future would take a "hands-off" position toward Chinese political affairs.[24] Further, the government acknowledged that Taiwan was a part of China and that the PRC (the de facto government of China) was entitled to control the island. This particular American position was repeatedly stated during the six months preceding the Korean War, but did not necessarily entail friendly relations between the US and the PRC.[25]

---

[24]Acheson, op. cit., pp. 349-53; Paige, op. cit., p. 63, see pp. 58-72 for a synopsis of US policy toward China, Japan, and Korea; Tang Tsou, America's Failure in China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 561.

[25]See Warren I. Cohen, America's Response to China (New York: Wiley, 1971), pp. 164-210 for a synopsis of US policy toward the PRC at this time; and Foster Rhea Dulles, American Policy Toward Communist China, 1949-1969 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972), pp. 1-130 for the period 1949-50; especially pp. 94-5; Robert R. Simmons, "The Korean War: Containment on Trial" (a paper presented at the American Political Science Association convention, Washington, September 5-9, 1972), p. 18; Spanier, op. cit., p. 55; Byron S. J. Weng, Peking's UN Policy (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 81. For an official statement of the American position on the Chinese civil war see: The United States Department of State, The China White Paper (Stanford: Stanford University Press,

Finally, the US government strongly wanted to consolidate its strategic interests in the Far East which coincided with a line of defense around the eastern most area of the Pacific Ocean, although Taiwan and Korea both were excluded. The US sought to retain military control in the Philippines and in Japan and intended to use other Pacific islands it had conquered in World War II for military purposes. In Southeast Asia the US supported the French colonial government in Vietnam in its war against the Vietminh.[26]

Overall, the American government was moving toward realization of these goals when the Korean War started.

By comparison, the PRC was working to consolidate traditional Chinese interests and to pacify the mainland. Several top-priority PRC policy goals included: consolidating political and economic control on the domestic scene; working to create an "Asia for the Asians" that was free of foreign influences; and, politically supporting communist liberation movements in Asia. The extent of China's foreign policy commitments was limited, however, since domestic reforms took precedence. Internationally, the PRC sought to consolidate frontier areas by retaking Taiwan and Hainan Islands; absorbing Tibet; re-establishing a

---

1967), 2 volumes (originally issued as United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30). See also Tang Tsou, loc. cit.

[26]Paige, op. cit., pp. 51-76, discusses US "policies in force" at the time the Korean War broke out. See also Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 41-60 for a discussion of American strategic commitments and capabilities prior to the war.

specific international boundary with India and the Southeast Asian countries; and, settling, at least temporarily, a mutually acceptable border with the Russians. Prior to the Korean War, China settled its claims with Russia and signed a mutual defense pact. Chiang Kai-shek was driven off Hainan Island but the issues of Taiwan and Tibet, as well as the southern border issues, were not settled, nor had the Chinese concluded a peace settlement with Japan. Moreover, the PRC gave only nominal, symbolic support to Asian communist movements during that time.[27]

In short, the general foreign policy goals of the PRC and the US were in conflict ideologically. Both governments were seeking sets of objectives to consolidate their political positions in Asia, but neither government was avowedly seeking an international confrontation despite their ideological differences. They were primarily concerned with creating strong political and military defenses first.

The PRC and the US did not formally recognize each other in 1950 since they were ideologically opposed. The American government objected to Chinese communism and the PRC objected to American capitalism and economic imperialism. Symbolism and rhetoric characterized US/PRC interaction on the surface but in substance both governments apparently were working toward a detente prior to the war. Within the

---

[27]Whiting, op. cit., pp. 1-33; Weng, op. cit., p. 77. Whiting has written: "Beyond the announced campaign against Tibet and Taiwan, it would appear that there was no anticipation of major military commitments in 1950, at least as far as Peking's economic planners were concerned," p. 19.

framework of the Asian balance of power, their policies were subtly geared toward co-existence, although publicly their political positions were incompatible.

The most salient feature of the interaction between the US and the PRC centered mainly on the rapport they had established vis-à-vis the Chinese civil war. American disengagement was complicated by the government's overriding anti-communist position. The US not only opposed an invasion of Taiwan, but refused to recognize the PRC and wanted to keep that government out of the UN as long as possible, to undercut the PRC's communist alliance with Russia by exploiting Chinese nationalism.[28] American officials emphasized their traditional friendship for the Chinese people but made it clear that they disapproved of Chinese political leadership. Since the PRC government was communist, however, it was a source of political hostility and fear for the American government that created anxieties among US officials about the "future" of Asia.

The PRC reciprocated American hostility, distrusted the US and hoped to destroy the alliance between Chiang Kai-shek and the US. Chinese leaders were concerned over the extent of American influence in Asia and worried about the possibility of a resurgent Japan allied with and supported by the United States. Even though the PRC was determined to take Taiwan, it did not want a major war with the US over that issue, or any other matter. Given six months of consistent policy statements

---

[28]Kennan, op. cit., pp. 518-19.

by the United States, China was moving toward a detente with America in the Spring of 1950. Although the Chinese distrusted American motives and intentions in general they hoped that the United States would stick to its word in keeping out of Chinese politics.

Korean political affairs were of minor concern for both governments before the war. The United States supported non-communist South Korea with economic and military aid and promoted UN efforts to resolve the partition of Korea through national elections. The American government stated publicly however that Korea was not a part of America's strategic line of defense.[29]

Chinese involvement in Korea also was limited. The PRC established formal relations with communist North Korea in October, 1949 and the two governments were generally supportive of one another's policies. Overall, the PRC shared ideological goals with the North Korean regime, but took no active role in Korean affairs except for releasing ethnic Korean military units from the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) for transfer to the North Korean army in late 1949. The Chinese apparently had nc specific goals vis-á-vis Korean politics, however, and accepted the status quo of a divided country prior to the outbreak of the war.[30]

---

[29]Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 1-36, 39-40, 49-60; Berger, loc. cit.; and Paige, op. cit., pp. 55-76.

[30]Whiting, op. cit., pp. 43-45; Goodrich, op. cit., p. 137; Simmons, op. cit., p. 27, has written, "In reality, the alliance between the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea during the war was strained."

The PRC treated the Korean issue as a matter of the internal affairs of Korea and did not support the United Nations' attempt to unify Korea. But, the PRC was positively oriented toward cooperating with the UN in general, and prior to the Korean War, the Chinese were intent on securing their seat in the organization. PRC officials apparently saw the UN as a means of entering international politics and as a vehicle for asserting for their government the status of a major world power. Despite the predominant American control of the UN the PRC was interested in competing politically in that international organization.[31]

The Chinese preference was for a unified Korea allied with China and the Soviet Union, but, as long as there was no immediate threat to China's border, the PRC saw the Korean issue as a "distant matter." Neither the US nor the PRC actively sought a military settlement of the Korean situation and neither government had a specific commitment to Korea prior to June, 1950 to become involved if war should break out. Clearly, neither the US nor the PRC wanted to go to war with one another over the Korean issue.

In sum, a comparison of American and Chinese policies prior to the Korean War shows that the two governments seemed more intent on mutual avoidance than on confrontation. Their major conflict was ideological rather than territorial. In this regard, the US was apparently

---

[31]See Weng, op. cit., pp. 73-83, who has written: "The UN was recognized by the Chinese as a world organization that was a going concern. It could become the arena where the "new China" would play the role of a great power," p. 72.

reducing its support of Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan and the PRC was expecting to take over the island. The matter was, however a source of potential, if not actual, conflict between the two governments. By contrast, the Korean issue appears to have been peripheral to the foreign policies of both governments.

When the Korean War started, however, this apparent detente collapsed and Sino-American hostility intensified. Prior to the war members of the US State and Defense Departments agreed that intervention in the Chinese civil war was "undesirable," but when the Korean War started they deemed it "necessary, possible and correct"[32] because they perceived a world-wide communist threat. So, the US 7th Fleet intervened, and as Whiting has written "The alternatives facing Peking were few, clear-cut, and dismal."[33]

Chinese response was along ideological lines. Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan welcomed the June 27 intervention in Korea and the Formosa Straits as "a most welcome sign of comradeship in the fight against communism!"[34] But, he had already lost China, so the most important reaction was that of the leaders of the PRC, whose "reaction was straightforward and accusative."[35] Foreign Minister Chou En-lai stated that he viewed the

---

[32]Paige, op. cit., p. 140.

[33]Whiting, op. cit., p. 49.

[34]Paige, op. cit., p. 184; Dulles, op. cit., p. 96.

[35]Weng, op. cit., p. 81. According to Dulles, op. cit., "the Chinese Communists angrily condemned the intervention. In his biography of Mao Tse-tung, Stuart Schram has written that this was the real turning point in the Communist leader's attitude toward America. The

American action as "armed aggression against the territory of China and . . . a gross violation of the United Nations Charter."[36] Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Tse-tung, stated that,

> Although Truman announced last January 5 that the United States would not intervene on Taiwan, he himself has just proven the hypocrisy of that statement and at the same time has broken every international agreement by the United States that it would not interfere in the internal affairs of China.[37]

United States 'openly exposed its imperial face,' he reported Mao as saying, 'and China had no alternative to resisting this policy and aiding North Korea,'" p. 96.

[36]Weng, loc. cit.; Dulles, op. cit., pp. 91-3. Dulles has written:

"Although it may not have been what the Truman Administration had in mind during the immediate emergency, this vital decision led to the complete reversal of American policy toward Formosa as enunciated by Truman only six months earlier. As future developments progressively demonstrated, it undermined his stated position that we did not intend to interfere in China's civil strife through the interposition of our armed forces: while the United States was ostensibly seeking no more than Formosa's neutralization to avert the further spread of Far Eastern hostilities, it was in effect throwing military support to the Nationalist regime against the Chinese Communists. The ban on possible operations against the mainland by Chiang Kai-shek was virtually meaningless--he was in no position to mount such an assault--but the interdiction of any move against Formosa by the forces of Mao Tse-tung was all important because Peking was prepared, with troops assembled on the adjacent mainland, to attempt a final liquidation of the Nationalist regime," p. 94.

[37]Paige, op. cit., p. 210. See also Tsou, op. cit., who states: "It appears quite possible that the Chinese Communists had counted on the United States to adhere to the hands-off policy and had derived considerable assurance from every American pronouncement that could be interpreted as a reaffirmation of that policy. The sudden reversal of American policy further increased their distrust of American intentions and their doubt about the reliability of American declarations," p. 562.

From the start, therefore, the PRC felt that the American government could not be trusted to keep its policy commitments, since the previous position on the Taiwan issue was abbrogated.

Chinese plans to invade Taiwan were automatically negated by the American action but this did not necessarily lead to immediate Chinese involvement in the Korean War. In fact, the PRC "seemed to avoid any specific and immediate commitment to assist North Korea," but "at the same time," Whiting has written, "preparations for invading Taiwan slackened, and PLA (People's Liberation Army) redeployment suggested planning for future contingencies in Manchuria or Korea." Whiting's evidence shows that,

> No actual assistance, however, was furnished DPRK forces. . . . For Peking, the period appears to have been one of watchful waiting, permitting evaluation of rapidly moving events and their possible consequences. Active responses to U.S. and U.N. moves in Korea appear to have been determined in Moscow, while Peking's primary responsibility continued to be Taiwan.[38]

The question as to how much this new situation contributed to the probability of a Sino-American confrontation in Korea is open to speculation, but our evidence suggests that it heightened the possibility because the PRC's political prestige was damaged by American intervention in the Formosa Straits, which prevented an invasion of Taiwan. Naturally, US intervention in Korea thwarted also the

---

[38]Whiting, op. cit., p. 53. Tsou, op. cit., has written: "The intensified hostility and distrust toward the United States apparently strengthened Peking's disposition to push its revolutionary interests and oppose American policies elsewhere in Asia. Both Mao and Chou did not confine their attacks to the reversal of American policy toward Formosa. They viewed American actions in the broad context of Asian affairs," p. 562.

possibility of a North Korean victory, thus damaging the PRC's prestige further as it was linked to North Korean military operations by virtue of PLA troop contributions. As Whiting has written,

> Communism was too recently victorious in China to ignore a setback across the Yalu that might reawaken U.S.-Nationalist activities throughout the mainland. Nor could Peking aspire to Asian leadership so long as it appeared unwilling, or unable, to influence events on its border.[39]

Moreover, China had practical interests in North Korea that were threatened by US intervention. These included a number of hydro-electric facilities that generated power for Manchuria as well as North Korea, and were a key to the economic redevelopment of Manchuria, which was the industrial heartland of the Far East. Whoever controlled North Korea also controlled Chinese power resources which were an important part of Chinese national interests. In addition to the Yalu power facilities, heavy traffic flowed steadily across the numerous Yalu bridges between North Korea and the PRC, so the two governments were actively engaged in commerce with one another. According to Whiting, "Thus both strategic and ideological considerations argued for maximum support of North Korea against 'American aggression.'"[40]

Obviously, the situation in the Far East was complex. We could debate at length and in detail the pros and cons of the American government's rationale for taking action as it did, but that is beyond the scope of this study. The important issue here is: What did US officials

---

[39]Whiting, op. cit., p. 50.

[40]Ibid.

know about the Chinese position and what did they believe about the possibility of Chinese intervention? Available evidence does not show exactly what US officials knew but does support the hypothesis that they were fully aware of Chinese hostility and recognized the possibility of Chinese intervention from the very beginning of the war. Indeed, because of their ideological preconceptions about communism they were quite anxious that the PRC would intervene on orders from Moscow.

American Perceptions of Chinese Involvement

Although the initial Chinese reaction to US intervention was a verbal attack on the US vis-à-vis the Taiwan issue, strategic information available to American decision makers at the time reinforced American beliefs that the Chinese were concerned about, and involved in the Korean War. Before the war, on June 5, and then again on June 25 General MacArthur's chief of intelligence General Charles Willoughby reported to Washington that Chinese troops were continuing to augment the North Korean army. According to Willoughby, "this was the first of a continuous succession of reports and comments on the Chinese potential. These reports were disseminated in large numbers of copies to our staffs and to Washington."[41] By the end of June the US government knew that the PRC had deployed approximately 180,000 troops in Manchuria near the North Korean border.

---

[41]Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur, 1941-1951 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 385-6.

In addition, the initial tone of PRC response to American involvement in the Far East was hostile on the issue of Taiwan, but on June 28 reflected Chinese concern over Korea as well. PRC Foreign Minister Chou En-lai not only accused the United States of "aggression against China" but blamed the Americans for instigating "the puppet government of Syngman Rhee to provoke civil war in Korea."[42] This was the first time that the Chinese stated a concern over the Korean issue. On June 29, however, an article in the Chinese communist news organ Jen-min jih-pao again called attention only to the reversal of US policy vis-à-vis China.[43] In general, the PRC was, at this time, incapable of a major military move in North Korea and there is no evidence to suggest that the PRC committed itself to aid North Korea, whatever the public Chinese position.[44]

The American government obviously had strategic intelligence on PRC involvement, or at least PRC concerns about the Korean War during the first two weeks of fighting. Whether US officials recognized the subtle changes in the PRC's policy position is unclear from available data, but, certainly, they were aware of a possible Chinese threat to American military operations in Korea and made short-term adjustments to account for that threat. General S.L.A. Marshall has written,

---

[42]Goodrich, op. cit., p. 138.

[43]Tsou, op. cit., p. 562.

[44]See Whiting, op. cit., pp. 14-56.

> American forces in the Far East had long been well aware of the close affinity between the Chinese Communist armies and the Red cohorts of North Korea [who had reciprocal arrangements for crossing and recrossing the Yalu River under military pressure.] The significance of these reciprocal accommodations was understood at full value by the American establishment.[45]
>
> . . . so, almost from the first shot, Eighth Army Intelligence was awake to the threat of intervention by the Communist Chinese. It was viewed not as a remote possibility but as the major contingency.[46]

When the US government chose to intervene in Korea, according to General MacArthur, "All the risks inherent in this decision--including the possibility of Chinese and Russian involvement--applied then just as much as it [sic] applied later."[47] In response to these dangers President Truman instructed American officials on June 27 to keep lines of communication open between the US and the Soviet Union.[48] The US State Department worked out a dispatch to the Russian government which in effect accused the Soviets of instigating hostilities and demanded that the Russians exercise their influence to prevent further

---

[45]Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, p. 3.

[46]Ibid., p. 5.

[47]Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 331. This is the General's personal retrospective.

[48]Nothing was done, however, to open lines of communication with the PRC, even though that government reacted more strongly to US intervention than the Soviet Union. While a rapproachement with the PRC may have seemed unpalatable to US officials, in all likelihood, it would have received strong support in the UN, where, Goodrich, op. cit., has noted, "many members felt that [the] . . . decision [to intervene in Formosa] was unwise, that it should not have been taken without consultation, and that it weakened the United Nations character of the action taken to restore international peace and security," pp. 110, 114, 155.

advances by the North Koreans. By June 29 the State Department received a reply from Moscow indicating that: (1) the Russians would not accept responsibility for the Korean War; and, (2) Soviet armed forces would not intervene. The wording of the Soviet note led Secretary of State Dean Acheson to conclude that "the Chinese might intervene, [but] the Russians would not."[49]

The US government continued to view the Soviets with suspicion but the President felt that if there was intervention by foreign troops, it would be by the Chinese, not the Russians. He concluded on June 29 "that the Soviets are going to let the Chinese and the North Koreans do their fighting for them."[50] Participation of Russian troops in Korea, then, was ruled out.

The possibility of Chinese intervention thus commanded top priority consideration from the very beginning of America's decision-making vis-á-vis Korea. According to General Courtney Whitney (General MacArthur's military secretary in Tokyo), "The calculated gamble that the Soviet or the Chinese Communists might enter the war was clearly understood and accepted by Washington at that time as it was by MacArthur."[51] US policy makers discussed Chinese intervention on

---

[49]Acheson, op. cit., p. 412.

[50]Paige, op. cit., p. 248. Paige is quoting Beverly Smith, "The White House Story, Why We went to War in Korea," Saturday Evening Post (November 10, 1951), p. 88.

[51]Courtney Whitney, MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 333.

June 25 and 26 prior to receiving the Soviet note and decided that it was "improbable," but after the Russian reply that possibility acquired new prominence.[52]

The strong Chinese position led Secretary of the Army Frank Pace to warn that operations above the 38th Parallel were dangerous and ought to be carefully monitored.[53] Likewise, General MacArthur was concerned about Chinese intervention and his June 28 intelligence summary "stated that the possibility existed that North Korea might receive Chinese communist reinforcements from Manchuria."[54]

Moreover, PRC troop strength in Manchuria began to increase and on July 6 President Truman received a report that approximately 200,000 Chinese troops were capable of reinforcing North Korea from Manchuria. Truman has written,

> . . . General Bradley said that intelligence from the Far East reported two more enemy divisions in North Korea that had not been committed, in addition to the possibility of elements, Korean or Chinese, that might be brought in from Manchuria.
>
> . . . Secretary Pace added that the estimate of the intelligence agencies was that there were two hundred thousand Chinese Communist troops in Manchuria.[55]

On July 7 General MacArthur noted in a report to Washington that Chinese intervention was an "unpredictable" contingency[56] and on July 8 US

---

[52]MacArthur Hearings, pp. 938-9, 949, 1491-2, 1504, 1716, 1832, 2611, 2630, 2586.

[53]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 341.

[54]Appleman, op. cit., p. 757.

[55]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 344.

[56]Whitney, op. cit., p. 337.

intelligence agencies reported that Chinese troops were entering the Antung-Yalu area on the Sino-Korean border, noting that 116,000 regular Chinese troops were available for action in Korea.[57] On July 9 MacArthur informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) that the Korean situation was critical, reporting that the North Koreans were receiving Soviet and Chinese aid.[58] And, by July 10 Chinese troops on the coast across from Taiwan were reportedly moving north to Manchuria.[59]

US officials adjusted to the Chinese threat in several ways. On the recommendation of Secretary Acheson military aid offered by Chiang Kai-shek was rejected to avoid antagonizing the PRC further, and to avoid jeopardizing Formosan security. Acheson argued that the aid should not be accepted "on the ground that the net result might well be the reverse of helpful by bringing Chinese Communist intervention either in Korea or Formosa or both."[60] As far as the State Department was concerned, the PRC response to US action was ". . . tantamount to a declaration of war,"[61] and Acheson feared that the "Chinese might intervene."[62]

---

[57]Robert Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953 (New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1961), p. 188.

[58]Gavin Long, MacArthur as Military Commander (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1969), p. 204.

[59]Walter Karig, War in Korea (Volume VI of the Series Battle Report, edited by Walter Karig. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944-52), p. 49.

[60]Acheson, op. cit., p. 412.

[61]Paige, op. cit., p. 248.

[62]Acheson, loc. cit.

In addition, Secretary Acheson issued a public statement on June 28 to reassure foreign governments that the American effort in Korea was limited to restoration of the status quo ante bellum (i.e. the situation as it had existed before the war). The government ". . . hoped that by limiting the scope of American military operations, the possibility of direct Soviet or Chinese Communist intervention in Korea might be minimized."[63]

In general, the American government was intent on avoiding a wider war and took specific action to avoid provoking Russia or China into a military confrontation. President Truman has written,

> Every decision I made in connection with the Korean conflict had this one aim in mind: to prevent a third world war and the terrible destruction it would bring to the civilized world. This meant that we should not do anything that would provide the excuse to the Soviets and plunge the free nations into full-scale all-out war.[64]

In authorizing air operations north of the 38th Parallel US officials in Washington warned General MacArthur to stay clear of Manchuria. And, in ordering him to impose a naval blockade on Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned him not to violate either the Chinese or Soviet coast lines since it might precipitate foreign involvement.[65] Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Finletter also issued special orders to the Far East Air Force Command to avoid bombing Chinese or Soviet territory and this order was passed along the chain of command the same day by

---

[63]Paige, op. cit., p. 166.

[64]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 345.

[65]Collins, op. cit., p. 18; MacArthur Hearings, pp. 3192-3; Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 340-1.

General George Stratemeyer (Commander of the Far East Air Force) who likewise warned his pilots.[66]

Clearly, US intervention in Korea brought the government into conflict with the PRC over a number of significant issues from the beginning of the Korean War that seriously raised the threat of a larger war. US officials subsequently sought strategic intelligence on those conflicts, but their attention was misdirected. They were looking to the Soviets to provide clues about what the Chinese would do, and, in the process, constructed a self-verifying hypothesis about the working relationship between the Russians and the Chinese. The situation is best illustrated by the opinion of government intelligence in late June. US intelligence agencies

> . . . were in general agreement that the Soviet Union intended to involve the United States with China and its satellites, but would avoid a head-on military collision with American forces in Korea or elsewhere. Although Chou En-lai's belligerent declaration had raised the possibility of Chinese intervention, it did not seem imminent.[67] [Italics not in the original.]

Likewise, Army historian James Schnabel has written,

> General [Charles] Bolté, then the Assistant Chief of Staff G-3, Department of the Army, reported to Secretary Pace, on 28 June, "There can be no doubt but that the invasion of South Korea is a planned Soviet move to improve their cold war position at our expense."[68]

---

[66]Futrell, op. cit., pp. 40-1; MacArthur Hearings, pp. 536, 1511-13, 3192-3.

[67]Paige, op. cit., p. 259.

[68]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 75.

So, American officials focused continually on the Soviet Union and it was in this context that strategic intelligence collection and evaluation became a standard operating procedure within the American government.

Conclusion

In sum, our evidence shows that the American response to the Korean War and American presumptions about Chinese involvement were based upon strongly held, widely shared anti-communist feelings. From the start, US officials viewed on-going events through "value colored spectacles" and preconceived future events in terms of a self-verifying Russian-agent hypothesis, both of which focused American attention on world-wide Soviet plans and away from the substance of political conflicts involving Korea and China. There was no effective dissent on the American position within the government, but, instead, unanimity of purpose and wide-spread agreement on the government's policy goals.

This is not to say, however, that men such as Acheson, Marshall and Truman were naive about what was happening. Their thinking was tied to a coherent theory, but that theory was only partially verifiable in fact and was closely tied to their emotive feelings about communism. Whether from hindsight their position might be judged erroneous or correct makes little difference for this study, because they held their view seriously.

The government's action in Korea, although consistent with its anti-communist position, was not apparently related to American strategic defense; and, while the US action in the Formosa Straits was consistent

with the Russian-Agent hypothesis it did not necessarily increase the likelihood of an American victory in Korea. But, both actions achieved the short range goal of resisting communism and reduced prevailing fears about communist expansion. That the actions enlarged the area of conflict was not fully understood by US officials, whose attitudes and policies were largely predetermined by their preconceptions about communism. The fact that there was wide-spread agreement on American policy simply strengthened the government's anti-communist commitment. Consequently, critical policy conflicts were submerged and US intelligence efforts became extremely complicated, if not entirely misdirected.

The main point of this chapter is that US policy makers ignored strategic information from the beginning of the war because of the theory they had about the nature of communism. They seriously overrated the capabilities of the Soviet Union to mobilize and control other communist governments, and they misconstrued the extent and character of possible Chinese involvement. The fact that they agreed so thoroughly on their views and felt so strongly about the war dulled their awareness to these initial shortcomings in the framework of their policy. And, as we shall see, their preconceptions about the war had long lasting, recurring effects on the way they responded to strategic intelligence.

CHAPTER III

UNIFICATION, PHASE 1--THE AMERICAN PREDISPOSITION TO UNIFY KOREA (JULY 10 - AUGUST 15)

Shortly after American intervention in Korea began the US government re-evaluated its war policy and initiated plans for unifying Korea through offensive military action. We will discuss below the first phase of government planning for unification, in an effort to answer two questions: What was the origin and nature of the government's unification objective? And, to what extent was the objective consistent or inconsistent with other American policy goals?

As noted in the preceding chapter, the North Korean invasion of South Korea faced the US government with a fait accompli that required military action to prevent a North Korean victory. Thus, the American response was a limited intervention "bounded" initially by two goals: restoration of the status quo ante bellum; and, prevention of a third world war. But as American troops began to establish a foothold in South Korea US policy makers gained time to evaluate these goals and explored contingencies that might arise from military action in Korea. The possibilities of unification and Chinese intervention were two such contingencies and we will concentrate on them throughout the remainder of this study. While this may oversimplify the problems facing US policy makers, it will allow us to focus on the substantive issues that arose at the time of the Yalu disaster.

The Evidence and Analysis

Our general line of argument is that the possibility of Chinese intervention represented a constraint on US policy in Korea, especially as that policy included the objective of unification. In short, there was an inherent discrepancy or inconsistency between attempting to unify Korea while at the same time trying to prevent a wider war, because the Chinese were opposed to unification on American terms. Thus, as the likelihood of unification increased so did the probability of Chinese intervention to prevent it. Over time the Chinese position became clearer and US officials became progressively more aware of it.

Several kinds of data bear on the argument. Official statements by Chinese leaders reveal their intent to intervene; while their "movements of troops and supplies" in China not only shows their intent but their capability as well.[1] Compiled in chronological sequence with American preparation and implementation of plans for unification, these data allow us to estimate how the discrepancy (described above) changed over time. Official statements by US policy makers, along with records on their military and political planning, allow us to determine to what extent they were aware of this discrepancy, and how they adjusted to it. In this respect we shall reconstruct the context of US decision making as a general trend or pattern of events across time involving a set of

---

[1] James Schnabel, Policy and Direction, p. 198, has written: "To determine through outward manifestations alone whether the Chinese intended to intervene was virtually impossible. But by using such indications as movements of troops and supplies, American intelligence agencies could gauge this intention with some hope of accuracy."

incremental decisions about Chinese intervention and unification. This will allow us to show what the accumulated evidence on Chinese intervention looked like at different points during the development of American policy and it will yield answers to two important questions: Were there points at which the Chinese threat was more recognizable than others? And, if so, what kinds of choices did US officials have? Answers to these general questions will help to explain the Yalu disaster as well as to test our hypothesis.

The analysis rests on several assumptions. The first assumption is that our estimation of Chinese intentions and capabilities approximates the strategic information available to US officials. Without access to official intelligence documents we cannot verify it unequivocally, so the information presented should not be misread as a summary of what US officials knew or should have known. Inevitably in some instances the information may be incorrect or subject to questions about its credibility, but, in general, it is reported from reliable sources. Bits of information have been cross-checked with government intelligence sources where possible, and, naturally, reports from official sources take precedence. For purposes of our inquiry the strategic information reported is important primarily insofar as it represents a clear and consistent picture of the trend of events relating to Chinese intervention. There may be some overlapping because of differences in the reporting procedures of various data sources, but, hopefully, this has been kept to a minimum.

A second assumption is that the objective of unification was an official policy goal of the United States government. This is mentioned as an assumption because unification was not formally adopted by the UN until October 7, prior to which it was represented by tentative contingency plans within the US government. Its official status as a government policy goal before October 7 may, therefore, be subject to alternative interpretation. We will treat it as an official policy goal for the purpose of illustrating to what extent it was discrepant with the possibility of Chinese intervention, with the qualification that it represented varying levels of commitment at different points in time. Accordingly, this manuscript is organized to reflect explicit changes in that commitment as it affected the status of unification as a policy goal.

A third assumption is that US policy makers agreed generally on the objective of unification and on how the possibility of Chinese intervention was to be evaluated. There were, of course, individual differences in approach and response and these have been noted where appropriate or necessary, but, in the main, similarities have been stressed. The continual reference to "US policy makers," the "US" and the "American government" rest upon this assumption but are separate and apart from data that show explicit "agreements" or extraordinary "unanimity" on different aspects of policy. Such agreements as noted are taken as evidence showing one way in which US policy makers resolved policy conflicts revealed by strategic information. In part our hypothesis will be verified by showing that if information was ignored

it occurred at the group, rather than at the individual, level.

Our fourth assumption is that efforts by both the Chinese and American governments to communicate effectively were serious because both governments wanted to avoid general war. As noted in the previous chapter, however, the conflict between them was ideological and the task of separating credible from incredible communicative acts is complex. Where specific acts appeared more important or credible than others they were identified and discussed, but, in general, it was extremely difficult to distinguish between propaganda and rhetoric as opposed to warning statements or explicit statements of intent. Even recognizing the ideological component in our analysis does not allow us to escape it. Within the American government the very term "communist" was pejorative and rarely, if ever, was the PRC referred to by its proper name, but usually as "Communist China." Likewise, the American government was rarely mentioned by the Chinese without being called an "imperialist aggressor." In short, such terms reflect the intensity of feeling involved on both sides and are used herein with that qualification. In general, however, the two governments are referenced throughout by their proper names, abbreviated.

One final word of caution is in order. The present analysis rests heavily on qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the public record on the Korean crisis. The data come from disparate sources with a wide range of reportorial perspectives on the Korean War and, given the ideological character of the conflict, some factual distortion may be reproduced herein. The writer fully recognizes the

danger in stressing specific facts and therefore relies upon consistency in a wide range of facts to show a clear and accurate picture of events. The chronological context reconstructed here places numerous events in proximity on a time scale that might not otherwise appear related if organized on a topical or issue oriented basis. In some instances the timing of events appears to have affected substantive choices or outcomes, and these have been pointed out, but, the writer is cognizant of the danger of imputing causality to a chain of events, and acknowledges the distortion inherent in generalizing trends, arguments or points of view.

Unification--Initial Proposals

We have already seen that there was no dissent over American policy and that US action represented widely shared anti-communist sentiments. During July these sentiments were manifested in informal proposals of various officials for reversing the course of the war, destroying the communist government of North Korea, and unifying all Korea. The scrutiny and discussion of these proposals within different branches of the government created a political predisposition among US policy makers as to what the outcome of the Korean fighting should be. This predisposition for unification interfered with official perceptions of strategic intelligence by creating a set of expectations about victory. Thus, a general propensity among decision makers to emphasize information supporting unification was encouraged and reinforced by prevailing sentiments.

During July and early August government planners started contingency studies on the possibility of unifying Korea. In the meantime, US policy (though not military action) was switched to the offensive. US officials turned down an offer to negotiate a peace settlement with the communists; strengthened US support of Chiang; and, drafted a public statement calling for unification. The overriding factor in decision-making appears to have been the predisposition to unify Korea.

Shortly after the war started, on July 10 Secretary Acheson told Paul Nitze (Head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff) ". . . that in the immediate future 'we have got to put in the force necessary to reoccupy to the 38th,' subject to new problems that Russian or Chinese intervention would raise." Acheson described his conception of the policy problem facing the American government, stating:

> In the longer run, if we should succeed in reoccupying the South, the question of garrisoning and supporting it would arise. This would be a hard task for us to take on, and yet it hardly seemed sensible to repel the attack and then abandon the country. I could not "see the end of it. In other words, as the Virginians say, we have bought a colt." Nowhere in my memorandum appears any thought of an independent and united Korea as the U.S. or UN [sic] war aim. Similarly, a series of discussions going on within State, within Defense, and within the Central Intelligence Agency--seemed to approach the longer-run question through an even more immediate tactical problem: what to do about crossing the 38th parallel.[2]

The possibility of unifying Korea apparently arose from these deliberations as an adjunct of crossing the parallel. Unification naturally gained informal support and promotion from such contingency studies, but, as Acheson has noted, it was secondary to more immediate tactical

---

[2]Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 451.

military problems. Nevertheless, the issue was joined.

The earliest explicit evidence showing high level consideration of the possibility of unifying Korea involves a meeting between two members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General MacArthur. Generals Joseph Collins (Army Chief of Staff) and Hoyt Vandenberg (Air Force Chief of Staff) visited MacArthur between July 10 and 15 at his headquarters in Tokyo for the purpose of discussing the military situation in Korea. At the time, American and South Korean troops were retreating toward Pusan on the southern tip of the peninsula under heavy pressure from advancing North Korean forces. On July 13 the three Generals talked things over and in the process General MacArthur stated his belief that he could "stabilize" the fighting, given adequate reinforcements.

General Collins inquired of MacArthur ". . . when he would be able to mount a counteroffensive and how many American troops he would need in Korea after the fighting ended."[3] MacArthur could not make a "categorical reply" but made his intentions clear. According to Army historian James Schnabel,

> He meant to destroy all their [North Korean] forces and, if necessary, to occupy all of North Korea. "In the aftermath of operations," he said, "the problem is to compose and unite Korea."[4]

---

[3]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 107.

[4]Ibid.

But, MacArthur acknowledged that "if Russia or Communist China intervened in force, the plans [for victory] would have to be changed."[5] So, from the beginning, the discrepancy between trying to unify Korea and preventing foreign intervention (i.e. a wider war) was recognized by high level officials.

On returning to Washington, General Collins instructed agencies under his command to cooperate in a National Security Council study involving an American crossing of the 38th Parallel. He has written,

> Meanwhile, the Intelligence Division of the Army General Staff was already working on a study of its own, as was the Central Intelligence Agency. Information in these studies was made available to the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff].[6]

As early as July 11, however, George Kennan (State Department Counselor) advocated an alternative to unification as a settlement of the Korean conflict. He suggested to Secretary Acheson that political bargaining with the PRC might be a possible means of negotiating an end to the war and pointed out that such action might yield the added advantage of splitting, or widening the political gap between Russian and Chinese national interests. Although Acheson had been interested in creating and exploiting just such a situation prior to the war, he did not respond immediately or positively to Kennan's suggestion.[7]

But, on July 13 the opportunity for just such an approach arose when Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sent diplomatic notes

---

[5] Ibid., p. 108.

[6] Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 144.

[7] Kennan, Memoirs, pp. 515-20; Acheson, op. cit., pp. 418-20.

simultaneously to the American and Soviet governments suggesting that the two recognize the PRC's claim to a UN seat and include that government in negotiations to end the war. The Soviet government agreed forthwith, but the American government delayed for a week to study the proposal. On July 18 Secretary Acheson informed Nehru that the US government would not agree to such negotiations involving the PRC.[8]

The US government's reasons were simple and rational. Negotiations while US forces were retreating would be to the American government's disadvantage. And, the seating of the PRC in the UN would erode American power there and transfer the focus of UN debate from the issue of halting "aggression" in Korea, to the issue of who was the legitimate representative of China: the PRC or Chiang Kai-shek? Moreover, "the price" for negotiations as Acheson put it, was the seating of the PRC, and that would be a symbolic victory for the communists that US officials did not want.[9]

After all, American involvement from the very beginning was a symbolic effort to defeat communism, and US officials were still convinced that the war was a Russian plot. Indeed, the JCS reported on July 13 ". . . that developments in Korea were part of a general USSR plan which might involve correlated actions in other parts of the world," and Schnabel has written that "the JCS planning staff declared":

---

[8] Ibid.

[9] Acheson, op. cit., p. 419.

> "It is now apparent from Korea that Russia is embarking upon an entirely new phase in her program of world-wide Communist domination. This is a phase in which she is now utilizing for the first time the armed forces of her satellites to impose by military strength a Communist-dominated government upon a weak neighboring state considered incapable of successful military opposition."[10]

Conclusions such as these represented strong sentiments against "appeasement" within the American government which led to the refusal to negotiate.

Likewise, the China lobby representing Chiang Kai-shek in the American Congress was adamantly opposed to negotiations with the PRC, and, befriended by John Foster Dulles and others, was able to affect US policy making. Dulles openly opposed negotiations, favoring instead an aggressive reaction against communism in the Far East. George Kennan has written that his position can be ". . . taken as evidence that such a view already represented the consensus of feeling in right-wing Republican circles on the Hill."[11]

The government's response to the Indian proposal did not result from a failure to recognize that other alternatives were feasible, but from strongly held, widely shared anti-communist feelings within the government. George Kennan, for one, had advocated a positive response, arguing that recognition of the PRC and its admission to the UN would merely acknowledge "existing facts" and "no new reality of any great significance" would be created. He has written that

---

[10]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 104.

[11]Kennan, op. cit., p. 516.

> To insist, as my associates were doing, that the Chinese should not be admitted because they had taken an adverse attitude toward the UN action in Korea was to try to make form rather than substance the decisive factor in the handling of UN affairs.
>
> What we were dealing with here was a conflict of interest, founded in bitter strategic and political realities.[12]

But, American preconceptions about communism obscured such "political realities," and engendered a predisposition for offensive action.

On July 19 General MacArthur wired President Truman that he had stopped the North Koreans, noting that they had already lost their "big chance" for victory, and the General's reassurance solidified prevailing sentiments.[13] Even though American forces were still retreating, and were still faced with possible disaster, US policy makers agreed that unification was desirable.

The groundwork was thus laid for continued planning for, and advocacy of unifying Korea and the debate as to whether or not US forces should cross the 38th Parallel after launching a counteroffensive was resolved. Most US officials agreed that the Parallel was an artificial boundary with no military significance and shared generally the view that it had to be crossed in order to destroy the North Korean army, so they felt that unification should be pursued as an added political bonus.

On July 21, however, Kennan called to the attention of State Department Planners the fact that such action might actually endanger

---

[12] Ibid., p. 521.

[13] Acheson, op. cit., p. 424; Schnabel, op. cit., p. 112; and Spanier, Truman-MacArthur Controversy, p. 84.

American forces and lead to disaster. Kennan argued as follows:

> We must remember, I said, that what we were doing in Korea was, although for good political reason, nevertheless an unsound thing, and that the further we were to advance up the peninsula the more unsound it would become from the military standpoint. If we were actually to move beyond the neck of the peninsula, we would be getting into an area where mass could be used against us and where we would be distinctly at a disadvantage. This, I thought, increased the importance of our being able to terminate our action at the proper point; and it was desirable that we should make sure we did not frighten the Russians into action which would interfere with us.[14]

His statement went to the heart of the government's goal of avoiding a wider war but its acceptance would have meant the end of plans for unification, and US policy makers were not anxious to abandon that new goal. The proposal of unification simply satisfied prevailing sentiments for offensive action; so the planning continued.

Pressures within the government for a stronger, more aggressive war policy in Korea increased accordingly. Thus, Acheson disregarded Kennan's argument, and has written,

> Curiously, the memorandum [by Kennan] did not mention what within a few months was to be a far more likely possibility--Chinese domination. Such was national interest in the abstract. In view of public opinion and political pressures in the concrete, ideas such as these could only be kept in mind as warnings not to be drawn into quicksands.[15]

Since the American government thought the Soviet Union was directing Chinese activities, however, Acheson's reasoning with regard to

---

[14]Kennan, op. cit., p. 515.

[15]Acheson, op. cit., p. 446. Acheson has added, "All this was good, even if purely negative, advice. It was well to be cautious. If we had been able to peer into General MacArthur's mind, we should have been infinitely more cautious than we were a few weeks later in giving him instructions and in formulating policy at the United Nations."

"Chinese domination" lacks credibility. His dismissal of the memo appears simply to have been an outgrowth of the widespread predisposition to unify Korea.

That predisposition was increasing over time. Acheson has written,

> Then, on July 31, planners across the river in the Pentagon made proposals of a far-reaching nature. I have long noticed that military recommendations are usually premised upon the meticulous statement of assumptions that as often as not are quite contrary to the facts and yet control the conclusions. So it was here. The recommendation was that the UN Supreme Commander should be directed to cross the parallel, defeat the enemy's forces, and occupy the country, provided the following assumptions held:
>
> 1. That the United States would mobilize sufficient resources to attain the objective and strengthen its military position in all other areas of strategic importance.
> 2. That the Soviet Union would not intervene in Korea or elsewhere. [Italics not in the original.]
> 3. That the President would proclaim, the Congress endorse, and the United Nations adopt as our war aim a united, free, and independent Korea, and that the United States and other nations would maintain their troops in Korea under the UN Command as occupying forces as long as needed.[16]

But, note Acheson's statement that the assumptions were "quite contrary to the facts and yet control[led] the conclusions." He may have meant that the US could not mobilize adequate resources, or that foreign intervention was likely, or that widespread agreement would not improve the chances of unification, or all of these. Whatever line of conjecture we might take, his statement is a striking revelation of the uncertain conditions surrounding the proposal of unification. Nevertheless the popular sentiment attached to it outweighed any false

---

[16] Ibid., p. 451.

premises and led to the drafting of a public statement for delivery in the UN, which in substance called for unification pending surrender of the North Korean army. When George Kennan saw this draft he "shuddered over the political implications of it."[17] He has written that the government's plans for unification seemed

> . . . to imply that the basis of our policy in the Far East from here on out would be an emotional anti-communism which would ignore the value to ourselves of a possible balance between existing forces on the Asiatic continent. . . .[18]

Moreover, he felt that it would increase political polarization over the issues in the Far East, break the unity of the Asian community, and go beyond American military capabilities.[19] It simply overextended the American commitment in Asia.

But, by the end of July the government's anti-communist commitment was publicly reinforced by action of General MacArthur. On July 31 he and members of his staff flew to Taiwan where they reviewed the military situation and openly promised Chiang Kai-shek more American support in his war against the PRC. The visit raised serious questions about whether American policy toward China was becoming more aggressive. Studies of the political situation in the Far East at this time have shown that MacArthur's visit confused the government's publicly stated policy in Korea and heightened PRC anxieties about that policy.

---

[17] Kennan, op. cit., p. 522.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

Certainly, "MacArthur was a powerful Pacific force in his own right,"[20] and his visit created "grave doubts over American policy both abroad and at home."[21] Indeed, at the UN it was considered "a triumph of mistiming" that was ". . . thought to be evidence of lack of coordination in American diplomacy" which ". . . increased the allies' and neutrals' anxiety over American policy toward China."[22] In the words of Chiang Kai-shek, the visit by MacArthur was "a demonstration to the world that the forces fighting communism in Asia were united."[23] It was a demonstration that President Truman did not want, however, because it increased communist hostility that might eventually threaten US operations in Korea.[24]

In the meantime, American officials continued planning for unification and on August 10 US Ambassador to the UN, Warren Austin, alluded to that possibility in a public statement before the General Assembly.[25]

---

[20] Ibid., p. 65.

[21] Spanier, op. cit., pp. 71-2.

[22] Tsou, America's Failure in China, p. 566.

[23] New York Times, July 31, 1950, p. 1. Hereinafter the New York Times will be identified as NYT and unless otherwise stated all articles noted are for 1950. See also MacArthur Hearings, pp. 3382-3.

[24] Spanier, loc. cit.; MacArthur Hearings, p. 3364. Margaret Truman, op. cit., has noted succinctly: "The glare of publicity which followed MacArthur everywhere made it look as if we were negotiating a mutual defense treaty with Chiang," p. 477.

[25] Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, p. 78. See also Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, The Limits of Power (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 591; and Simmons, "The Korean War," p. 20.

Strategic Information on the PRC

These actions, including planning for unification and strengthening of support for Chiang, were taken even though, throughout July and August, strategic information on the PRC's political position showed increasing Chinese hostility toward the US and increasing PRC attention to the military situation in Korea. There is no evidence showing that the PRC made a specific military commitment in July to aid North Korea, or showing that Chinese troops being redeployed in Manchuria were positioned specifically for intervention. But it is clear that Chinese maneuvers strengthened PRC troops on the Sino-Korean border and increased Chinese capabilities for intervention. Since these troops eventually intervened we shall review strategic information about their deployment and discuss the development of the PRC's political position from the point of view of American decision makers.

Throughout the Korean crisis the Chinese Nationalist intelligence agency supplied information to the American government relating to the possibility of Chinese intervention. In addition, public news reports covered Chinese maneuvering and, more important, American intelligence units were actively collecting and sifting information.

As early as July 2 reports on PRC troop movements to Manchuria and on PRC assistance to the North Korean army were available to US officials.[26] Also, on July 4 the Nationalist Chinese Ambassador to the US, Wellington Koo met with Dean Rusk (US Under Secretary of State)

---

[26] NYT, July 2, p. 5; Section IV, p. 1.

and reported that PRC troops were being deployed along the North Korean border.[27] At the same time, Chiang Kai-shek indicated his impression to Washington that the Soviets would aid the Chinese in fighting in Korea.[28]

Nationalist Chinese intelligence sources reported again on July 5 that the PRC had twenty-four army groups that it was moving up the coast of China to be used in the Korean fighting.[29] On July 7 and 8 Nationalist sources continued to report that PRC troops were moving toward Korea,[30] and the pro-Nationalist press in Hong Kong reported on July 9 that the Chinese Fourth Field Army was moving North through Canton.[31] By July 11, Ambassador Koo stated that "it would not be surprising if the PRC joined the Korean fighting at a 'critical moment.'"[32]

On July 13 Chinese troops in division strength were tentatively identified on the combat front in South Korea. "The Chinese division was identified by an American advance intelligence officer with the South Korean defenders . . . who . . . had considerable experience with Chinese divisions during the civil war," according to American news

---

[27] NYT, July 4, p. 3.

[28] Ibid.

[29] NYT, July 5, p. 3.

[30] NYT, July 7, p. 3. This dispatch also reported that a high level conference of Chinese military leaders in Peking had been convened to study the Korean situation. See also NYT, July 8, pp. 1, 4.

[31] NYT, July 9, p. 5.

[32] NYT, July 11, p. 20.

reports.[33] US officials, however, were skeptical about the identification. The report was discounted by the Pentagon, but the possibility of Chinese involvement was not completely ruled out by government spokesmen.[34]

A report made public by General MacArthur in mid-July indicated that the Fifteenth North Korean division was made up of a large number of former Chinese soldiers.[35] Thus, according to General Marshall,

> In mid-July, before the Pusan perimeter had formed, the first memorandum was sent down to troops urging them to isolate and report any appearance of Chinese soldiers in the ranks opposite. The memorandum caused many alarms and not a few excursions.[36]

Also in mid-July the "best intelligence in Hong Kong" reported that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth groups of General Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army were moving from Southeast China to Manchuria. The General himself was reported to be attending a high level military conference in Peiping during mid-July whereat the Chinese government reportedly decided to support the North Koreans militarily at some future date, short of all out war.[37]

---

[33] NYT, July 13, p. 4. General S.L.A. Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, has written: "In late July one unit fighting southwest of Taegu reported the capture of a Chinese soldier. Eighth Army sent an officer to interrogate him. He proved to be simply a Korean idiot afflicted with mongolism. These were typical incidents among many such; all were investigated and none stood up," p. 6.

[34] NYT, July 13, p. 4.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Marshall, loc. cit.

[37] Appleman, South to the Naktong, p. 759. See also, NYT, July 13, p. 4. Cf. post pp. 91, 107, 199.

Chinese troop movements, obviously, were well known but solid evidence on Chinese intent was scarce. Indeed, Indian Ambassador to the PRC, K. M. Panikkar reported to Nehru on July 15 that Mao still viewed the Korean issue as a "distant matter."[38] But, on July 17 the PRC began a vitriolic propaganda campaign against US involvement in the Far East, apparently intended to mobilize Chinese domestic support for future contingencies vis-à-vis Korea or Taiwan, although the Chinese did not specifically make a commitment to intervene in either area.[39] The Chinese emphasis continued to be on the issue of Taiwan and on July 21 PRC General Chen Yi declared that the Chinese would respond to American "aggression" on Taiwan by seizing the island militarily.[40]

In late July the PRC started an ambitious program to expand the Chinese air force.[41] Throughout the latter part of July, Chinese Nationalist reports concentrated on projected PRC moves against Taiwan, but it became increasingly clear to American intelligence agencies that such a move was unlikely given the American presence there. Indeed, by mid-August the chances that the PRC would invade Taiwan in 1950 seemed remote, so the area at issue was Korea.[42]

---

[38] NYT, July 15, p. 6.

[39] Rees, Korea, p. 105. See also Whiting, op. cit., pp. 80-4.

[40] NYT, July 21, p. 3.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Walter Karig, War in Korea, pp. 39-41. Karig suggests that the Chinese target date for such an invasion was August 15 and once that date passed the Formosa Straits became too rough for the Chinese to transport an invasion force. See also Whiting, op. cit., pp. 62-4.

During the first weeks of August the PRC continued its anti-American propaganda and Chinese officials stated that their five million man army was "yet destined to play a significant role in defending the peace of East Asia and the world."[43] Chinese military men were reported as being part of a military team directing North Korean forces,[44] and on August 2 PRC General Chu Teh, at a mass rally for the Red Army attended by the Soviet and North Korean ambassadors to the PRC, restated the Chinese policy of communist liberation.[45] In addition, he denounced action by the US 7th Fleet as "aggression against China," and denounced General MacArthur, indicating that the Chinese saw his visit to Taiwan as proof of American imperialism.[46]

Shortly thereafter, on August 8, General Willoughby reported to MacArthur that the Chinese had increased their regular troop strength to 217,000 in Manchuria.[47] On August 13, moreover, the PRC sent its first ambassador to North Korea who was, coincidentally, commander of the PRC's 39th Army.[48] At the same time an official Chinese news article stated official pessimism over developments in Korea,[49] and on

---

[43] NYT, August 1, p. 8.

[44] Ibid., p. 12.

[45] NYT, August 2, p. 6.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Willoughby, MacArthur, p. 400.

[48] Whiting, op. cit., pp. 25, 44, 81.

[49] NYT, August 16, p. 3.

August 14, US aircraft were reportedly attacked by PRC planes off the China coast.[50]

These events did not constitute Chinese intervention in Korea, but did portend that eventuality. Yet, the information reported should not be overstressed because the inherent danger signals were weak and indirect. For the most part the PRC's position was simply an anti-American propaganda campaign. Indeed, despite all the troop movement reports, between July 6 and August 8 barely 17,000 additional troops arrived in Manchuria, hardly an overwhelming number. In addition, the information coming from Nationalist Chinese sources lacked credibility for the simple reason that most of it was designed to serve the political purposes of Chiang Kai-shek. But, the information does show several significant trends. PRC attention was shifting from Taiwan to Korea, slowly and subtly while PRC hostility toward the American government also was increasing. Major troop movements within China were developing toward the Sino-Korean border, and the Chinese were becoming more insistent on their own participation in any Korean settlement.

More important from the standpoint of strategic intelligence, however, were the warning signals that had arisen and had been dismissed within the American government itself. As noted in the preceding section, George Kennan repeatedly raised important strategic issues which, if considered in the context of the trends reported here, deserved more careful evaluation than they apparently received. As the

---

[50] NYT, August 14, p. 3.

tendency within the government to consider such arguments decreased, so did the likelihood of a full, and complete evaluation of the intentions and capabilities of the Chinese and Soviets.

Pressures for Agreement

Increasingly, the pressures for conformity and unanimity within the government were subverting the intelligence process. Thus, the predisposition to unify Korea gained strength over time and became the overriding concern. Certainly, PRC propaganda solidified prevailing anti-communist sentiments and General MacArthur's optimistic outlook on the war, along with the activities of the China lobby, contributed to development of an offensive policy. The drive to satisfy prevailing political predispositions apparently became more important, or at least gained higher priority than the need to develop a prudent policy. Following are examples of the prevailing conflicts and reasons why adjustments in the government's policy failed to ameliorate the situation significantly.

The US government's refusal to negotiate with the PRC and the Soviets may not have enhanced the American international position, but it did solidify anti-communist sentiments within the government. US officials viewed Nehru's ingenuous peace proposal as part and parcel of the communist conspiracy and his inclusion of the PRC in the Korean matter re-affirmed American preconceptions that the Chinese government was a Soviet satellite. Chou En-lai continued to make known his desire to negotiate even after the US refused the Indian proposal, but, when

the matter arose in UN debates on August 2 the American government continued to insist that the Chinese issue was separate from the Korean issue. Yet, at the same time the American government denounced China's political attitude as amounting to aid for the North Koreans.[51] It is difficult to reconcile this contradiction between separating the two issues on the one hand and connecting them on the other, unless we emphasize the ideological character of American political views at the time.

Since the US position in the Far East was premised on an avoidance of a wider war the government naturally wanted to avoid a confrontation with the PRC. But, General MacArthur's visit to Taiwan jeopardized that goal. He aroused and inflamed Sino-American hostility to such an extent that President Truman sent Averell Harriman to Tokyo with the purpose of clarifying for MacArthur the government's policy in Asia. On August 6 Harriman conferred with MacArthur and attempted to explain that the US policy was to support and defend Chiang in such a way as to avoid provoking the PRC. But, MacArthur wanted to increase that support with more aid and a stronger public position. Harriman reported to the President,

> In all, I cannot say that he recognizes fully the difficulties, both within the world and within the East, of whatever moves we make <u>within China</u> in our position with the Generalissimo in Formosa. [Italics not in the original.]
>
> He suggested the President might reiterate his previous statements by threatening the Chinese Communists. . . . I told

---

[51] <u>NYT</u>, August 2, p. 15.

> him that if he wanted to make that recommendation to the President it was up to him, but I assured him that I would strongly recommended [sic] to the President against his doing so.[52]

So, MacArthur was reminded that he was a soldier, and technically in a non-political position, and subsequently, but tentatively, he agreed to follow the President's lead.

We could debate at length whether MacArthur's visit to Taiwan increased the likelihood of Chinese intervention but the question is purely speculative. What seems important here is that it signalled to the Chinese that the US government's anti-communist commitment was strongly held and potentially aggressive. And at the same time it created pressure within the government to come to a common agreement on policy. Given the President's approach to MacArthur, it seems clear that the pressures were not just one-way. MacArthur was not reprimanded in any formal sense for his visit to Chiang. Quite the contrary, he was brought into the higher levels of policy making (whether intended or not) by a personal visit from the President's special adviser. While it is obvious that MacArthur could not, by himself, determine US policy in the Far East, it is just as obvious that the President could not ignore MacArthur in the development of that policy. So, both the President and the General gave in just a little, but just enough to support a more offensive strategy, irrespective of the PRC.

---

[52]Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 352-3. See also Spanier, op. cit., pp. 71-3; Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur; and Rees, op. cit., pp. 55-76.

Indeed, at this conference the subject of possible Chinese intervention arose and was discussed. The President learned from Harriman that General MacArthur

> . . . feared that Russia and the Chinese Communists would be able to greatly strengthen the North Korean forces and that time was of the essence, or grave difficulties, if not disaster, were ahead. . . .
>
> He did not believe that the Russians had any present intention of intervening directly, or becoming involved in a general war. He believed the same was true of the Chinese Communists. The Russians had organized and equipped the North Koreans, and had supplied some of the trained personnel from racial Koreans of the Soviet Union who had fought in Red Army forces. The Chinese Communists had cooperated in the transfer of soldiers who had fought with the Chinese Communist forces in Manchuria. These had not come over as units, but had been released in Manchuria, and reorganized into North Korean forces after they had been transported to North Korea. Their leadership was vigorous. A number of Russian officers were acting as observers but undoubtedly giving direction. Their tactics had been skillful, and they were as capable and tough as any army in his military experience.[53]

General MacArthur emphasized that "victory must be attained rapidly" but that he had "no doubts of the political outcome, once there is victory."[54]

The President has written, "I was reassured. I told the press that the General and I saw eye to eye on Formosa policy."[55] Yet, MacArthur advocated a much stronger, and more dangerous position vis-à-vis China than the President himself wanted. And, whether Truman

---

[53]Harry Truman, loc. cit.

[54]Ibid., p. 351.

[55]Ibid., p. 354.

agreed or not, MacArthur intended to unify Korea. But, they shared generally the same anti-communist sentiments and desired mutually a victory over communism in Korea; so, the President and the General were able to reach an agreement on policy, at least officially. Thus, despite the dangers of Chinese or Soviet intervention, Truman was "reassured" because it was clear that unanimity of purpose prevailed within the government.

Through mutual reassurance they ignored the dangers posed by the PRC, but their agreement was a private, intra-governmental affair. The President's follow-up statement showed only that the two agreed on policy issues, and did not show the substance of those issues, at least to Chinese leaders. The President made no policy statement to, or about the PRC, so it was not clear publicly whether MacArthur had accepted Truman's unprovocative position, or whether Truman had adopted MacArthur's aggressive stance. The PRC had to speculate.

Throughout July and early August the predisposition for unification was strengthened by this kind of agreement and optimism about a military victory, which ignored important, on-going conflicts. The optimism simply was not justified on the basis of available evidence. Throughout this time US forces were on the brink of disaster in South Korea and General MacArthur's optimism stemmed largely from unverified premises he held about future contingencies. In particular, he heavily stressed the role that air power could, and would play in creating victory. General Collins has written that MacArthur

> . . . <u>hoped</u> to block off support to North Korea from Manchuria or China. He was <u>sure</u> that the Communists would try to

> reinforce the Koreans but was equally sure this could be prevented by medium bomber attacks.[56] [Italics not in original.]

MacArthur firmly believed and actively propounded this myth about his airpower and many other US officials came to share his hopes. He was a prestigious, persuasive man and his thinking promoted established policy goals, but there was no way to check whether he could do what he said he could do, and as we shall see, his myth had long range consequences.

By contrast to MacArthur, George Kennan's advocacy of political alternatives for resolving the Korean War were unsettling for US officials predisposed toward unification. He has written that he was "shouted down" when he attempted to discuss the feasibility of negotiations in July. The China lobby reinforced anti-communist political sentiments that contributed significantly to the outright rejection of his position and Kennan has written that this is an "instance of the damage done by the irresponsible and bigoted interference of the China lobby and its friends in Congress."[57] He has also written of the merits of his own position:

> The reader will recognize, of course, that had my view[s] been accepted, there would have been no advance by our forces

---

[56] Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 82.

[57] Kennan, op. cit., p. 520. See MacArthur Hearings, pp. 1972-3, 2071-4, 2116-21, 2188, 2202-3, 2235-7 for a discussion of the extensive corruption of the Nationalist Chinese government and its political allies. See also, Rees, loc. cit.

> to the Yalu, no Chinese intervention, but distinctly better prospects for an early termination of the conflict.[58]

The substance of Kennan's arguments are provocative and deserve careful attention but an explication of them goes beyond the scope of the present study. It is sufficient to note that although Kennan shared the anti-communist sentiments of his associates, his views were unpopular and were rejected because they contravened, indeed threatened the growing predisposition within the government to make an aggressive new change in America's war policy. Kennan's opposition was no match for the unanimity which supported that predisposition, as he has noted, "I found myself for the most part in a lonely position of single opposition to the views of my associates,"[59] but not entirely. Charles Bohlen (State Department Counselor) also argued against unification because it was a dangerous course. Bohlen has written that,

> We [he and Kennan] were particularly opposed to plans for a counterinvasion of North Korea. We warned that Communist countries would react strongly if hostile forces approached their borders. We had both China and the Soviet Union in mind, of course. Basic to our thinking was our conviction that the main objective of the leaders of Communist countries is preservation of the system. It was folly, Kennan and I argued, to take the chance of prodding China and/or the Soviet Union into a war.[60]

As Kennan put it, if the US attempted to unify Korea and move all the way to the Northern border (i.e. toward Russia and China), "the Russians

---

[58] Ibid., p. 524. Bohlen, Witness to History, p. 295, has also written, ". . . Kennan and I were correct in our prediction about Chinese intervention."

[59] Kennan, op. cit., p. 520.

[60] Bohlen, op. cit., p. 293.

would never under any circumstances agree to this."[61] "But," Bohlen has written, "we were in the minority."[62]

As Kennan saw the objective of unification beginning to take shape in July, he wrote

> Plainly, the government has moved into an area where there is a reluctance to recognize the finer distinctions of the psychology of our adversaries, for the reason that movement in this sphere of speculation is all too undependable, too relative, and too subtle to be comfortable or tolerable to people who feel themselves faced with the grim responsibility of recommending decisions which may mean war or peace. In such times, it is safer and easier to cease the attempt to analyze the probabilities involved in your enemy's mental processes or to calculate his weaknesses.[63]

Within a month the issue of unification had gained widespread support within the government even though the objective was only a remote possibility in Korea and despite the fact that the gap between the US and the PRC had widened. On August 14 Kennan concluded,

> Never before has there been such utter confusion in the public mind with respect to US foreign policy. The President doesn't understand it; Congress doesn't understand it; nor does the public, nor does the press. They all wander around in a labyrinth of ignorance and error and conjecture, in which truth is intermingled with fiction at a hundred points, in which unjustified assumptions have attained the validity of premises, and in which there is no recognized and authoritative theory to hold on to.[64]

Such a theory was clearly developing in the policy of unification, but it did not embody the ideas and thinking of Mr. Kennan.

---

[61] Kennan, op. cit., p. 516.

[62] Bohlen, op. cit., p. 292.

[63] Kennan, op. cit., p. 527.

[64] Ibid.

It was centered around the sentiment of anti-communism and by August 15, it was strong enough to encourage a public statement by Admiral Chester Nimitz (US adviser to Secretary General Trygve Lie at the UN) that UN forces "were unlikely to stop their attack on reaching the thirty-eighth parallel."[65] Thereafter, Kennan had little hope of influencing the development of US policy and terminated his service in the State Department at the end of August.

Conclusion

In sum, what can be said about American policy during this early phase of the war? To be sure the government was working to restore the status quo ante bellum and was not committed to unifying Korea; nor were the Chinese intervening, or committed to intervention. The record shows only that the American government was moving toward a policy of unification and that opposition to such a policy was diminishing within the government. That Kennan's arguments about the soundness of US policy were overwhelmingly opposed by other US officials shows the strength of their predispositions toward unification. Kennan's rational arguments were simply no match for prevailing political sentiments.

Irrespective of the "predisposition" for unification US planning was tentative and whatever may be said of this early phase there was no hard and fast decision to unify Korea. But, the possibility was gaining

---

[65] NYT, August 15, p. 8.

popular support from exposure in the framework of contingency planning that resulted in an initial commitment in the form of public statements favoring unification in mid-August. In other words, the existence of contingency plans for unification created pressures to change existing policy and were a form of decision making with a momentum of their own. Our data show that the government was pursuing a conscious management strategy for implementing changes in established policy, but that such changes could not be fully controlled or manipulated.

What this chapter shows is that the policy of unification was being chosen irrespective of whether it was feasible or not. And, because of the strength and nature of the political agreement about unification, US officials downgraded critical policy conflicts and ignored strategic information. Their tolerance of alternative points of view thus decreased while the strength of their commitment to unification increased.

CHAPTER IV

PHASE 2--THE PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO UNIFICATION

(August 17 - September 10)

This chapter explains the further evolution of the government's war policy from mid-August to mid-September during which time US officials committed themselves publicly to the objective of unification. As shown below, the commitment motivated the government to a course of action without at the same time reducing the risks involved and it encouraged US policy makers to discount and ignore information related to those risks.

The events reviewed here were a result of decisions made within the government at different points in time, some of which occurred prior to mid-August and created the context, or "environmental milieu" of policy making. In general, this was manifested in a motivation among policy makers to continue planning for unification in spite of (perhaps even because of) the fact that the battlefield situation and the possibility of Chinese intervention both were uncertain.

In effect, the objective of unification became a positive reference point in what was otherwise a negative policy of "preventing" a communist takeover in South Korea and "avoiding" a world war. Unification was, from the American standpoint, a far more desirable objective than restoration of the status quo ante bellum, since it was an outcome that could maximize American values within the limited context of Korea. It was a demonstrative way of turning the tables on the communists who had

not hesitated to propagandize their own ideological victory and who aimed much of their abusive rhetoric at the United States government. Thus, the plans for unification were a surrogate for offensive action on the battlefield that bolstered the morale of US officials.

But, as we have seen, once the planning began it was a form of action that increased and encouraged further investments in the policy objective. And, as long as there was widespread agreement among the planners on the value of the objective, there was a tendency to discourage dissenting debate, to ignore discrepant information and to stress renewed agreements. All of which contributed to an acceptance of higher military risks and heavier political investments.

Thus, there was by mid-August a nascent crisis that repeatedly escalated in terms of its threat to the government's overall policy. The crisis was manifest not only in the conflict between the PRC and the US but in the overriding predisposition toward agreement and reassurance that existed within the government. Continued pursuit of unification by the government led to further conflicts and contradictions on both counts that repeatedly were resolved by discounting information.

The Public Commitment

In mid-August the government publicly stated via the UN its preference for unifying Korea and shortly thereafter General MacArthur publicly restated and reinforced the American commitment to protect Taiwan. Following that, President Truman re-stated US interest in unification and de-emphasized American involvement in China to pave the

way for American action in North Korea. Throughout the period of mid-August to mid-September US officials continued planning for unification and continued collecting strategic intelligence on the possibility of Chinese intervention. We shall review these events in detail below.

Dean Acheson has written that the government's formal commitment to unify Korea ". . . represented a view that had been growing in the Far Eastern and United Nations divisions of the [State] Department during August. . . . [So] Ambassador Austin put up a trial balloon by a speech in the Security Council on August 17," stating American support for unification.[1] Austin not only suggested that Korea should be united under UN auspices, but called for nation-wide elections to be held after the fighting ended. He made it unmistakably plain that the US government favored a non-communist Korean government.[2]

Also on August 17, General MacArthur was requested by the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization to make an address to their annual national encampment. The formal statement he issued in response was political dynamite. Not only did he reinforce the government's support

---

[1]Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 454.

[2]Ibid.; see also George, "Chinese Communist Intervention," p. 16; Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur, p. 51; Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 591; Kennan, Memoirs, p. 516; Lichterman, "To the Yalu," p. 585; Rees, Korea, p. 99; Harry Truman, Years of Trial, pp. 379-80; Simmons, "Korean War," p. 20. Whiting has written: "Evidence of [a] . . . new Chinese policy . . . appears early enough to suggest that Sino-Soviet agreement was reached on Chinese Communist involvement in Korea, at least of a political kind, in advance of the August 17th statement by Austin." See Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, p. 87.

for Taiwan, he enunciated a wide ranging military doctrine based on American control of the island. He argued that Taiwan was essential to American strategic defense and that the US government should aid Chiang Kai-shek in harrassing the PRC. He felt that "in view of misconceptions being voiced concerning the relationship of Formosa to our strategic potential in the Pacific" the American policy should be clarified. He stated in part that,

> Nothing could be more fallacious than the threadbare argument by those who advocate appeasement and defeatism in the Pacific that if we defend Formosa we alienate continental Asia.
>
> Those who speak thus do not understand the Orient. They do not grant that it is in the pattern of Oriental psychology to respect and follow aggressive, resolute, and dynamic leadership--to quickly turn on a leadership characterized by timidity or vascillation--and they underestimate the Oriental mentality. Nothing in the last five years has so inspired the Far East as the American determination to preserve the bulwarks of our Pacific Ocean strategic position from future encroachment, for few fail accurately to appraise the safeguard such determination brings to their free institutions.[3]

The President learned of MacArthur's statement on August 26 via the White House Press Room, and was told that ". . . a weekly magazine was already in the mails with the full text."[4] Naturally,

---

[3]Richard Lowitt (editor), The Truman-MacArthur Controversy (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1967), p. 10. Previous to this, MacArthur had discussed his views of "Oriental psychology" with Averell Harriman, who reported to Truman: "He described the difference between the attitude towards death of Westerners and Orientals. We hate to die; only face danger out of a sense of duty and through moral issues; whereas with Orientals, life begins with death. They die quietly, 'folding their arms as a dove folding his wings, relaxing, and dying.'" See Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 351. The text of MacArthur's VFW message is reprinted in full in the MacArthur Hearings, pp. 3187-9.

[4]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 356.

Truman was outraged. The President has written that among other things he was disturbed by MacArthur's statement because it ". . . called for a military policy of aggression, based on Formosa's position. The whole tenor of the message was critical of the very policy which he had so recently told Harriman he would support." Moreover, Truman has written,

> It was my opinion that this statement could only serve to confuse the world as to just what our Formosa policy was, for it was at odds with my announcement of June 27, and it also contradicted what I had told the Congress. Furthermore, our policy had been reaffirmed only the day before in a letter which, on my instructions, Ambassador Austin had addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie.
>
> Austin's letter to Trygve Lie had made it plain that we had only one intention: to reduce the area of conflict in the Far East. General MacArthur's message--which the world might mistake as an expression of American policy--contradicted this.[5]

Thereupon, President Truman ordered MacArthur to withdraw his VFW message and the General complied forthwith. But, Truman felt that MacArthur should also be furnished with a "detailed exposition of our policy,"[6] sc he sent MacArthur a personal letter and a copy of the Austin letter, stating the American government's official policy toward China. The government argued several points:

(1) The US had not acted aggressively toward China.

(2) US intervention in the Formosa Straits was an "impartial neutralizing action" to protect UN forces fighting in Korea and to prevent a wider war.

---

[5]Ibid., p. 355. See MacArthur, Reminiscences, pp. 342-3. Spanier, Truman-MacArthur, pp. 76-7, discusses the political implications of MacArthur's VFW message.

[6]Harry Truman, loc. cit.

(3) The US favored "international action to determine . . . [the] future" of Taiwan and welcomed "United Nations consideration of the case. . . ," because the American government had a "record through history of friendship for the Chinese people."

(4) The American government's main concern was "to repel the aggression" in Korea.[7]

But, as the Austin letter was sent to Lie, MacArthur and the public press, other US officials made conflicting policy statements. On August 25, in contradiction to the Austin letter, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews publicly called for a preventive war in Asia to curtail Chinese involvement in communist expansions[8] and General Orville Anderson, Commandant of the Army War College, publicly called for preventive strikes in Asia with nuclear weapons.[9] Both officials were reprimanded for exceeding their political authority, but the damage to US policy was done. In addition, Admiral C. Turner Joy (Commander of American Naval forces in the Far East) publicly warned Peiping against

---

[7] Ibid., pp. 356-8.

[8] Acheson, op. cit., p. 478, notes that Matthews was relieved of his duties and "penalized" by being made Ambassador to Ireland. See also Higgins, op. cit., p. 40; Rees, op. cit., p. 75; Stone, Hidden History, p. 92; Ibid., p. 383; and Zelman, Bi-lateral Failure of Deterrence, p. 22.

[9] Acheson, loc. cit.; Stone, loc. cit., gives the date as September 1; Zelman, op. cit., p. 23, has written: "Exactly what the effect of such conflicting statements as [these] . . . had on Chinese thinking is difficult to assess. But it is reasonably clear that the Chinese were frequently unsure about who was expounding actual U.S. policy." Whiting has noted, however, that "the initial militancy came from Peking before these provocations. Hence one must consider the possible reasons for Chinese Communist willingness to participate diplomatically, and perhaps militarily, in the Korean venture as early as the first two weeks of August." See Whiting, op. cit., p. 87.

invading Taiwan and again pledged the US to defend the island.[10] These acts, along with MacArthur's statement, were clearly provocative of the PRC.

Ironically, though, the most significant conflict was in the substance of the Austin letter, originally intended to reassure the PRC. The stated American position on Taiwan seemed to reflect a new US interest: namely, an international (UN) settlement of the China issue, whereas in the past the American position had been that the issue was related to the internal affairs of China and should be settled by the Chinese themselves once the Korean War ended. Moreover, the US government again pointed to the fact that the Chinese were, by implication, related to, or involved in the Korean conflict. Thus the substance of the letter itself reduced the likelihood of the PRC being reassured.

And, a larger more important issue relating to MacArthur's VFW statement on the China issue was left unclarified by the Austin letter. As President Truman has written, MacArthur's statement appeared to be official policy because of the General's high position. According to the President,

> There can be only one voice in stating the position of this country in the field of foreign relations. This is of fundamental constitutional significance. General MacArthur, in addition to being an important American commander, was also the United Nations commander in Korea. He was, in fact, acting for and on behalf of the United Nations. That body was then debating the question of Formosa, and its members--even those outside the Soviet bloc--

---

[10] NYT, August 27, p. 7.

> differed sharply in their views regarding Formosa. It was hardly proper for the U.N.'s agent to argue a case then under discussion by that body.[11]

Yet, the Austin letter (released for public consumption) said nothing about this conflict, and in fact, the issue was not raised with General MacArthur, even though it was the main reason for Truman's concern. The President simply assumed that his authoritative pronouncement superseded MacArthur's and that the Chinese would understand it that way.

Naturally, an accurate understanding of the PRC's perception of this conflict in American politics deserves careful examination, but that would go beyond the scope of this study. Moreover, there are insufficient data to reconstruct, even approximately, Chinese perceptions. We shall note only that the conflict itself encouraged PRC hostility and distrust, while at the same time pressuring the American government to clarify more fully its intent in the Far East. Thus, by the end of August, Secretary Acheson viewed ". . . the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea as the 'chief danger' to world peace and American security." He stated publicly, "I think we cannot overemphasize the seriousness of that situation."[12]

---

[11]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 355.

[12]Paige, Korean Decision, p. 172, ff. 117. Whiting, op. cit., p. 85, has written that ". . . it would be difficult to cite the Resist American Invasion of Taiwan and Korea campaign as evidence of preparation for military intervention in the war." He points out that it ". . . did not mobilize the populace for war in Korea. At best it prepared the climate of opinion for any eventuality and tried to arouse hostility against the United States without alerting the country for action. The general design of Peking's propaganda at this time indicates that military action, particularly war with the United States, would have been undertaken with considerable reluctance on the part of

On August 30 he publicly declared that the US wanted to keep China out of the Korean War. According to one historical account,

> "The Government is being extremely careful," the Secretary told a news conference, "to avoid any action that might appear to the Chinese to be an aggressive, hostile or provocative step."
>
> "It would be clearly an act of aggression, on the other hand, for anyone to join with the North Korean Communists in their attack on the Republic of Korea. . . ."[13]

And, on September 1 President Truman restated US policy in a nation-wide broadcast. Truman has written,

> I declared that our aims and intentions could be put down in eight points: "1. We believe in the United Nations and pledge ourselves to seek peace and security through that organization. 2. We believe that Koreans have a right to be free, independent, and united. 3. We do not want the fighting in Korea to spread into a general war; it will not spread unless Communist imperialism draws other armies and governments into the fight of the aggressors against the United Nations. 4. We hope in particular that the people of China will not be misled or forced into fighting against the United Nations and against the American people who have always been and still are their friends. 5. We do not want Formosa or any part of Asia for ourselves. 6. We believe in freedom for all of the nations of the Far East. 7. We do not believe in aggression or in preventive war. 8. Our men are fighting for peace today in Korea; we are working constantly for peace in the United Nations and in all capitals of the world." [Italics not in original.][14]

---

both the regime and the people." Rovere and Schlesinger have noted also: "If there was genuine anxiety in Peiping, it seems far more likely that it was caused by our Formosa policy than by our Korea policy. If the anxiety was faked for propaganda reasons, then Peiping already had its case for entering the war." Rovere and Schlesinger, MacArthur Controversy, p. 150.

[13]Henrietta and Nelson Poynter (editors), China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1966 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 53.

[14]Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 358-9. See also NYT, September 1, p. 1; September 2, pp. 1, 4.

So, with euphemisms about freedom, friendship and peace, the President recommitted the government to unification while discounting PRC involvement in, or concern over, the development of US policy in Korea.

A public statement by Secretary Acheson on September 7 implied again that the US would sponsor the unification of Korea[15] and on September 8 UN Secretary General Lie added his public endorsement to the US policy objective.[16] On September 9 Dean Rusk (Under Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) called for general support of unification and on September 10 Secretary Acheson restated the objective, adding that Chinese intervention to prevent it would be "sheer madness."[17]

Thus, the official American commitment to unify Korea was publicly stated well in advance of a formal UN resolution specifically calling for such action, and, before American troops took the offensive. It was not until September 15, in fact, that US troops made any attacks outside the small beachhead they occupied near Pusan for three months. The political groundwork for unification was thus laid in the midst of confusion over American policy and uncertainty on the battlefield. It resulted, at least in part, from political pressures to clarify American policy and to produce consonance on that policy within the American

---

[15]Tsou, America's Failure in China, p. 570.

[16]Weng, Peking's UN Policy, p. 85.

[17]Rees, op. cit., p. 112; McLellan, "Dean Acheson," p. 20; Tsou, loc. cit.

government. Although the initial statements were tentative and vague, they added up to a real commitment.

The Intelligence Picture

The unification policy was formulated at a time when US officials were well aware that the PRC was becoming increasingly concerned about American policy in general, and about the Korean situation in particular. According to US Air Force historian Robert Futrell,

> The success or failure of the newly-stated mission of United Nations forces would depend upon the warlike intentions of the Chinese Communists and Russians. All summer long both the United States Central Intelligence Agency and the Far East Command intelligence officers had been posting the movements of Chinese troops into Manchuria. "That the enemy was shifting his forces northward," stated MacArthur, "I knew thoroughly."[18]

On August 16, 200,000 troops of General Lin Piao's Fourth Army were again reported moving toward Manchuria on the border of North Korea.[19] The PRC warned on the following day that any foreign vessels violating Chinese territory or air space would be fired on[20] and on August 18, PRC coastal batteries fired on a British warship in the Hong Kong area.[21] At the same time a report from Hong Kong news sources indicated that an agreement had been reached between Molotov and Mao

---

[18]Futrell, U.S. Air Force in Korea, p. 188. General MacArthur's view of the PRC as "the enemy" illustrates the militancy of his attitude and approach to the Chinese as early as August.

[19]NYT, August 16, p. 3.

[20]NYT, August 17, p. 3.

[21]NYT, August 18, p. 10.

on the Korean situation.

> The paper reported that the Korean understanding provided that should United Nations forces in Korea launch a full-scale counteroffensive carrying them beyond the Thirty-eighth Parallel the Chinese Communists would send 150,000 troops into Korea from Manchuria, with the Soviet Union supplying military equipment.[22]

This was the first public report that combined Chinese interest in the Korean War with a specific condition under which the Chinese would intervene. Also, the US Army was fully aware of Chinese troops concentrating in the North Korea-Manchuria area.[23]

In addition, the PRC was becoming more explicit about its concerns in Korea and about its position toward the US. In fact, Chou En-lai cabled Secretary General Lie on August 20 demanding PRC representation in the UN in order to have a hand in the development of a peace settlement in Asia.[24] He also cabled Jacob Malik (Soviet Ambassador to the UN) at the same time publicly denouncing the US government for preventing a settlement of the Korean War and accusing the US of starting the war in the first place.[25] Within two days the Chinese fired on US aircraft from positions north of the Yalu River[26]

---

[22] NYT, August 17, p. 4.

[23] Poynter, loc. cit.; Willoughby, MacArthur, p. 386.

[24] Whiting, op. cit., p. 79, 84-5, 106; Rees, op. cit., p. 76; Spanier, op. cit., p. 84; Zelman, op. cit., p. 8. See also George, op. cit., p. 20; and Goodrich, U.S. Policy in the U.N., p. 138.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Futrell, op. cit., p. 142; MacArthur Hearings, p. 3493.

and the PRC publicly admitted giving aid to the North Koreans.[27] Also, Malik attacked Austin's statement calling for unification, warning that such action would lead to a wider war in Korea.[28] Again, on August 24 the PRC cabled the UN protesting the presence of the US 7th Fleet in the Formosa Straits and charging the US with aggression.[29]

On August 26 US Army spokesmen issued a public statement on the concentration of Chinese troops, and "the Army's word on the long indicated movement of Chinese Red troops caused new speculation as to whether they might eventually plunge into a Far Eastern war."[30] Further, an August 26 article in the official Chinese publication World Culture indicated solidarity between the North Koreans and the PRC and committed the PRC to involvement in the settlement of the Korean

---

[27]Zelman, loc. cit.

[28]Whiting, op. cit., pp. 79, 90, 95; Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 172. Whiting has written that "one point seems certain . . . : Chou's cable of August 20th and Malik's warning of August 22nd ushered in a new co-ordinated Sino-Soviet strategy," p. 91. He also states that "after the chances of victory seemed past, Peking suddenly identified itself with Pyongyang's cause, demanding participation in U.N. discussions on the war, but still withholding military support. Peking's failure to act earlier or more vigorously is easier to explain than its decision to intervene politically in mid-August," p. 88.

[29]Rees, op. cit., p. 106; Spanier, op. cit., pp. 84-5; Poynter, loc. cit.; Weng, op. cit., p. 88.

[30]NYT, August 26, pp. 1, 3. According to the Times, some American "officials posed the possibility that the Chinese Communist troops had been moved to the Korean border as a precautionary measure in the event that the United Nations forces decided to drive past the Thirty-eighth Parallel toward Manchuria," p. 1.

issue.[31] US intelligence reports on August 27 showed that PRC units were ready to aid North Korea and possible PRC moves were forecast to General MacArthur by his intelligence agency.[32]

US air activity on the North Korean border of Manchuria prompted Chou En-lai to send an official protest directly to the US government, and to the UN, detailing American air violations over the Yalu. The note indicated that the Chinese saw the situation as "very serious."[33] This marked the first formal, direct communication between the PRC and the US and established a precedent for improved communication between the two governments. But, the American government refused to acknowledge the PRC note, indicating that the problem was a UN matter, and US officials publicly denied that American aircraft had crossed the Yalu.[34]

On August 27 two public news reports called attention to the possibility of Chinese intervention. One of these reports read as follows:

> Communist China hinted today that it might take a hand in the Korean War. A Chinese broadcast quoted the current issue of Today's Culture, a Peiping Communist organ, as having said:

---

[31]Rees, loc. cit.; Whiting, op. cit., pp. 70, 84-5; Zelman, loc. cit. Whiting has written that the "Chou En-lai cable of August 20th and the World Culture article of August 26th declared China an interested party with respect to Korea in an unequivocal and unprecedented manner," p. 86.

[32]Willoughby, op. cit., pp. 380-2, 286.

[33]Whiting, op. cit., pp. 97-9; Rees, op. cit., p. 76; Futrell, loc. cit.; Goodrich, loc. cit.; Spanier, loc. cit.; Stone, op. cit., p. 90; Zelman, loc. cit., has written that this and other PRC statements during August "are notable for their absence of warnings," Whiting, loc. cit., notwithstanding.

[34]Ibid.

> "It is impossible to solve the Korean problem without participation of its close neighbor, China." The Chinese people, it added, "cannot allow such aggressive acts of American imperialism in Korea."[35]

Henry Lieberman, New York Times correspondent in Hong Kong, reported at the same time on close cooperation between China and Russia, indicating that China was building up its relations with the North Koreans and was receiving military aid from the Soviets.[36]

On August 29 the official PRC radio denounced American aggression, claiming that the US was seeking a wider war in Asia[37] and a report from Nationalist Chinese sources indicated a PRC build-up in North Korea. The report read in part as follows:

> "It has now been definitely established," said the statement issued today, "that eight Chinese Red Armies, two cavalry divisions and one artillery division aggregating 270,000 men are concentrating on the Manchurian border and the territory of North Korea ready to fight on the side of the North Koreans. Three Russian equipped armies under Lin Piao, namely the Fifty-fifth, Fifty-sixth, and Fifty-seventh and another army of unknown designation [earlier intelligence reports have placed the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth in position for a crossing of the Yalu River border] are known to have crossed the Yalu River last month. Defense works of a permanent nature were reported to have been constructed along the Yalu River."[38]

---

[35] NYT, August 27, p. 10.

[36] Ibid., Section IV, p. 5.

[37] Spanier, loc. cit.; Tsou, op. cit., p. 567.

[38] NYT, August 29, pp. 1, 6.

US intelligence verified the fact that the number of PRC troops in Manchuria had increased to at least 246,000 by August 29,[39] but on August 30 Army spokesmen stated that they "had received no word on the massing of Chinese Communist forces in North Korea."[40] [Italics not in original.] That such troops were massing on the border, of course, they knew fully. In fact, General Willoughby

> reported on 31 August that ". . . sources have reported troop movements from Central China to Manchuria for some time which suggests movements preliminary to entering the Korean Theater." Eighty thousand men were reported assembling near Antung, just across the Yalu from Korea.[41]

Following the President's unification statement in early September, the US learned that the PRC might intervene militarily in Korea.[42] General MacArthur himself acknowledged that he was fully aware of Chinese troops being massed on the Manchurian frontier and knew Chinese capabilities at that time.[43] More specifically, American intelligence learned of a Chinese pledge to support North Korea if US forces approached the Yalu River.[44] In addition, public news reports

---

[39]Willoughby, loc. cit.; Futrell, op. cit., p. 188; Schnabel, Policy and Direction, p. 179; Zelman, op. cit., p. 5, indicates that there was no redeployment of Chinese troops into Manchuria during August.

[40]NYT, August 30, p. 27.

[41]Schnabel, loc. cit. According to Schnabel, "MacArthur continued to favor crossing the parallel even after . . ." Willoughby made his report.

[42]MacArthur Hearings, p. 1234.

[43]Ibid., p. 84. See also NYT, September 3, pp. 1, 12 and Section IV, p. 1.

[44]Appleman, South to the Naktong, p. 758.

focused on the disposition of PRC troops in Manchuria as well as on the development of the PRC's political position. A September 1 news dispatch observed that,

> The Chinese Communists are making troop dispositions that will enable them to intervene militarily in Korea if they wish.
>
> Chinese Communist military intervention in Korea may well occur . . . particularly when and if United States offensive operations threaten a North Korean defeat.[45]

Also, from Hong Kong Henry Lieberman observed on September 3 that PRC troop deployments in Manchuria were matched by formal protests over US bombing and strafing north of the Yalu River. He noted that PRC hostility toward the US was a natural follow-up to the American position taken in June vis-a-vis Taiwan, and that PRC involvement in Korea was forestalled primarily by ". . . the fact that the Peiping regime has not yet consolidated its control on the mainland. . . ."[46] In other words, Chinese military intervention to date had been forestalled more by Chinese domestic considerations than by American military power in Korea or the Formosa Straits. Lieberman noted further that Manchuria was the most important strategic area of China, and hostilities in North Korea were in this respect a threat to the PRC. His report read in part as follows:

> It is highly doubtful that the Chinese will remain immobile on the Manchurian side of the Yalu River should the United Nations troops press beyond the Parallel. In fact, danger exists that the Communists may move into Korea even before these troops

---

[45] NYT, September 1, pp. 4, 2.

[46] NYT, September 3, Section IV, p. 3.

> reach the Thirty-eighth Parallel on the assumption--accurate or inaccurate--that United Nations troops will proceed toward the Manchurian border.
>
> According to the best intelligence information here close to 200,000 Communist troops were shifted back to Manchuria from western and southern China in a movement that started just before the Korean war, and gathered momentum shortly thereafter. There is no question that the Chinese Communists have the troops and equipment to make the Korean war much more difficult for the United Nations.[47]

Another news dispatch warned of the dangers of a protracted war due to Chinese intervention in Korea reporting on September 3 that the decisive factor would probably be an American move across the 38th Parallel.[48]

Shortly following these reports, Army intelligence learned that PRC forces would probably be committed to save the North Korean Army. According to US Army historian Roy Appleman,

> On 8 September the daily intelligence summary included a report of the Chinese Nationalist Ministry of Defense G-2 [military intelligence division] that if the outcome of the war seemed doubtful, elements of Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army probably would be committed.[49]

In addition, a news dispatch reported that 300,000 PRC troops were moving toward the Sino-Korean border.[50] Yet, on this same day the US State Department press officer, Michael J. McDermott, reported publicly that the American government "had no information shedding any light

---

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., pp. 3, 5.

[49] Appleman, loc. cit.; Willoughby, op. cit., p. 386.

[50] NYT, September 8, p. 6.

on the intentions of the Chinese Communists because the United States Government had not communicated with them. . . ."[51]

However, in mid-September, the government gathered more specific information on Chinese intentions. Appleman has written,

> The Far East Command learned . . . of an alleged conference in mid-July in Peiping where it was decided to support North Korea short of war. Chou En-Lai was quoted, however, as having said that if the North Koreans were driven back to the Yalu, the CCF [Chinese Communist Forces] would enter Korea. Far East Command intelligence, in commenting on this report, said that the Chinese Communist authorities apparently were worried over Korea and would regard a U.N. advance to the Yalu as a "serious threat to their regime."[52]

The implications of this report are obvious, but the report itself does not show Chinese intent to intervene for certain.

None of the information reviewed above clearly and unquestionably shows Chinese intervention in Korea. Nor does it show that the Chinese government was irrevocably committed to such a course of action. Indeed, some of the information was from sources that were not entirely reliable and might be discreditable on that ground. But it does reflect important trends in the developing situation that could be taken as strategic intelligence relating to a possible Sino-American confrontation.

The Chinese troop masses on the Sino-Korean border were an obvious danger signal. The repeated reports on Chinese concerns, Chinese planning and Chinese propaganda were, at least, consistent with developments that portended (if it did not already show) some form of

---

[51] Ibid.

[52] Appleman, loc. cit. Cf. ante p. 58. Cf. post pp. 107, 199.

overt Chinese involvement in Korea. Moreover, the increase in PRC troop strength by nearly 30,000 (from 217,000 on August 8 to 246,000 on August 31 according to US Army intelligence) showed an increase in the rate of change over time.

What adjustments were made by the government to these changes in the strategic picture is not entirely clear from available data. Apparently most were in the form of re-stating, or clarifying US policy in the Far East. But, as noted in the preceding section, these kinds of adjustments appear not to have had the intended effect of diminishing Peiping's hostility or decreasing Chinese motivation to intervene. Many US policy statements reiterated the American desire to unite Korea, but that was a policy contingency prolific of danger for the American government because it ultimately threatened Chinese and Russian interests in the northern border area.

Despite critical policy conflicts with the PRC and increasing signs of PRC concern over US action in Korea, the American predisposition toward unification continued to be strongly held and widely shared by government officials. And, the repeated public statements on unification had the effect of strengthening the American commitment to unification. Thus, US policy making became increasingly geared toward maintaining and actualizing that commitment and US planners simply discounted the danger of Chinese intervention when it threatened the goal of unification. They took whatever action necessary to avoid damaging or relinquishing that commitment, as shown, in particular,

by government planning for a counter-offensive and follow-up operations in Korea.

The Offensive Strategy

As noted in the preceding chapter, General MacArthur began planning in July for a counter offensive, proposing an amphibious landing at Inchon on the western coast of South Korea (near the capital of Seoul, and just below the 38th Parallel). By August 15 the battle-field situation appeared stabilized so MacArthur's planning continued in earnest.

On August 21, one day after Chou's official protest to the UN, General Collins and Admiral Forrest Sherman (Navy Chief of Staff) met with General MacArthur in Tokyo and agreed that a landing at Inchon should be followed by movement across the 38th Parallel. In the ensuing debate in Tokyo on August 23 the strategic problems of landing at Inchon and crossing the Parallel were discussed but American military leaders agreed that destruction of the North Korean army and government was the appropriate military objective in Korea, and that Korea should be unified.

In debating the plans for Inchon, the question of Chinese intervention arose. According to Futrell,

> During the summer of 1950 General MacArthur's intelligence officers had not been blind to the "sinister" connotations of a growing Chinese Communist order of battle in Manchuria, and the Inchon planners recognized that Chinese Communist entry into action at the time of the invasion at Inchon might be fatal to the United Nations Command. General MacArthur, however,

> was willing to gamble that the Inchon operation would surprise both the North Koreans and the Chinese Communists.[53]

Air Force General Stratemeyer was particularly concerned about the possibility of Chinese involvement, since intelligence reports at the time showed a build-up of Chinese aircraft in the Antung area on the Sino-Korean border and because of the Chinese protest notes about US overflights there.

> General Stratemeyer warned that the Chinese protest note could well be the final indication that the Chinese Communists intended to carry out their announced determination to aid the North Korean invaders. Stratemeyer notified Generals Partridge and O'Donnell that he considered Chinese air and ground assistance to the hard pressed North Koreans to be a "distinct possibility."
>
> The General was fully convinced of the danger of Communist air intervention.[54]

Despite Air Force awareness of this situation, MacArthur insisted that his air power could reduce the possibility of Chinese intervention. Yet, he himself has written that in August,

> The pattern and density of the enemy's supply and reinforcement movement showed that heavy tonnage was coming from Chinese Manchuria and Russian Siberia, through Seoul, in spite of our bombing and strafing.[55]

There is no evidence that this reality was given "in depth" consideration by the Far East Command. MacArthur simply assumed that more bombs would be more effective.

---

[53]Futrell, op. cit., pp. 141-2.

[54]Ibid.

[55]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 346.

The plans laid by MacArthur for a counter-offensive were beset by even deeper, more fundamental dangers. Indeed, the group of military leaders who discussed the issue on August 23 in Tokyo generally agreed that MacArthur's proposed landing at Inchon was an incredible gamble entailing extremely high risks. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and high ranking officers of the Far East Command itself pointed out a plethora of dangers but General MacArthur was predisposed toward Inchon because it could "achieve a quick and decisive victory over the enemy,"[56] that would lead to unification.

MacArthur "showed extreme optimism in describing the probable effects upon the enemy of a landing . . . "[57] at Inchon and was convinced that it would strategically surprise the North Koreans, reverse the war, and set the stage for a quick defeat of North Korea followed by unification of the country. He knew full well the dangers but when he discussed the situation "he omitted any mention of the hazards. . . ," and emphasized the possible effects on the North Koreans, especially the ". . . tremendous political and psychological advantages to be gained by retaking the Korean capital. . . ."[58] He ignored the dangers because he was heavily committed to "victory" and all that it entailed, especially unification. His arguments in favor of the offensive were accepted by his superiors because they shared that commitment.

---

[56]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 150.

[57]Ibid., p. 153.

[58]Ibid., p. 150.

Indeed, MacArthur's argument was persuasive because he appealed to the widely shared, strongly held political sentiments of his military and civilian associates. In the August 23 conference on Inchon General MacArthur discussed ". . . the reasons why the landing should be made at Inchon and . . . the tactical conditions which favored its success. . . ."[59] But his most persuasive argument was political. He argued that a possible junction between UN forces fighting around Pusan ". . . would be 'dramatically symbolic of the complete collapse of the enemy.'" When the decision to authorize the Inchon operation came down to a matter of "yes" or "no," he persuaded his superiors to accept the risk with a passionate, emotional statement that appealed to prevailing anti-Communist sentiment. He stated:

> The prestige of the Western world hangs in the balance. Oriental millions are watching the outcome. It is plainly apparent that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest. The test is not in Berlin or Vienna, in London, Paris or Washington. It is here and now--it is along the Naktong River in South Korea. We have joined the issue on the battlefield. Actually, we here fight Europe's war with arms, while there it is still confined to words. If we lose the war to Communism in Asia, the fate of Europe will be gravely jeopardized. Win it and Europe will probably be saved from war and stay free. Make the wrong decision here--the fatal decision of inertia--and we will be done. I can almost hear the ticking of the second hand of destiny. We must act now or we will die.[60]

General Collins has written,

> The brilliant exposition left the general's audience spellbound. Admiral Joy later recounted, "I must admit that after I had listened to this eloquent and passionate soliloquy,

---

[59] Ibid.

[60] MacArthur, op. cit., p. 350.

> my personal misgivings about the choice of Inchon were erased. I believe the General had persuaded me, and all others in the room--with possible exception of Admiral Sherman--that Inchon could be successful."[61]

But, General Collins himself has noted, "I was favorably impressed but still had some reservations."[62] Admiral Forrest Sherman "commented 'If every possible geographical and naval handicap were listed--Inchon has 'em all.'"[63] Yet, everyone present accepted the military risks and the Inchon landing was tentatively authorized on August 28 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[64]

The authorization, the acceptance, the agreement all came reluctantly and reservedly from MacArthur's associates who seemed intent on avoiding direct responsibility for the "5000-to-1" Inchon landing. But, whatever the reluctance of MacArthur's associates, they accepted

---

[61] Collins, op. cit., p. 126.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., p. 123; see also MacArthur, op. cit., p. 348.

[64] Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 150-1; see also pp. 146-50 for a full discussion of the Inchon planning. See also Futrell, op. cit., pp. 140-4; MacArthur Hearings, pp. 346-54; Rees, op. cit., pp. 79-83; and Spanier, op. cit., pp. 78-80. See especially Collins, op. cit., pp. 118-28. While MacArthur was planning this risky operation, US troops in South Korea were barely able to maintain a beachhead there. In fact, throughout the month of August and even as the Inchon operation was being launched, US forces were threatened with disaster. Thus, if Inchon failed, the government faced a total defeat in South Korea. Schnabel reviews the military situation during August and September on pages 115-45 and 155-75. The uncertainty of the battlefield situation undoubtedly played a large part in encouraging opposition to MacArthur's plans for Inchon.

the military risk because they agreed with his political sentiments and because they shared his strong political commitment.

The tactical risks of the Inchon operation were ignored, but the danger of Chinese intervention continued to be understood and recognized by US policy makers. In fact, the National Security Council studied on September 1 the possibility of crossing the 38th Parallel and stressed the threat of Chinese intervention and the need for contingency plans to deal with the PRC. The study pointed out that the only way to handle a major confrontation would be to stabilize fighting at the 38th Parallel.

In other words, the NSC recognized the fact that Chinese intervention affected the feasibility of unifying Korea, but at the same time failed to find a satisfactory solution for circumventing that uncomfortable reality because of the existing commitment to unification. General Collins, who reviewed the study, commented that it

> . . . was a long, somewhat rambling paper, whose central idea was that conditions were too uncertain for the United States to commit itself to any definite course of action.
>
> This curiously contradictory document received a cold review by the JCS [who thought that stopping at the parallel would solve nothing while a drive to the Yalu would unify Korea and defeat the NKPA]. The chief contra argument that we considered was that an extension of operations to the north would provide additional excuse for Soviet recalcitrance in the United Nations and could lead to the active intervention of the Soviets or the Chinese Communists.[65]

The political implications were clearly undesirable from the standpoint of unification so the JCS suggested that the matter be given further

---

[65]Collins, op. cit., pp. 144-5.

study. Simply, no one wished to make conclusions that would cancel the political commitment to unification.

On September 8 the Inchon landing was given final Presidential approval,[66] and on September 11 the President and the NSC tentatively approved a possible crossing of the 38th Parallel.[67] On September 15 the Inchon offensive was launched. According to Army historian James Schnabel, General MacArthur commented just prior to the offensive: "'I and all my commanders and staff officers, without exception are enthusiastic and confident of the success of the enveloping operations.'"[68] Yet, Schnabel has noted, "MacArthur planned his bold amphibious venture sustained only by hope, credit, and promises."[69]

Clearly, the government began its offensive operations fully aware of the dangers facing it, including the possibility of Chinese intervention. But, the launching of the Inchon offensive was entirely consistent with US policy. Indeed, from the American standpoint, an offensive was absolutely necessary not only for unification, but for restoration of the status quo ante bellum. But this obvious necessity for the offensive obscured a fundamental issue: namely, Inchon was an extremely high risk operation chosen not because it was the only

---

[66] Ibid., pp. 127-9; Rees, op. cit., p. 85; Schnabel, op. cit., p. 154.

[67] Rees, op. cit., pp. 99, 121; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 584; Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 359; Weng, loc. cit.; Spanier, op. cit., p. 95; and Collins, op. cit., p. 146.

[68] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 154.

[69] Ibid., p. 155.

alternative but because it was the best one for creating a decisive, symbolic victory over the communists and for promoting Korean unification. It was a logical outgrowth of the government's commitment to unification.

Indeed, the entire basis of American planning and action from August 17 to September 15 seems to have been geared toward maintaining and expanding that commitment. The repeated public statements of US officials in favor of a "free and united" Korea created a positive incentive to cross the parallel. By contrast the public commitment of US prestige created a negative incentive for giving it up. American policy makers were committed, and General MacArthur was optimistic of victory, so the government's overriding concern shifted from the issue of whether US forces could hold a beachhead, to the issue of how soon a victory could be won. And, when the focus of official concern shifted, the predisposition to unify Korea increased. Once US prestige was publicly linked to that predisposition, the government was committed, at least enough to bias decision making in favor of unification. So, the planning for a unified Korea gained support and momentum.

Conclusion

In sum, the government was clearly moving toward implementation of its plans for unification by mid-September fully cognizant of the Chinese threat. This is not to say that the government was irrevocably committed or over committed. The military approach was risky, to be sure, but it was a step-by-step operation and even though unification

was studied two months prior to Inchon, MacArthur's orders did not include provisions for military operations north of the 38th Parallel when he first took the offensive. Nevertheless, Inchon was a political move, as well as a military gamble, and the political implications were well understood by the military planners.

The nature of the American "commitment" to unification was conditional by mid-September. It was still a contingency plan but it was no longer a secret. Unification was a month old public policy proposal that had the strength of official American backing in the UN. Whether US officials intended for it to gain high visibility and clarity so quickly, so early is subject to debate. Certainly, the fact that the August 17 "trial balloon" was followed in late August and early September by repeated US statements in favor of unification shows that the government was becoming committed even if those statements were only to sound-out public reaction. Available evidence suggests that the American commitment was reinforced partly as a result of pressures created within the American government, as shown by General MacArthur's outspoken position vis-a-vis Taiwan.

At the same time, however, MacArthur's position brought into focus the problem of US policy toward China at a time when US policy makers were dealing with the touchy issue of unification, so they could not avoid recognizing the relationship (or discrepancy) between the two policy problems. Certainly, the government's policy as stated in the Austin letter and in the President's September 1 speech confronted this critical issue. Given the wording and timing of those

two statements, the government's strategy apparently was to keep its policy options open by reassuring the PRC without abandoning the goal of unification.

In view of what was known at the time about Chinese interests, attitudes, intentions and capabilities, such a strategy is difficult to understand unless we emphasize the ideological and affective character of American policy as it was manifested in the growing commitment to unification. That commitment not only reflected official values but motivated US policy makers toward choices that supported it and away from decisions that threatened it. In the decision making process, therefore, they chose to discount and ignore intelligence on the possibility of Chinese intervention. While they perceived themselves as having the situation fully under control they were progressively obligating themselves to unification without reducing the risks it entailed. Although they thought they were keeping their options open they were actually losing decisional flexibility by setting in motion government machinery for actualizing their political plans and promises.

CHAPTER V

PHASE 3--HEIGHTENED EXPECTATIONS OF VICTORY

(September 15 - October 14)

We have seen thus far how the American government's prestige became linked to Korean unification. Official public statements favoring such an outcome of the war committed the US government to a new objective, but not in an irrevocable or unalterable way. The objective was a contingency consistent with overall US policy goals and was treated as tentative until American troops took the offensive on September 15. But then, the summer contingency plans were activated.

On September 15 MacArthur's Inchon landing succeeded beyond all expectations, scoring the dramatic military and political reversal of the war he had promised. It completely surprised and routed the North Korean army, setting the stage in two weeks for ground action north of the 38th Parallel. The victory by American troops and their subsequent movement toward the Parallel increased the possibility of unification, creating an atmosphere of euphoria and heightened expectations, which subsequently began to interfere with the way strategic intelligence on Chinese intervention was handled. As will be shown, those expectations guided policy making and predetermined official judgments about the contingencies of unification and Chinese intervention.

For the period September 15 to October 14 we can reconstruct clearly the kind of strategic intelligence reaching US officials and, in some instances, we can observe how they responded to specific bits

of information. On the following pages we will review available data on the strategic intelligence picture, discuss the way US officials adjusted to the possibility of Chinese intervention, and consider how they viewed unification.

The Chinese Response to Inchon

September 15 marked the beginning of the end of the North Korean army as a major factor in settling the Korean War. And, it marked the beginning of a period during which the PRC showed explicit concern over the war and initiated a commitment to intervene. Allen Whiting, in his study of Chinese intervention, has written that "in the aftermath of Inchon, Peking steadily increased the signs of its interest in the fate of North Korea."[1] In other words, the PRC's commitment to aid North Korea was increasing as the capability of the North Korean army decreased.

Following the September 15 offensive, General MacArthur issued his fourth report to the United Nations, covering the military situation from August 16 to August 31. In it he specifically charged the PRC with having supplied personnel for the North Korean Army, thereby acknowledging Chinese involvement and publicly linking the North Korean defeat to the PRC's international political prestige.[2] The PRC then

---

[1]Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, p. 104.

[2]This charge was presented to the UN Security Council on September 18, 1950. MacArthur's report is reprinted in the MacArthur Hearings, pp. 3398-3402. See also NYT, September 19, p. 1; Poynter, China and U.S. Far East Policy, p. 54; and Ibid., p. 105. Clark Lee

took a more active, more public involvement in the matter. On September 17, the PRC unequivocally stated its position on UN action in Korea in a cable from Chou En-lai to the UN Security Council, warning that any UN action taken without PRC participation was "illegal, null and void."[3] Shortly thereafter, US intelligence in Korea reported PRC troop strength on the Sino-Korean border to have increased to 450,000.[4]

On September 22, for the first time, the PRC Foreign Affairs Ministry openly admitted transfer of PRC troops to North Korea and pledged solidarity with the DPRK. According to Whiting's study of PRC policy,

> This was the first official PRC comment on the war issued primarily for foreign consumption since Chou En-lai's protests over the alleged border incidents of late August. . . . the timing and content of the September 22nd statement suggest it was intended to allay Western doubts about Chinese Communist willingness to assist in North Korea's defense.[5]

Such doubts as might exist were again attacked on the following day, when Jen min jih-pao publicly argued a case for PRC assistance to North Korea. Whiting has written that

---

and Richard Henschel, in their book Douglas MacArthur (New York: Holt, 1952) have written that MacArthur felt shortly after Inchon that "if the Chinese Communists entered the war . . . the landing would be 'not one of the short list of decisive battles of the world, but merely a preliminary to that catastrophe,'" p. 203.

[3]Weng, Peking's UN Policy, p. 88.

[4]Futrell, U.S. Air Force in Korea, p. 188.

[5]Whiting, loc. cit. See also Rees, Korea, p. 106 and Tsou, America's Failure in China, p. 572.

> . . . this authoritative newspaper strengthened the alert signal in the most closely argued rationale for supporting Pyongyang that had yet appeared. As the situation deteriorated in Korea, Peking increased its public commitment to Pyongyang both abroad, so as to deter invasion of the DPRK, and at home, so as to prepare the populace for action should deterrence fail.[6]

A news dispatch reported on September 23 that an official PRC spokesman had pledged, "we shall forever stand on the side of the Korean people."[7] Again on September 24 the Chinese government was reported as preparing for military involvement in Korea and Chou En-lai cabled the UN protesting American air violations of PRC territory, accusing the US of wanting to extend the war to China.[8] Peiping radio followed this on September 25 with a denunciation of the US position by PLA General Nieh Jung-gen, who indicated that the PRC was committed to defending Chinese interests despite American military power. Speaking to Indian Ambassador Pannikar in Peiping, the General pointedly told him that the Chinese government was undeterred by US military power even though the PRC recognized that nuclear weapons might be used against China.[9] Meanwhile, Chinese troops continued moving toward Manchuria.[10]

---

[6]Whiting, op. cit., p. 106.

[7]NYT, September 23, p. 2.

[8]NYT, September 24, p. 7. See also Whiting, op. cit., p. 107.

[9]Lichterman, "To the Yalu," p. 590. See also NYT, September 25, p. 6; Rees, op. cit., pp. 106-7; Spanier, Truman-MacArthur Controversy, p. 85; Tsou, loc. cit.; Whiting, loc. cit.; and Zelman, Bi-lateral Failure of Deterrence, p. 8.

[10]Lichterman, op. cit., p. 572.

But, whether PRC pronouncements were expressions of intent to intervene or simply propagandistic outbursts was not clear even by late September. Their statements were a mixture of both and, as such, helped increase Sino-American hostility. For example, Henry Lieberman reported from Hong Kong on September 26 that the PRC was

> . . . acutely concerned over the possibility that United Nations forces may cross the Thirty-eighth Parallel and advance to the Manchurian border. [He noted that the PRC radio had again denounced the US] and pledged solidarity with the defeated North Koreans. A PRC broadcast had stated, "The Chinese people will never forget this blood debt and they will certainly make American imperialists repay it."[11]

Nevertheless, the US government had other "hard" intelligence showing Chinese intentions. On September 27 the US Army's "daily intelligence summary reported an alleged high level conference on 14 August, at which it had been decided to provide 250,000 CCF [Chinese Communist Forces] troops for use in Korea."[12] In addition, the PRC continued making public statements in late September threatening military involvement. On September 30 Chou En-lai publicly declared in a major foreign policy address that, "the Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded."[13] In other words, the post

---

[11] NYT, September 26, p. 17.

[12] Appleman, South to the Naktong, p. 758. See also Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 174 and MacArthur Hearings, p. 1234. Cf. ante, pp. 58, 91.

[13] Tsou, op. cit., pp. 572-3. See also Collins, op. cit., p. 172; Goodrich, U.S. Policy in the U.N., p. 139; Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur, p. 54; Rees, loc. cit.; Spanier, op. cit., pp. 85-6, who gives the date incorrectly as September 31; and Whiting, op. cit., pp. 107-8. Appleman, op. cit., p. 608 gives the date October 1.

Inchon PRC position showed increasing concern over the North Korean defeat and the evidence cited above suggests that the probability of Chinese intervention increased significantly.

The American Offensive in September

As shown above, the American government was pursuing at this time an offensive military strategy for settling the war, and official US concern over possible Chinese intervention was diminished by the euphoria of a temporary victory. Although the US government did not commit troops to North Korea in late September, American officials hardened their commitment to pursue unification through specific decisions taken at that time.

In the aftermath of Inchon General MacArthur's immediate concern was to restore the South Korean government at Seoul as a symbolic display of the American victory and as a sign of support for the non-communist South Korean government. In fact, "General Almond, under pressure from General MacArthur, pushed his forces to take the capital quickly," [italics not in the original] despite higher battle costs from heavy enemy resistance.[14] Indeed, Almond had been selected personally by MacArthur to direct the campaign for that political purpose. Apparently, General MacArthur felt that the symbolic restoration of the South Korean government would mobilize political support for unification, and, certainly, he made a strong personal effort to dramatize the

---

[14]Schnabel, Policy and Direction, p. 184.

American victory. He instructed General Almond to prepare for official restoration ceremonies, stating: "'There will be no invocation or benediction necessary as the spiritual features are embodied in my own address.'"[15] When the ceremonies were held both the US State and Defense Departments

> . . . noted with surprise and alarm that the American flag had been displayed with undue prominence over the ROK Capitol during the ceremonies, and complained that this placed too great an emphasis on the nature of the Korean War as a United States, rather than a United Nations, operation.[16]

Ironically, it appears that US officials were concerned lest MacArthur's activities undermine their carefully laid groundwork for unification!

After Inchon, certainly, US planners agreed that unification was more desirable than it had been at any other time, so the State and Defense Departments both "urged and approved" a move across the 38th Parallel; and, the President's advisers "were agreed upon pursuit" of the North Korean army.[17] On September 20, Secretary Acheson publicly restated American intent to unify Korea,[18] and on September 23 and 25 (the same dates when Chinese officials made warning statements)

---

[15] Ibid., p. 185.

[16] Ibid. See also Rees, op. cit., pp. 90-7 who discusses the "terrible liberation" of Seoul. As shown by statistics presented in the MacArthur Hearings, the period following Inchon and the liberation of Seoul was one of the highest US casualty periods comparable to the period following the Yalu disaster, see pp. 3258-97.

[17] Neustadt, Presidential Power, p. 127. See also Collins, op. cit., pp. 99-100 and Lichterman, op. cit., pp. 584-5.

[18] Rees, op. cit., pp. 100-1.

US intelligence agencies concluded that Chinese intervention was improbable.[19] Given the timing and nature of these estimates, it seems clear that the judgments of US intelligence agencies supported, if they were not determined by, the overriding political predisposition for pursuing unification.

The plans for crossing the parallel, approved by the President on September 11, were then put into effect, with full recognition by the American government of the dangers involved. In fact, US policy makers were "convinced that any crossing of the 38th Parallel by General MacArthur would evoke certain reactions from Russia."[20] [Italics not in the original.]

Yet unification was pursued anyway. Available evidence supports the hypothesis that this was because the action satisfied pre-existing political desires, commitments and expectations on the part of US officials. To be sure, it was a political preference and not a military necessity. As army historian Schnabel has pointed out,

> it was definite that the United States did not want its resources tied up in Korea, an area regarded as of little strategic importance, if general war came [and] Truman's top advisers did not consider crossing the parallel to be a necessary ingredient of victory.[21]

Only after MacArthur began moving rapidly toward the 38th parallel did it become "a matter of military urgency" that he be given explicit

---

[19] MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833.

[20] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 178.

[21] Ibid., pp. 178-9.

instructions on whether or not to cross.[22] Then, he was given such authority by the JCS in orders that General Collins has described as being "designed to avoid any excuse for direct Communist intervention."[23] In fact, he was ordered ". . . to make a special effort to determine whether China intended to intervene."[24] President Truman has summarized the orders, sent to MacArthur on September 27, as follows:

> . . . he was authorized to conduct military operations north of the 38th parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operation there had been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement of an intended entry, and no threat by Russian or Chinese Communists to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. He was also instructed that under no circumstances were any of his forces to cross the Manchuria or U.S.S.R. borders of Korea, and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean ground forces were to be used in the provinces bordering on the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Similarly, support of his operations north or south of the 38th parallel by air or naval action against Manchuria or against U.S.S.R. territory was specifically ruled out.
>
> He was additionally instructed, in the event of the open or covert employment of major Chinese Communist units south of the 38th parallel, you should continue the action as long as action by your forces offers a reasonable chance of successful resistance.[25] [Italics not in original.]

---

[22] Ibid., p. 181.

[23] Collins, op. cit., p. 173.

[24] Ibid., p. 174.

[25] Harry Truman, Memoirs, Volume II, pp. 359-60. Rees has noted that, "the only alternatives seemed to be either ruling North Korea as a virtual colony of the UN until elections were held, or abandoning it to the Communists and so presenting the UN with the very conditions which had started the war in the first place," see Rees, op. cit., p. 102.

In addition, the Army's history of events indicates that General MacArthur's orders included the following provision:

> You will not discontinue Air and Naval operations north of the 38th Parallel merely because the presence of Soviet or Chinese Communist troops is detected in a target area, but if the Soviet Union or Chinese Communists should announce in advance their intention to reoccupy North Korea and give warning, either explicitly or implicitly, that their forces should not be attacked, you should refer the matter immediately to Washington.[26] [Italics not in original.]

Clearly, the possibility of Chinese intervention was recognized and accepted with these circuitous provisions.

The government's strategy was to emphasize through propaganda the government's peaceful and benevolent intentions in unifying Korea, and to stress UN involvement as a protective shield against foreign intervention. Schnabel has written that,

> MacArthur was directed to use all information media at his command to turn "the inevitable bitterness and resentment of the war-victimized Korean people" away from the United Nations and to direct it toward the Communists, Korean and Russian, and, "depending on the role they play," the Chinese Communists.[27]

But, MacArthur was cautioned by Secretary Marshall against any public announcement of US intentions to cross the parallel, stating in a message to the General:

> 'Announcement . . . may precipitate embarrassment in the United Nations where evident desire is not to be confronted with the necessity of a vote on passage of the 38th parallel.' Secretary Marshall left no doubt, however, as to how he himself felt about the crossing when he said, 'We want you to

---

[26]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 182.

[27]Ibid.

> feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of the 38th parallel.'[28]

Thereupon, General MacArthur warned General Walton Walker operating in Korea:

> 'The matter is of such delicacy,' he told the Eighth Army Commander, 'that all reference thereto will be made either from GHQ or direct from Washington.' And in answer to the Secretary of Defense MacArthur replied that he had cautioned Walker against 'involvement connected with nomenclature.'[29]

He made it clear to Washington, though, that he regarded "all of Korea" open for military operations, and, informing the JCS of his plans on September 28, reported "that there was no indication of 'present entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces.'" [Italics not in original.] As Schnabel has noted, however:

> The actual plan for destroying North Korean forces above the 38th Parallel was based on three assumptions. Two were correct, namely, that the bulk of the North Korean forces had been destroyed and that the United Nations Command would conduct operations north of the 38th Parallel. The third, that there would be no outside interference, was less sound.[30]

Likewise, Secretary Acheson's description of the plan for unification points out the uncertainty of the assumptions on which US policy was based. He has described the plan as being

---

[28] Ibid., p. 183. Lichterman, op. cit., p. 589 quoted a similar JCS message to MacArthur as follows: "We desire that you proceed with your operations without any further explanation or announcement and let action determine the matter. Our government desires to avoid having to make an issue of the 38th Parallel until we have accomplished our mission." See also Collins, loc. cit.

[29] Schnabel, loc. cit.

[30] Ibid., pp. 118-9; 184; 193.

> . . . excellently contrived to create a strong military position from which to exploit the possibilities of the North Korean defeat--either to insure the South by a strong defensive line against a renewal of the attack, or if the South Koreans were strong enough and the Chinese did not intervene, to move toward the UN goal of a united, free, and independent Korea. With these thoughts in mind General Marshall and I recommended, and the President approved the plan of operation.[31]

Our evidence indicates that these assumptions were unsound because of the basic premises on which US policy was initially based.

We have already noted that the government's strategy rested on a set of shakey premises proposed by the Pentagon (and repudiated by Acheson) in early July: namely, that all available US resources could be utilized, UN backing could be mobilized, and foreign intervention could be deterred. These premises were not carefully considered from the start apparently, and there is no evidence that they came under careful scrutiny after Inchon or, that they were any less problematic as part of the overall strategy after that victory. At no time was the government prepared to apply fully its military resources to unify Korea and its control over the UN was no guarantee that the members could be mobilized to support a wholly new objective of "liberating" North Korea. Thus, as the possibility of Chinese military intervention arose, US policy makers were faced with a third uncomfortable problem that represented a roadblock for their policy.

US officials were fully aware of this problem. They were very concerned about the possibility of Chinese intervention and were anxious to avoid a costly confrontation, but at the same time were committed to

---

[31]Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 453.

unification. This situation required some juggling. They had to attempt to unify Korea with a minimum of US resources, a minimum of UN support and at the same time minimize the risk of Chinese intervention. Obviously, the latter problem was the most important and difficult to control. Our evidence shows that US policy makers dealt with the problem by inserting carefully worded qualifying provisions into MacArthur's military orders. Yet, there was nothing in what they said or did that reduced the likelihood of Chinese intervention. At best, the qualifications to MacArthur's orders postponed the problem of deciding what to do if the Chinese intervened and ignored the fact that the basic premises of the orders were unsound. Moreover, as soon as the orders were issued, even the qualifying provisions themselves were negated. That is, the Chinese had already made threatening statements and announcements and their entry into Korea was a clear and obvious threat. The ambiguous wording and circuitous logic of the orders worked as devices for reducing official anxieties about the possibility of intervention but did nothing to make US policy more feasible. They were, in a sense, means for denying uncomfortable information. With this problem momentarily contained, however, US officials turned their attention to mobilizing UN support for an American crossing of the 38th Parallel.[32] And, as these events transpired, the PRC moved closer to intervening.

---

[32]See Goodrich, op. cit., pp. 125-30, who has written: "The considered position of the United States Government . . . appears to have been that the Security Council resolutions, notably that of June 27, gave ample authority to cross the parallel. This view was not seriously disputed by other Members of the United Nations," p. 127. He points out that there was widespread support for the U.S. position but also notes that: "Fears were currently being expressed that crossing

Chinese Concern about the 38th Parallel

Available data show that PRC concern over American action centered on whether or not US forces would invade North Korea. As the American government took a stronger public position in favor of unifying Korea, and as US troops neared the 38th Parallel the PRC voiced its opposition in an increasingly direct and specific manner.

On October 1 Chou En-lai again publicly warned that the PRC "would not stand aside" while North Korea was invaded by American troops.[33] Nevertheless, General MacArthur issued an unconditional surrender ultimatum to the DPRK, and ordered ROK troops into North Korea. On October 2, the North Korean Premier Kim Il-sung refused to surrender, publicly stating that North Korea was "firmly resolved to continue the fight to ultimate victory under support of the Chinese people."[34] This statement by Kim matched the previously stated position of the PRC reaffirming that government's intention to aid North Korea. As Whiting has observed

---

the parallel might result in an expansion of the conflict. The Indian government was of the opinion that the parallel should not be crossed until efforts at a negotiated settlement had been made. It took seriously the reports of its Ambassador Panikkar at Peking that crossing the parallel risked bringing Communist China into the fighting. It wanted to take all possible steps to bring the fighting to an end and to avoid the possible extension of hostilities. Other Members of the United Nations shared these concerns in varying degree."

[33] NYT, October 2, p. 3. See also NYT, October 1, p. 48; Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 595; Poynter, op. cit., p. 54; and Spanier, op. cit., p. 86.

[34] NYT, October 2, p. 3.

> So far as formal communication was concerned, Peking's successive statements from August 20th to October 2nd steadily increased the PRC commitment to the DPRK. By the end of this period Communist China had clearly defined the casus belli as the entry of US forces into North Korea, and its own response as military intervention on behalf of the DPRK. This much had been communicated, informally and formally, through neutral diplomatic channels. It had been indicated in official public statements, although much less explicitly, as well as in the controlled domestic press. Where references to the "liberation" of Taiwan had become less specific following the U.S. move of June 27th, the references to Korea had become more so. As the conditions upon which Peking predicated its entry into the war came nearer, Communist China became increasingly explicit in its communication of intent.[35]

Moreover, two months prior to the Yalu disaster the US government received a specific statement of intent from the PRC via diplomatic channels. President Truman has written,

> On October 3 the State Department received a number of messages which all reported the same thing: The Chinese Communists were threatening to enter the Korean conflict. Chou En-lai, now the Foreign Minister of the Chinese Communist regime, had called in the Indian Ambassador to Peiping, K.M. Panikkar, and had told him that if United Nations forces crossed the 38th parallel China would send in troops to help the North Koreans. However, this action would not be taken if only South Koreans crossed the 38th parallel.[36]

According to Panikkar, Chou "was emphatic," warning that "the South Koreans did not matter but American intrusion into North Korea would

---

[35]Whiting, op. cit., p. 110.

[36]Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 361-2. See also, Appleman, op. cit., pp. 608-9; Collins, op. cit., pp. 173-4; Futrell, op. cit., p. 189; George, "Chinese Communist Intervention," p. 22; Goodrich, op. cit., p. 139; Higgins, loc. cit.; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 591; MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833; Montross and Canzona, U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, Volume III, p. 7; Rees, op. cit., pp. 106, 110-11; Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 197-8; Spanier, op. cit., p. 86; Tsou, op. cit., p. 573; and Zelman, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

encounter Chinese resistance."[37] The substance of Chou's statement was transmitted to Washington via New Delhi, London, Moscow and Stockholm.[38] The message was transmitted to MacArthur, from Washington, where Secretary of the Air Force Thomas K. Finletter stated that he was "extremely worried" about the possibility that "China might intervene momentarily in the Korean War."[39]

On this same date, General Collins has written that,

> The United Nations command intelligence summary reported some evidence that twenty Chinese divisions were already in North Korea and had been there since September 10. Commenting on the warning from Chou En-lai and the other recent Chinese threats, this summary noted, "Even though the utterances are in the form of propaganda, they cannot be fully ignored since they emit from presumably responsible leaders in the Chinese and North Korean Communist Governments. The enemy retains a potential for reinforcements by CCF troops.[40]

But, American troops continued toward the Parallel while the US government lobbied strongly for passage of a UN resolution authorizing an American crossing.

In the meantime, the bad news about Chinese intervention kept bombarding US officials. On October 4 Washington informed MacArthur that the Chinese might intervene if the US crossed the parallel, and ". . . the General Headquarters intelligence summary observed that

---

[37]K. M. Panikkar, In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat (London: G. Allen, 1955), p. 110.

[38]Harry Truman, loc. cit. See also Futrell, loc. cit.; Lichterman, loc. cit.; MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833; Rees, loc. cit.

[39]Lichterman, op. cit., p. 595.

[40]Collins, op. cit., p. 174.

recent reports were taking on a 'sinister connotation.'"[41] General Collins has written that the government revised its conclusion of late September that Chinese intervention was unlikely, and decided at this time that the potential "exists for Chinese forces to openly intervene in the Korean War, if United Nations forces cross the 38th Parallel."[42] Again on October 5 FEAF (Far East Air Force) intelligence reported that a crossing of the Yalu by Chinese forces seemed imminent, and Chinese intervention was listed as the number one intelligence priority of US forces in Korea.[43] Also, a news dispatch from Hong Kong reported that PRC forces had "crossed the border and taken up positions to protect the Suiho hydro-electric plant on the Korean side of the Yalu River."[44]

Whether PRC forces actually had intervened in North Korea by the beginning of October is unclear from available data so the repeated reports on such entry cannot be overemphasized. But, by this time the American command did know that at least eighteen Chinese divisions were deployed on the Yalu River banks and that the Chinese were contributing supplies to the North Koreans and were continuing their political liaison with Pyongyang. Also, General S.L.A. Marshall has written

> . . . as October opened, Eighth Army published to its forces the Chinese Communist order of battle along the Yalu River

---

[41] Ibid.; see also Futrell, loc. cit.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Appleman, op. cit., p. 759; Willoughby, MacArthur; Futrell, op. cit., p. 188.

[44] NYT, October 5, p. 3.

front, an evaluation which subsequent events proved to be amazingly accurate.[45]

Moreover, General George Stratemeyer (Commander, Far East Air Force) warned Major General Earl Partridge (Commander, Fifth Air Force) on October 1 that enemy air activity was taking on sinister connotations, even though the North Korean Air Force had already been destroyed.[46]

Even if the premises of General MacArthur's orders were not negated on September 27, they certainly were by the first week of October. Indeed, all available evidence showed then that the Chinese intended to intervene and that intention was communicated both explicitly and implicitly. Moreover, US officials learned of Chinese intentions through diplomatic communications and not solely through military channels. Thus, the inherent policy problem of trying to unify Korea while preventing Chinese intervention emerged again with greater prominence and clarity than ever before. And, it emerged at the highest levels of the American decision making establishment.

At this point, however, the government had become officially committed to unification, and US officials seriously expected to win a quick and easy victory in all Korea and, in that context, the PRC threat hardly seemed serious. Thus, the possibility of Chinese intervention was gradually being accepted to maintain the goal of unifying Korea, as the US turned to the UN for political support.

---

[45]Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, p. 7; NYT, October 5, p. 3; Willoughby, op. cit., p. 386.

[46]Futrell, op. cit., p. 190.

In effect, the Chinese threat was discounted as US officials sought the reassurance of a formal UN resolution to legitimize crossing the parallel. The government's position on UN involvement was that the June resolutions implicitly authorized operations in North Korea even though many UN members expressed fears that the war would escalate if US forces moved north. Since the government "wanted to avoid a look of going it alone, or putting something over, or relying on fine print," US officials lobbied for, and succeeded in passing a new resolution specifically authorizing unification.[47] Evidence on US activity in the UN at this time shows that "in fact, the General Assembly's words on this occasion were of Washington's selection," and the UN decision to cross the parallel was American "in all essentials."[48] According to Schnabel:

> State Department officials talked informally with representatives of friendly member nations in the United Nations and solicited their support for the passage of the resolution. The United States could not work through the Security Council as in earlier days, since the USSR delegate to the council had returned to his seat in August, bringing a veto power likely to be used against any American-inspired resolution. Consequently, the American delegation moved the Korean question before the General Assembly where the USSR had no veto power and where American greatly outweighed Russian influence.[49]

---

[47]Neustadt, op. cit., p. 128.

[48]Ibid., p. 121.

[49]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 194. According to Rees, ". . . the unification of Korea had been canvassed from the very beginning of the war." See Rees, op. cit., p. 98.

The government's strategy apparently was to attempt to deter Chinese intervention, by using the collective UN symbol to legitimize unification and to de-emphasize the threat posed to China by US military operations in North Korea. On October 5, in fact, the possibility of Chinese intervention was called to Secretary Acheson's attention in a news conference where he "declined to make a flat prediction" on what the PRC would do but argued that "any country seeking acceptance among the nations of the world would not attack United Nations forces."[50] [Italics not in original.] On October 7 the UN General Assembly formally authorized movement across the parallel, and, as General Collins has written, "there remained no question but that the U.N. General Assembly, President Truman, the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff all had approved the crossing of the 38th Parallel."[51] The movement north, then, was strengthened, if not entirely promoted by widespread agreement within the American government and the UN on the desirability of unification.[52]

---

[50] NYT, October 5, p. 3.

[51] Collins, op. cit., p. 149.

[52] Lichterman, op. cit., p. 584. Lichterman has written, "Actually at no time during his tenure as UN commander did General MacArthur and the authorities in Washington, both civil and military, agree so fully on operations in Korea as they did from the time the authorization was given for the Inchon operation until passage of the October 7 resolution or shortly thereafter. In carrying operations into North Korea General MacArthur was following out orders issued in Washington and approved at the UN in Lake Success," p. 594. "There seemed to be general agreement between top officials of the U.S. and other UN members on policies to be followed in Korea if the Russian

Thus, Chou's diplomatic warning of October 3 came at a time when the objective of unification was gaining UN support, US forces were routing the North Koreans, and US officials were agreed among themselves to take further action. This agreement, widespread and publicly expressed, was largely a product of the ideological feeling of US officials, which in the case of the October 3 warning in particular, led them to discount Chou's message. Of the October 3 warning President Truman has written,

> . . . the problem that arose in connection with these reports was that Mr. Panikkar had in the past played the game of the Chinese Communists fairly regularly, so that his statement could not be taken as that of an impartial observer. It might very well be no more than a relay of Communist propaganda . . . and it appeared quite likely that Chou En-lai's "message" was a bald attempt to blackmail the United Nations by threats of intervention in Korea.[53]

---

and Chinese Communists did not intervene." See also Spanier, op. cit., p. 93. He states, "Washington and Tokyo were evidently in full agreement that the war was almost over, and that Communist China would not intervene." See Collins, op. cit., p. 148. The General states: "By and large, news commentators, columnists and editorial writers indicated a strong public opinion in favor of continuing military operations to eliminate the Communist satellite state of North Korea and, thus hopefully, prevent a recurrence of the Korean War." See also Rees, op. cit., pp. 100-2 and Tsou, op. cit., pp. 571-2.

[53]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 362. Rovere and Schlesinger have noted: "Mr. Panikkar is a curious figure in world affairs. He is regarded by as shrewd an observer as Walter Lippman as perhaps the ablest diplomat in the world. He may well be that, although the failure of his elaborate efforts to talk Peiping out of the annexation of Tibet suggests that, where there is a will to resist his charms, a way can be found. Some people think him spectacularly inept. Considering the number of times he had sounded false alarms on Formosa, the Alsop brothers were constrained to remark that he was at least aptly named. Nevertheless, he was one of the few diplomats from a non-Communist country who was persona grata in Peiping, and our State Department made use of his good offices on a few occasions." See Rovere and Schlesinger, MacArthur Controversy, p. 148.

The warning was simply taken as part of a communist trick that fit in neatly with the American preconception of communists as being treacherous and deceitful. As General Collins too has written,

> Because of . . . [their] roundabout approach and because it hardly seemed likely that, if the Chinese were serious, they would disclose their intentions in advance, United States intelligence agencies discounted the warning. Panikkar was suspected of having Communist leanings. A short while later, again through Indian channels, he reported that the Chinese would not intervene. The United States intelligence community generally agreed that Chou's threats were a bluff, primarily a last-ditch attempt to intimidate the United States and probably covered a less drastic plan of action, such as offering sanctuary to the North Korean leaders.[54]

In addition to General Collins' feelings about the communist leanings of Panikkar and the duplicity of the Chinese, this statement is interesting for another reason. We have already seen that MacArthur was instructed to make special efforts to determine Chinese "intentions" via covert intelligence channels and by public statements or announcement. Yet, the very first sentence of Collins' statement suggests that he (Collins) was predisposed to disbelieve anything the Chinese might say about their own intentions even if, as in this case, it was said confidentially and conveyed to the American government through diplomatic channels. Apparently, the expectations of US officials outweighed the qualifying provisions they, themselves, had written into MacArthur's orders.

To return to Panikkar's warning, Secretary Acheson saw it as viable, but also as part of the larger Soviet conspiracy designed to

---

[54]Collins, op. cit., p. 173.

disrupt UN agreement in favor of crossing the parallel. He has written,

> Since on the same day Vishinsky was calling on the United Nations for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and a coalition government to rule all Korea until national elections could take place, it was obvious that a combined Sino-Soviet effort was being made to save the North Korean regime. Chou's words were a warning not to be disregarded, but, on the other hand, not an authoritative statement of policy.[55]

Acheson's logic helped serve the purpose of discounting the Chinese warning and avoiding the unpleasant conclusion that might follow from accepting it; namely, that Korean unification was infeasible since the Chinese intended to intervene. Even if we assume that Acheson was correct in pointing to a combined "Sino-Soviet effort" it is still clear that at this early date the government knew full well that the destruction of North Korea was not acceptable to the Russians or the Chinese. Taken together, these data suggest that the warning was discounted in order to save the government's policy of unification. Simply, US officials were agreed that unification was desirable and had committed themselves to that goal, so they did not want to believe the Chinese would intervene.

---

[55]Acheson, op. cit., p. 452. Spanier has written that, ". . . there are no indications that the Administration gave . . . Chinese intervention serious thought. No evidence exists that President Truman and Secretary Acheson ever entertained the belief that the Chinese Communist leaders might invade Korea because they might really possess a genuine fear of a "reactionary" General and his "imperialistic" armies on the sensitive and strategic Manchurian frontier; at no time apparently did it occur to American officials that Peking might well invoke one of the favorite slogans of American diplomacy, "deeds, not words," and ask for some specific and concrete guarantee against possible United States violations of Chinese territorial integrity." Spanier, op. cit., pp. 95-6.

Strategic Intelligence after the October 7 Resolution

Despite the reassurance of UN support there were still more intelligence reports showing that unification was endangered by the possibility of Chinese intervention. According to General Collins, "President Truman had kept abreast of these reports through periodic intelligence briefings," so he was aware of the developing situation.[56] American intelligence units indicated on October 8 (a month and a half before the Yalu disaster) that elements of the Chinese army were massing along the Yalu River and the following day the PRC publicly reaffirmed Chinese support for the North Koreans. Additionally, General Collins has written that,

> In a series of intelligence summaries between October 8 and 14 the Far East Command G-2 reported that "while exaggerations and canards are always evident, the potential of [the Chinese] massing at the Antung and other Manchurian crossings [of the Yalu] appears conclusive."[57] [Italics not in original.]

Thus the qualifying conditions in MacArthur's September 27 orders were being met and the premises of US policy again deserved careful review. But, at this point, supported by a UN resolution (however ambiguous), US officials found it easier to avoid that unpleasant problem. President Truman has written that,

> The possibility of Chinese intervention in Korea . . . could not be discounted, and I therefore instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a directive to General MacArthur to cover such an eventuality.[58] [Italics not in the original.]

---

[56] Collins, op. cit., p. 174.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Harry Truman, loc. cit.

So, new orders, submitted to the JCS by Secretary Marshall, with the President's approval, were sent to General MacArthur on October 9. MacArthur was told:

> In light of the possible intervention of Chinese Communist forces in North Korea the following amplification of our directive [of September 25] [sic] is forwarded for your guidance:
>
> "Hereafter in the event of the open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should continue the action as long as, in your judgment action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success. In any case you will obtain authorization prior to taking any military action against objectives in Chinese territory."[59] [Italics not in the original.]

Obviously, this was an extension of MacArthur's military authority by Washington in pursuit of unification. The new provisions accepted the possibility of Chinese intervention by giving MacArthur the "go-ahead" to fight the Chinese if necessary, and in that sense, the action was an escalation of the war.

We cannot say that these new orders increased hostilities between the US and the PRC or that the orders introduced new strategies

---

[59] Ibid. See also MacArthur Hearings, pp. 720, 3483; Collins, pp. 174-5; Cagle, op. cit., p. 116; Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 8; McLellan, op. cit., p. 23; Futrell, op. cit., p. 189; Kolko, op. cit., pp. 595-6; Higgins, op. cit., p. 56; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 596; and Rees, op. cit., p. 108; and George, op. cit., pp. 28-9. An interesting coincidence in regard to these orders is that Chinese intervention was listed as the number one priority with US intelligence agencies beginning October 5 but with the issuance of the orders it dropped to third priority. See Appleman, op. cit., p. 759.

or tactics. Quite the contrary, the October 9 orders were the logical outgrowth of the American policy to unify Korea, a policy which ignored Chinese interests and which, all along, had discounted the Chinese threat. As with the decision to initiate plans for unification, the decision to make public statements on unification, and the decision to authorize MacArthur to cross the 38th Parallel, our data show that this new decision to extend MacArthur's authority represented a convergence of sentiment in favor of unification and was a device to reduce political pressures and anxieties about Chinese intervention. The timing and substance of the orders both support this hypothesis. The orders came after the October 7 resolution which was the apex of agreement on unification, not only within the American government, but at the UN, and after US forces had crossed the parallel. By giving greater discretion to General MacArthur, the October 9 orders made the situation appear well in hand, and reduced fears that US forces might be taken by surprise with unworkable restrictions (such as those of September 27) placed on the theatre commander. In effect, of course, the new orders simply discounted the latest, most credible Chinese warnings, increased the government's commitment to unification, and decreased the ability of US officials in Washington to manage their own war policy, all at a time when the PRC threat was seriously increasing.

So, the war continued and the bad news kept coming in. According to the official history of US Army operations in Korea, an intelligence report on October 14

> . . . presumably represented the official view of Major General Charles A. Willoughby, Far East Command G-2 [intelligence

> division]. This intelligence estimate accepted a total strength of thirty-eight CCF Divisions in nine armies in Manchuria. It expressed the view that Russia would find it convenient and economical to stay out of the conflict and let the Chinese provide troops if there was to be intervention.[60] [Italics not in the original.]

The report indicated further that intelligence agencies were focussing on Lin Piao and the maneuvering of his 4th Field Army near the North Korean border. Willoughby's intelligence summary flatly stated:

> . . . the numerical and troop potential in Manchuria is a fait accompli. A total of 24 divisions are disposed along the Yalu River at crossing points. In this general deployment, the grouping in the vicinity of Antung is the most immediately available Manchurian force, astride a suitable road net for deployment southward.[61]

As the situation became more critical Truman and his advisers decided to meet personally with General MacArthur on October 15, for a full discussion of the matter.

In the meantime, US officials simply discounted the possibility of Chinese intervention, and this led inevitably to contradiction between the information and the evaluations in intelligence reports available to high level policy makers, including the President. For instance, one report to the President on October 12 stated that, ". . . in spite of Chou En-lai's threats and Chinese troop movements in Manchuria there were no conclusive indications of Chinese intentions."[62]

---

[60] Appleman, loc. cit.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Collins, op. cit., p. 175; MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833. Collins has noted, "President Truman never interfered with military operations, but in the Korean War--a war in peacetime, without a formal declaration by the Congress--he was deeply committed personally and wished to be kept constantly informed," p. 120.

And, the Russian-agent theory was invoked to discredit the Chinese threat. According to General Collins,

> . . . this report said that, although full-scale Communist intervention in Korea should be regarded as a continuing possibility, a consideration of all known factors led to the conclusion that barring a Soviet decision for global war, such action was not probable in 1950. During this period intervention probably would be confined to continued covert assistance to the North Koreans.[63] [Italics not in the original.]

But even in that context, the threat did not disappear. For example, on October 5,

> General Willoughby told Washington officials that the USSR "would find it both convenient and economical to stay out of the conflict and let the idle millions of Communist China perform the task as part of the master plan to drain United States resources into geographical rat holes of the Orient."[64]

Yet, after the October 7 resolution was passed, Willoughby discounted even that possibility. Thus, he supplemented his October 14 report (on the "fait accompli" of Chinese troop masses) with the argument that the Soviets and Chinese ". . . have decided against further expensive investment in support of a lost cause."[65] Moreover, he advised Washington that "recent declarations by CCF leaders, threatening to enter North Korea if American forces were to cross the 38th Parallel, are probably in a category of diplomatic blackmail."[66]

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 100; Appleman, op. cit., p. 759.

[65] Appleman, op. cit., p. 760.

[66] Ibid. See also Willoughby, op. cit., p. 386. At this time, Chinese troops definitely were crossing into North Korea. See

Willoughby stressed the fact that available intelligence did not include a specific statement or declaration of war from the Chinese and Soviets, so it was invalid to believe that the Chinese would intervene!

Only a change in the American objective of unification could have realistically affected Chinese motivation to intervene, but no one in the US government wanted to make that change.[67] The fact that the October 9 orders to MacArthur accepted the risk of Chinese intervention supports the conclusion that the government would not abandon that policy goal unless physically forced to do so. By mid-October, the US commitment was, therefore, highly resistant to change.

While the October 7 resolution made unification appear more feasible for the US, it seriously reduced the PRC's options for dealing politically with the developing military situation. A study of the PRC's position on UN activity at this time has shown that the political implications were serious. Prior to passage of the resolution PRC officials were positively motivated to cooperate and work with the UN, but after the resolution was passed Chinese officials could not maintain that motivation,[68] and Chinese political maneuvering

---

Whiting, op. cit., pp. 116-24; Marshall, op. cit., p. 14; Appleman, op. cit., p. 756; and Collins, op. cit., p. 217.

[67]George, op. cit., pp. 8-29.

[68]Weng, op. cit., p. 91. In Weng's words, "Considering the nature of the contacts the PRC was having with the UN during this period, one would have to conclude that Peking's language and attitude toward the UN was still positively directed. But the fact that its efforts to operate with and through the UN brought little result for the PRC meant that this type of practice would have to be re-evaluated."

"gave way to military action."[69] Peking's position at this time was that its warning[s] had been ignored and its challenge accepted. Peking's response "to these U.N. developments," Whiting has written, "bear[s] out the hypothesis that the crossing of the thirty-eighth parallel was the final contingency determining Peking's entry into the war."[70]

---

[69]Whiting, op. cit., p. 115. Whiting's full comment was: "The first ten days of October form the closing period of one phase in Sino-Soviet strategy and the initial period of another. The political maneuvers of Peking and Moscow now gave way to military action. Peking's warning had been ignored and its challenge accepted."

[70]Ibid., p. 114. Rovere and Schlesinger have argued: "To sustain the theory that the crossing of the parallel provoked Chinese intervention, it is necessary to ignore the fact that Peiping had previously issued warnings in far more comprehensive terms than those which the Secretary of State said had been given the Indian ambassador. From the very start of the war, Peiping, like Moscow, had denounced the United States an aggressor both in Korea and in Formosa. When Chou En-lai said in September that the Chinese would not "supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors savagely invaded by imperialists," he did not specify North Koreans as the neighbors he had in mind. For months he had been saying that the United States was "the most dangerous foe of the Chinese people." Indeed, both Peiping and Moscow recognized the North Korean government as the legitimate government of all Korea," Rovere and Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 149; Tsou has written: "In retrospect . . . it is clear that given Peking's distrust of American intentions, her determination to occupy Formosa eventually, and her assumption of revolutionary leadership in Asia, a clash between Communist China and the United States was sooner or later likely to occur, if not over Formosa then at other places where terrain, lines of supply, and other geopolitical factors gave Peking a better chance of successfully challenging the United States," Tsou, op. cit., p. 596. According to Spanier, "It is significant that the crossing of the 38th Parallel was not considered as an act which would arouse the strong anti-American sentiment that the United States was attempting to minimize. The available material indicates that the American government judged an assurance of goodwill as sufficient guarantee for the men in Peking." Spanier, op. cit., p. 97.

The decision to cross the 38th Parallel ". . . presented me with problems of the gravest import," General MacArthur has written, because "it immediately raised the shadow of Red Chinese intervention."

> Actually, the possibility of such an intervention had existed ever since the order from Washington, issued to the Seventh Fleet in June, to neutralize Formosa. . . . This released the two great Red Chinese armies assigned to the coastal defense of central China and made them available for transfer elsewhere. They were reported to be moving north toward Manchuria. . . . Red China would represent for me new conditions and totally new war. The United Nations chose to ignore this uncomfortable problem. No means were ever furnished or even considered to meet it, although the sinister implications were perfectly understood by all governments concerned.[71]

In the words of Foster Rhea Dulles,

> . . . both the United Nations and the United States were acting in this extension of the war beyond the Thirty-eighth Parallel in the face of repeated and emphatic warnings from Communist China. The diplomatic and military authorities in Washington, the UN command in Korea, all ignored these warnings.[72]

The accumulating evidence on the PRC's position by mid-October pointed consistently to the possibility of Chinese intervention and the trend of events discussed here shows that the probability was increasing rapidly. The point needs no amplification given the qualitative data thus far presented, but it takes on greater clarity when measured quantitatively. For example, we have noted periodic changes in PRC troop strength on the Sino-Korean border, as reported by US intelligence units. A graphic representation

---

[71]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 359. See also Willoughby, op. cit., p. 379.

[72]Dulles, op. cit., p. 98.

of these changes shows not only that Chinese capabilities were increasing, but that the rate of change in those capabilities was also increasing, quite dramatically. Indeed, the figure of 200,000 Chinese troops on the border, given to the President on July 6, more than doubled by late September, when US intelligence reported a figure of 450,000.[73] (Graph #1)

In addition, we have noted that the PRC's capabilities and intentions to intervene were reported frequently in the public press. A comprehensive computation of the lines of coverage in the New York Times relating to PRC policy statements, troop movements and speculative reporting on the possibility of Chinese intervention, reveals a trend similar to that shown by US intelligence data.[74] (Graph #1)

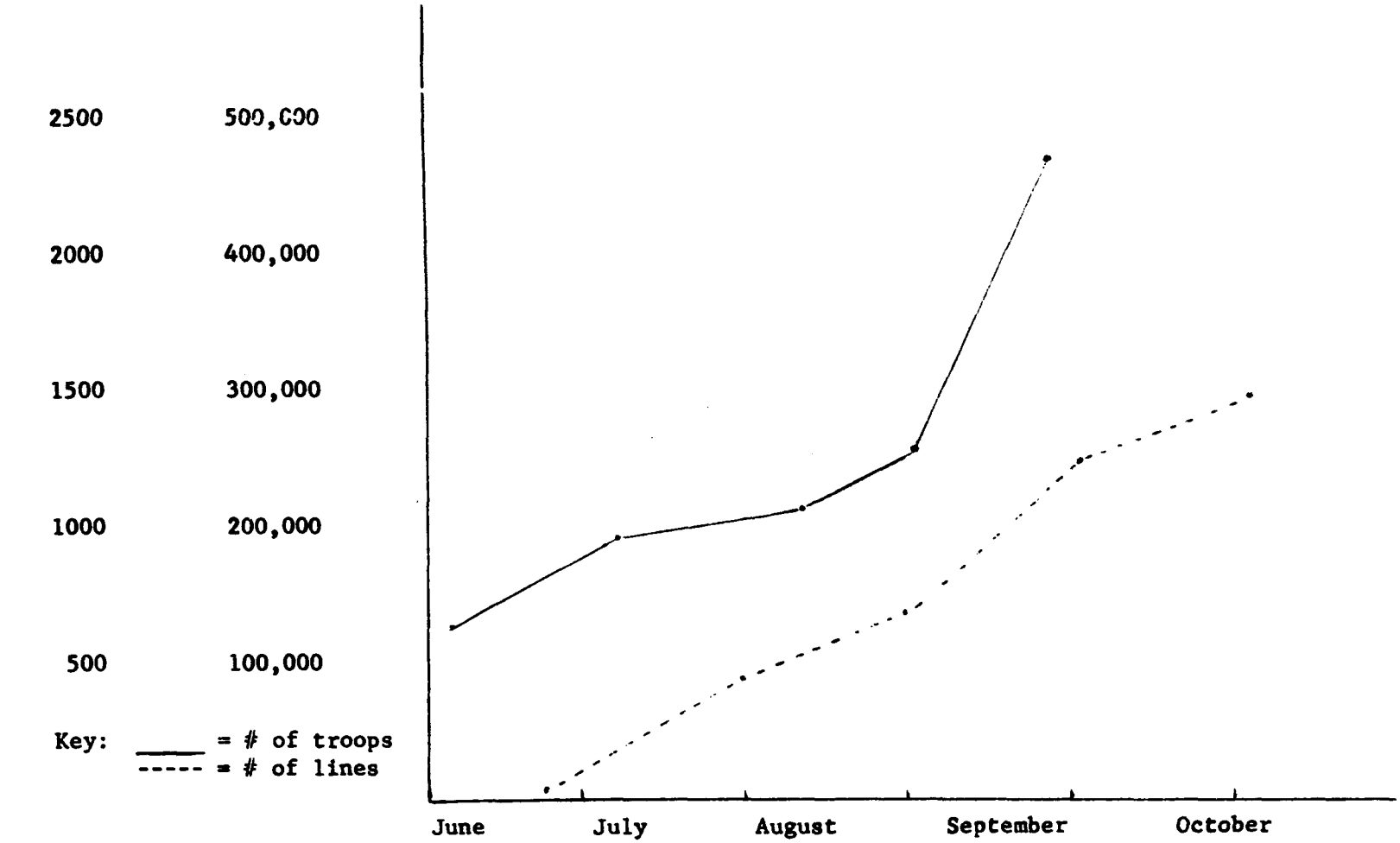
---

[73]Whiting, using different sources, produces a different set of figures. See Whiting, op. cit., pp. 64-67, 118-24. Whatever figures we use, as Zelman has observed, "It is interesting, in terms of deterrence value of these troop movements, that the troop movements in September and October were not concealed from diplomats in Peking." Zelman, op. cit., p. 5. According to de Weerd, "These reports built up a convincing picture of Communist Chinese capabilities to intervene in North Korea in the autumn of 1950." de Weerd, op. cit., pp. 118-22.

[74]At this point we will abandon our comprehensive content analysis of public press reports on Chinese intervention for the simple reason that the volume of coverage for the period October 15 to November 28 is overwhelming. As our graph shows, the trend was monotonically increasing through the end of October, and the volume of coverage during the first week of November alone equalled (approximately) the total for all of October. As noted in Chapter 3, official sources take precedence in our analysis, and since such sources also are voluminous for the closing period of this crisis, we can rely primarily on them for adequate data.

Graph # 1

PRC troop deployments and volume of news coverage on the PRC's position



Both trends are remarkably consistent with one another, showing a clear and steady increase over time in the level of a PRC threat, as well as rapid changes in the rate of increase.

Conclusion

Allen Whiting has written that the PRC's

> . . . failure to enter Korea until one week after U.N. units had crossed the thirty-eighth parallel suggests, like so much other evidence, Peking's reluctance to enter the war until all political means had been exhausted.[75]

Such a conclusion does not fit American decision making in regard to the contingencies of unification or Chinese intervention. On the contrary, our conclusion is that the American government avoided political means in favor of a military settlement in Korea, even at the risk of bringing the Chinese into the war. The October 7 resolution supported this military posture by sanctioning American operations in North Korea and by implicitly calling for unification. The US effort in the UN at this time did not represent a political effort to settle the war.

Ostensibly, of course, the American military strategy was highly cautious, as shown by the restrictive clauses in MacArthur's military orders. But, from our observations here we can conclude that they were meaningless because US officials did not expect to get "hard" evidence on Chinese intentions, and were predisposed to disbelieve it when they did get it. The restrictions made MacArthur's mission appear

---

[75]Whiting, op. cit., pp. 118-22.

safe and "under control," and resolved temporary political conflicts, but basically they did nothing to reduce the dangers that confronted US officials and became, instead, a device to avoid a thorough examination of US policy when that appeared necessary. The words written into MacArthur's orders show that the government was pursuing a conscious management strategy for dealing with the possibility of Chinese intervention, but the behavior of US officials in response to Chinese warnings shows that their expectations and commitments were the controlling factor in interpreting strategic intelligence on that possibility. The provisions themselves were no insurance against surprise, because, as we have seen, when strategic intelligence became more ominous, US officials simply made MacArthur's orders more ambiguous and less cautious.

We can conclude also that the nature and character of changes in the developing situation at this time contributed to the willingness of US policy makers to discount incoming information. For example, there was a rapid, non-incremental change in the military situation. We need only recall that within the three weeks between September 15 and October 7, US forces totally reversed the course of the war by recapturing virtually all of South Korea, restoring the South Korean government, destroying most of the North Korean Army, and crossing the parallel into North Korea. This translated into a drastic change in the attitude of US officials and their policy constituencies. After witnessing three months of desparate defensive action they became euphoric over victory and excited about the

possibility of unifying Korea. Their expectations about victory became drastically re-ordered and their reliance on strategic intelligence as a reference point in policy making diminished. In the context of this kind of rapid and drastic change strategic intelligence had only a minor influence on political decision making.

CHAPTER VI

PHASE 4--DISCONFIRMED EXPECTATIONS

(October 15 - November 7)

This chapter discusses the development of US policy from October 15 to November 7, when US forces captured the North Korean capitol and moved rapidly toward the Yalu River, where Chinese troops were massed. The movement of American troops north across the 38th parallel was an irrevocable act that unequivocally committed the American government to unification. As will be shown, the strength and nature of that commitment affected the way US policy makers handled and responded to strategic information on Chinese intervention.

We have already noted that Chinese units moved into North Korea after US forces crossed the parallel, so the nature of evidence on Chinese intervention changed as it reflected PRC military involvement. Thus, the US government acquired more accurate (and more ominous) intelligence from its military units in Korea. Due to the time lag between events and the transmission of relevant information to Washington, there was initial uncertainty among some US officials about the extent of Chinese involvement in Korea, but, generally the upper command levels were kept well informed with timely, accurate data on Chinese activities. Evidence on American efforts to adjust to the new reality of Chinese military intervention is reviewed and supports the hypothesis that US officials were reluctant to believe

the PRC had intervened because the American government was heavily committed to unification and expected to win a quick and easy victory.

As noted in the preceding chapter, US officials progressively redefined in military terms the political problem of Korean unification and thus accepted the increasing risk of Chinese military intervention. Although the substantive alterations of MacArthur's attack orders from September 27 to October 9 were made in response to the accumulating evidence on Chinese intervention, they were only a stop-gap measure that did nothing to make Korean unification more feasible, and this became abundantly clear as American and Chinese forces converged in North Korea. Despite the repeated discountings of intelligence by Willoughby and others, the situation did not improve from the American standpoint. On the contrary, by mid-October official expectations of victory engendered by the Inchon landing were waning because the Chinese threat appeared more dangerous than ever, and this fact prompted President Truman to meet with General MacArthur on Wake Island.

The Wake Conference

Coming at such a critical time the discussion which took place at the October 15 Wake Island meeting was momentous because of the way US officials resolved their doubts and uncertainties about Chinese intervention. They simply agreed on the desirability of unification and chose to continue operations in spite of the Chinese threat by reassuring each other with hopes and promises. The data on this

meeting show that the participants were fully aware of the Chinese threat but discounted it because the prevailing agreement heightened their expectations of victory.

On October 15, President Truman and General MacArthur met personally for the first (and last) time on Wake Island in the Pacific because President Truman ". . . wanted to get the benefit of firsthand information" on the possibility of Chinese intervention.[1] They held two conferences. First, Truman and MacArthur conferred alone in a one hour meeting during which Truman has written, "the general assured me that the victory was won in Korea. He also informed me that the Chinese Communists would not attack and that Japan was ready for a peace treaty."[2] MacArthur apparently emphasized the improbability of Chinese intervention because Truman has noted, "He repeated [in this first meeting] that the conflict was won and there was little possibility of the Chinese Communists coming in."[3] [Italics not in original.]

Thus, the President was reassured personally by the top US military officer immediately in charge of operations in Korea that the Chinese would not intervene, regardless of what the intelligence picture indicated. Following this private discussion, MacArthur and Truman met with the larger group of policy makers present at Wake,

---

[1]Harry Truman, Memoirs, Volume II, p. 363.

[2]Ibid., p. 365.

[3]Ibid.

including Admiral Arthur W. Radford (Commander of the Pacific Fleet); John F. Muccio (US Ambassador to Korea); Frank Pace (Secretary of the Army); Omar N. Bradley (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff); Phillip C. Jessup (Ambassador at Large); Dean Rusk (Undersecretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs); and Averell Harriman (Adviser to the President). President Truman has written that at this second meeting too, "General MacArthur stated his firm belief that all resistance would end, in both North and South Korea, by Thanksgiving."[4] Indeed, most of the conference was about future aid to a unified Korea.

When the group turned specifically to the possibility of Chinese intervention, General MacArthur again discounted it. According to Truman, "Then I gave MacArthur an opportunity to repeat to the larger group some of the things he had said to me in our private meeting. 'What are the chances,' I asked, 'for Chinese or Soviet interference'?"[5] General MacArthur replied, "Very little." He went on to say,

> Had they interfered in the first or second months it would have been decisive. We are no longer fearful of their intervention. We no longer stand hat in hand. The Chinese have 300,000 men in Manchuria. Of these probably not more than 100,000 or 125,000 are distributed along the Yalu River. Only 50,000 to 60,000 could be gotten across the Yalu River. They have no Air Force. Now that we have bases for our Air Force in Korea, if the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang there would be the greatest slaughter.[6]

---

[4] Ibid., pp. 365-6.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Richard Lowitt (ed.), The Truman-MacArthur Controversy (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1967), p. 10. See also ibid., p. 366.

This estimate went unchallenged. Instead, it prompted unanimous agreement that the war was won, Korea should be unified and Chinese intervention was unlikely.

General MacArthur has recorded that the agreement was widely shared among these top level policy makers. "It was the consensus of all present at Wake," MacArthur has written, "that Red China had no intention of intervening. This opinion had previously been advanced by the Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department."[7] Army historian Roy Appleman has further observed,

> . . . so thoroughly did they seem to agree with his opinion that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked him when he could spare a division for European duty. So it would seem that General MacArthur in responding to the President's question merely voiced the consensus of the highest officials from the seat of government.[8]

The President, as well as the General, was satisfied with the agreement, as Truman has written:

> As we returned to our planes I told MacArthur that I thought we had had a most satisfactory conference and that I hoped our next meeting would not be too long delayed.[9]

MacArthur, too, stated,

> I left the Wake Island conference with a distinct sense of satisfaction that the country's interests had been well served through the better mutual understanding and exchange of views which it afforded.[10]

---

[7]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 362. General MacArthur has emphasized that, "There was no disagreement from anyone."

[8]Appleman, South to the Naktong, p. 759.

[9]Truman, op. cit., p. 367.

[10]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 367.

Whether General MacArthur's estimate was correct or not it had the effect of reviving everyone's expectations of a military victory and excited pre-existing agreement on the policy goal of unification. General Collins has noted, "as General MacArthur returned to Tokyo from the Wake Island conference, optimism prevailed throughout all echelons of the United Nations command and in Washington."[11] This optimism did nothing to reduce the growing Chinese threat or to prepare government officials for the contingency of Chinese military intervention. On the contrary, it promoted further military action in Korea and created an atmosphere conducive to discounting strategic intelligence. So, President Truman returned to the US stating publicly, "we are fully aware of the dangers which lie ahead, but we are confident that we can surmount these dangers. Our sole purpose

---

[11]Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 175. All available accounts of the Wake Island conference show unquestionably that there was complete agreement among the participants as to the unlikelihood of Chinese intervention and as to the desirability of continuing with the unification of Korea. See the following: Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp. 456-7; Appleman, op. cit., pp. 760-1; Berger, The Korea Knot, p. 171; Collins, op. cit., pp. 153-4; de Weerd, "Strategic Surprise," pp. 446-7; Dulles, American Policy Toward China, p. 100; Futrell, U.S. Air Force in Korea, pp. 189-90; Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur, pp. 57-9; Lee and Henschel, Douglas MacArthur, pp. 206-8; Lichterman, "To the Yalu," p. 598; Long, MacArthur, p. 212; MacArthur, op. cit., pp. 360-7; MacArthur Hearings, pp. 1035, 3364, 3468-9; McLellan, "Acheson and the Korean War," p. 24; Montross and Canzona, Marine Operations in Korea, Volume III, pp. 35-6; Rees, Korea, pp. 115-21; Sebald, With MacArthur, pp. 200-1; Spanier, Truman-MacArthur Controversy, pp. 104-12; Stone, Hidden History, pp. 139-50; Whitney, MacArthur, pp. 392-3; Willoughby, MacArthur, pp. 382-3; Zelman, Bilateral Failure, p. 11.

in Korea is to establish peace and independence."[12]

The substance, as well as the timing of the Wake agreement is critical since, as the evidence shows, MacArthur discounted Chinese intervention with promises that he could interdict the Chinese with his air power. Whether such promises were valid or not, they were conditional and unverifiable until after the Chinese started moving into North Korea. The whole tone of MacArthur's statement showed a willingness on his part not only to accept the possibility but the reality of Chinese intervention. Apparently, he felt that 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese troops (a number approximately equal to the US X-Corps, could easily be defeated, and posed no problem for unification. By promising to "slaughter" the Chinese MacArthur discounted the threat of intervention, making it seem less formidable than intelligence reports showed it to be.

What the data on the Wake conference do not show is also important. In particular, the data do not reveal a careful analysis of the accumulating evidence on Chinese intervention and there is no strong indication that the conferrees shared strategic information with one another, beyond that mentioned by MacArthur.

Although this meeting came in response to developments revealed by strategic intelligence, surprising little of that intelligence appears to have been integrated into the policy making at Wake. The transactions of the conferees show that they shared opinions and

---

[12]Truman, op. cit., pp. 367-9. See also NYT, October 15, p. 5; NYT, October 18, p. 8; and Rees, op. cit., p. 122.

attitudes rather than information, and, as we have seen in the case of General MacArthur, his opinion about what was happening, and especially his expectations about what would happen, far outweighed anything showed by strategic intelligence. Consistent with our study we can conclude that MacArthur's colleagues, from the President on down the executive chain of command, agreed with MacArthur and catered to his opinion because it substantially supported their predispositions about Korean unification. And, we can conclude that they chose to ignore strategic intelligence on this occasion because it reinforced their commitment to that goal. While their inter-personal reassurances made unification appear more possible and Chinese intervention less likely, nothing in what they did or said made US policy any more feasible.

From available evidence on what was happening, the government's policy clearly deserved a careful re-examination. For example, Air Force historian Robert Futrell has written,

> General MacArthur's remark that the Chinese Communists had "no air force" was at variance with FEAF estimates that the Chinese possessed at least 300 combat aircraft. Citing repeated reports of enemy aircraft sightings, including reports of jet aircraft, General Stratemeyer had cautioned General Partridge on 1 October that "Maintenance of absolute air superiority continues to be the highest priority mission for Fifth Air Force area."[13]

Yet, two weeks later at Wake, MacArthur was claiming that the Chinese had no air force and was still insisting that his air power would stop Chinese intervention.

---

[13]Futrell, op. cit., p. 190.

Likewise, on October 15 the Department of the Army had informed MacArthur that Moscow "was preparing a surprise" for American troops in North Korea,[14] and given the government's Russian-agent theory this signal could easily have been interpreted as a warning of Chinese intervention. Moreover, according to Army historian Appleman,

> At the time . . . that General MacArthur was expressing to President Truman and his advisers at Wake Island on 15 October his belief that there was very little likelihood that the Chinese Communist Forces would intervene, that, if they did no more than 60,000 could get across the Yalu and that his air force would destroy them, approximately 120,000 CCF soldiers either had already crossed, were in the act of crossing, or were moving from their assembly and training areas to the crossing sites for the purpose of crossing [the Yalu].[15] [Italics not in the original.]

While we cannot say for certain whether all of these specific facts were known at the time of the Wake conference, there is evidence showing that nine Chinese POW's had been captured in North Korea and interrogated on October 12, three days prior to Wake.[16]

The renewed agreement at Wake submerged all the critical danger signs that were known and lulled US officials into believing that Korean unification was a mopping-up operation that would end shortly and release more US troops for European duty. There was no careful, probing examination of available evidence on Chinese intervention and no thorough-going discussion of how it affected US policy. The

---

[14] Appleman, op. cit., p. 759.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Lichterman, op. cit., pp. 598, 572. See also Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, pp. 7-8.

conference members shared high expectations about what ought to happen, and in that context, strategic intelligence became meaningless. US policy makers knew full well Chinese entry into Korea was imminent but ignored that fact, and, in the process, set themselves up for a sobering surprise in late October.

The New Enemy

After Wake, US policy moved inexorably closer to disaster. On October 15 the North Korean government again protested against US aggression[17] and on October 16 when President Truman declared that unity of purpose prevailed within the American government, US intelligence indicated that PRC units had moved into North Korea.[18] And, on October 17 MacArthur, on his own, ordered all troops under his command to advance to the Yalu, lifting the qualifying restriction that, as a

---

[17] NYT, October 15, p. 13; Section IV, p. 5. This news report is interesting insofar as it reflects the complexity of the prevailing political situation. The Times reported:

"United Nations observers said tonight that North Korean charges [that] the United Nations was using Japanese troops might be a pretext to throw Chinese Communist troops into the Korean War.

"United Nations officials said no protest had been received here yet. The observers who said that the North Koreans might be ready to call on the Chinese Communists for help pointed out that Communist China and Russia had pledged mutual defense against the Japanese.

"One United States official at the United Nations, however, said that the North Korean charges were 'just some more week-end Communist propaganda.'" P. 13.

[18] Malcolm Cagle and Frank Manson, The Sea War in Korea (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1957), p. 165. See also Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 373 and MacArthur Hearings, p. 3493.

matter of policy, only ROK troops could go that far north.[19] General Collins has observed that, "if the Chiefs noted this--and I have no recollection that we did--we offered no objection."[20]

Strategic information on Chinese intervention continued to show an increasing Chinese threat. On October 17 Chinese antiaircraft again fired across the Yalu[21] and Chou En-lai again protested UN involvement in the Taiwan issue,[22] while on the following day seventy-five fighter aircraft were spotted by US reconnaisance at Antung airfield on the Sino-Korean border. "General Stratemeyer thought that the Communists had displayed the planes to lend color and credence to their menacing statements."[23] At the same time, Admiral C. Turner Joy (Commander, US Naval Forces in the Far East) warned of the dangers in landing the X-Corps Marines in North Korea due to the "increasing possibility of Chinese military intervention."[24] His warning, dispatched to Admiral Struble (Commander of the Seventh Fleet) "showed the firm official anxiety" about the Chinese threat among some US policy makers.[25]

---

[19]Appleman, op. cit., pp. 670-1; Collins, op. cit., p. 177; Futrell, op. cit., p. 210; and McLellan, loc. cit.

[20]Collins, loc. cit.

[21]MacArthur Hearings, p. 3493.

[22]Weng, Peking's U.N. Policy, pp. 89-90.

[23]Futrell, op. cit., p. 205 and Kolko, Limits of Power, p. 597.

[24]Karig, Battle Report, Volume 6, p. 297.

[25]Ibid.

By October 19 the State Department still believed Chinese intervention was unlikely,[26] but on October 20, 5,000 Chinese troops were reported to have established positions in North Korea and US Far East intelligence reported that 400,000 more were deployed along the Yalu and had been alerted to cross between October 18 and 20.[27] At the same time in Northwest Korea, the trend of events was shown to be even more sinister when the ROK II Corps, interrogating captured Chinese soldiers, learned that 9,000 Chinese troops had crossed the River.[28] In Tokyo, General MacArthur stated unequivocally that he was worried "by the growing indication of a startling build-up of Red Chinese troops in Manchuria, just north of the Yalu,"[29] and in Washington, the President was warned by the CIA that PRC troops were likely to enter North Korea to protect hydro-electric stations in the area.[30]

Thus, on October 21, just six days after the Wake agreement, the JCS already were warning MacArthur to keep clear of hydro-electric facilities in North Korea because of the likelihood of Chinese

---

[26]DeWeerd, op. cit., p. 447 and MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833.

[27]Appleman, op. cit., p. 761 and MacArthur Hearings, pp. 1387, 3493.

[28]Lichterman, op. cit., p. 600 and deWeerd, loc. cit.

[29]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 365.

[30]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 372. See also George, "Chinese Communist Intervention," p. 33 and Lichterman, op. cit., p. 613.

intervention.[31] General MacArthur still kept responding optimistically that he expected fighting to end in North Korea and continued his advance toward the border.[32] But, as the New York Times observed, his

> announcement that the drive toward the border would be continued coincides with reports of increased massing Chinese troops on the Manchurian border, in strength of perhaps 250,000 men.[33]

MacArthur again ordered all of his troops to the border in spite of existing policy restrictions and when questioned on his action by the JCS, argued that his move was a matter of military necessity completely "consonant" with JCS orders.[34] Thereafter the JCS did not challenge him again on the issue and consented implicitly to his offensive operations. This unrestricted movement of MacArthur's troops toward the Yalu, combined with the crossing into North Korea of Chinese forces, set the stage for a military confrontation.[35]

---

[31] MacArthur Hearings, pp. 3415-16 and Higgins, op. cit., pp. 65-6.

[32] Rees, op. cit., p. 124. See also Ibid., pp. 64-6 and Montross and Canzona, loc. cit. MacArthur announced publicly that the fighting "was 'definitely' coming to an end" at this time. See NYT, October 21, p. 1.

[33] NYT, October 22, p. 1.

[34] Acheson, op. cit., p. 462; Collins, op. cit., pp. 180-1; MacArthur Hearings, p. 1241; McLellan, loc. cit.; Montross and Canzona, op. cit., pp. 36-7; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 600; Rees, op. cit., pp. 127-8; and Spanier, op. cit., p. 124.

[35] Goodrich and Simons, The U.N. and the Maintenance of International Peace, p. 475. The authors have commented:

"Thus it appears that at a time when other Member governments were becoming concerned over the danger of Chinese Communist intervention and were making specific suggestions for the use of restraint, the United Nations Commander was permitted, for reasons of military

Then on October 25, just ten days after the Wake conference, the US effort to unify Korea was frustrated by Chinese military intervention. The ROK II Corps, attacked by Chinese units in Northwest Korea, was "badly beaten by the Chinese and lost all of their own artillery and many vehicles," according to General Collins.[36]

---

necessity, to act contrary to instructions that were in line with such a course. No doubt General MacArthur's action was justified if the achievement of his military mission, which was to destroy the opposing forces in North Korea, was to be placed ahead of all other considerations. If, on the other hand, the prevention of the extension of the conflict was to be a major guiding consideration, as many Members desired, a strong case could be made for being satisfied with less than the complete fulfillment of the original mission. Although existing procedures of consultation appear to have been inadequate for achieving the balanced evaluation of alternative courses and their likely consequences in a situation of this kind, what was most apparent in this case was that the United States Government, in the discharge of its responsibility of unified command, did not effectively implement the policy that it had adopted both in an effort to meet the desires of its associates in the United Nations and on the basis of its own estimate of the situation." The unrestricted movement of US troops in North Korea was particularly upsetting to the Indian government who feared a wider war because of MacArthur's activities. Although the Indian government's position was denounced by US officials as "playing into the hands of the communists," it seems to have been based on sound political logic. As Prime Minister Nehru stated in an October 18 news conference:

"It was patent to us that the USSR, and even more particularly China, were deeply concerned with the future of a neighboring territory like Korea and that no satisfactory solution in the Far East could be arrived at by ignoring these two powers. To cross the Thirty-eighth Parallel without making . . . an effort at peaceful solution appeared to us to be wrong and to involve grave risks of conflict on a much wider scale." NYT, October 17, p. 8.

[36]Collins, op. cit., p. 184.

General Walker, commanding the US Eighth Army was "alarmed" at the news, and General Collins has reported that:

> Word that the enemy to the front were Chinese rather than North Korean spread rapidly through the ROK troops, bringing chills of apprehension even more ominous than the first snow of approaching winter, which hit at the same time.[37]

ROK General Paik Sun-yup reported to the US command at this time that approximately 10,000 Chinese troops were on the fighting front, while ROK units came under heavy attack. Chinese POW's were captured by ROK and US troops both, and according to President Truman

> The prisoners stated that their units had crossed the Yalu River on October 16, only one day after General MacArthur had assured me on Wake Island that he did not expect them to try anything that foolish.[38]

On October 26, the US 8th Cavalry Regiment was attacked by Chinese units at Unsan in Northwest Korea.[39] According to General S.L.A. Marshall,

> These developments signaled more than a brief flare-up of organized resistance after weeks of desultory skirmishing. Both traps had been sprung by Chinese troops in superior strength. Extrapolating, intelligence concluded that somewhere between 30,000 and 60,000 Chinese had already crossed into Korea.[40]

But, as Marshall has written, "bad news does not always travel on winged feet," and so it was in Korea.[41] Even in the face of setbacks at the

---

[37] Ibid., p. 185. According to General Marshall, ROK troops ". . . had a tremor phasing into paralysis" when they heard that Chinese troops were in the battle, so, "with some mental reservations, Intelligence therefore took a more conservative tone." See Marshall, op. cit., p. 7.

[38] Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 373.

[39] Collins, op. cit., pp. 184-5.

[40] Marshall, op. cit., p. 10.

[41] Ibid., p. 176.

hands of the Chinese, Eighth Army and X-Corps intelligence reports continued insisting that there was no indication of Chinese intervention, and optimism of victory continued to prevail among many units, and especially at the high command levels.[42] The Marine

> X-Corps Intelligence section added to the optimism by stating that little organized resistance could be expected and that North Korean remnants planned either to withdraw into Manchuria or to make a last ditch stand in the mountains to the north.[43] [Italics not in the original.]

General Collins has written that, "as late as October 26 Eighth Army intelligence officers discounted prisoner reports of Chinese intervention in strength,"[44] and according to General Ridgway, ". . . the United States command was reluctant to accept this accumulating evidence."[45]

Events on the battlefield simply would not conform to the high expectations of US officials, however, as American combat troops were forced to deal with the reality of Chinese intervention. When US Marines landed at Wonsan in Northeast Korea, Colonel Homer Litzenbergh (Commanding the Seventh Marine Regiment) "was not convinced" that high level reports were correct in discounting Chinese intervention and

---

[42]In fact, the US I Corps at this time issued a new directive to destroy the North Korean Army. See Appleman, op. cit., p. 676.

[43]Andrew Geer, The New Breed (New York: Harper, 1952), pp. 195-6.

[44]Collins, op. cit., p. 185.

[45]Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 53.

warned his troops "that on the drive north they could expect to meet with the Chinese Communist troops." He stated in his combat briefing on October 26:

> "If there is anyone here who expects an easy walk to the Yalu River, erase it from your mind now. We are faced with a winter campaign and we're going to have to fight. It's important to win all of our battles, but it's most important that we win our first one when we meet the Chinese."[46]

Throughout late October public news reports continued showing the infiltration of large numbers of Chinese troops into North Korea, but official US government spokesmen denied publicly that the Chinese had intervened. Although they had "hard" intelligence on Chinese involvement (i.e. defeat of the ROK II Corps, etc.), US officials avoided conclusions about Chinese intervention that might force them to abandon unification. General Ridgway has written that ". . . all through this period, official reports shone with optimism." According to Ridgway:

> Washington was informed that there was "no confirmation" of the widely circulated press stories that 20,000 Communist Chinese troops had entered North Korea. On October 28, Washington was assured that there was still "no firm indication of any open intervention by the Chinese." Two days later the Far East Command reported that it did not believe, despite reports to the contrary, that any elements of the Chinese 39th and 40th Armies reportedly in Korea, had actually crossed the border.[47] [Italics not in original.]

The atmosphere of optimism among US officials continued and extended to the lower, as well as the upper levels of the military

---

[46]Geer, loc. cit.

[47]Ridgway, op. cit., p. 51.

bureaucracy, even to the point of affecting the attitudes and responses of some battle units. General Ridgway has observed,

> . . . when Colonel Percy Thompson, G-2 (intelligence officer) of the I Corps, warned troops of the 1st Cavalry Division just committed to Unsan that they might be facing Chinese forces, the men responded with disbelief and indifference. [Italics not in original.]
>
> The staff of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, who were to hold the positions north and west of Unsan, likewise refused to pay heed to the stories told them by the troops and attached KMAG [US-Korea Military Advisory Group] officers of the ROK 1st Division who had run up against the Chinese outside Unsan. . . .[48] [Italics not in original.]
>
> A request by General Hobart R. Gay, Commanding the 1st Cavalry Division, for permission to withdraw the 8th Cavalry Regiment to a position a few miles below Unsan, was denied by I Corps headquarters. Few were the officers who took any of these disquieting reports to heart.[49]

The capture of sixteen Chinese POWs by X-Corps on October 29, however, forced that unit to conclude that "integral CCF units have been committed against U.N. forces,"[50] and "General Almond at once sent a personal radio message to General MacArthur informing him of the presence of CCF units in North Korea and giving him such details as

---

[48] Ibid., p. 53. See also Appleman, op. cit., pp. 689-90. According to Appleman, "General Gay maintained that his first information on Chinese intervention came on November 1 when he visited General Paik at the latter's ROK 1st Division headquarters at Yongbyon. This is hard to reconcile with the fact that in the last two days of October officers and men of the 8th Cavalry Regiment at Unsan heard a great deal about the Chinese from the ROK 1st Division troops and the attached KMAG."

[49] Ridgway, op. cit., p. 53.

[50] Appleman, op. cit., p. 755.

he had learned in the course of his interview with the prisoners."[51]

Since all of this information threatened the goal of unification, it is unsurprising that US intelligence agencies continued discounting it. For example, one X-Corps G-2 estimate covering this period reported:

> "The capture by the 26th ROK Regiment of 16 POWs identified as being members of the 124th Division . . . would seem to indicate that the CCF has decided to intervene in the Korean War. It would indicate, also, that this re-inforcement is being effected by unit rather than by piecemeal replacement from volunteer cadres. However, until more definite information is obtained it must be presumed that the CCF has not yet decided on full scale intervention."
>
> Division intelligence officers concluded their analysis with the comment, "The advantage to be gained by all-out intervention, at a time when the North Korean forces are on the verge of complete collapse is not readily apparent."[52]

Likewise, Eighth Army headquarters was "skeptical" of intelligence showing the Chinese build-up and "did not accept" prevailing evidence at hand.[53]

These official reactions to Chinese intervention seem to follow naturally from the events we have observed thus far, and point out some of the effects of the Wake agreement. Clearly, an attitude of optimism

---

[51] Ibid., p. 687. See also Collins, op. cit., pp. 191-99 and Spanier, op. cit., p. 115. Montross and Canzona point out that US Marines aided the Nationalist Chinese in the Chinese civil war so, "the first blows between the Marines and the Chinese Communists took place not in Korea, but along the Peiping-Tientsin highway as early as October, 1945." See Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 85 and pp. 82-91.

[52] Montross and Canzona, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

[53] Appleman, op. cit., p. 752.

had spread throughout all levels of the government and we can see that it affected front line troops and intelligence units. The initial Chinese attacks were a surprise to troops who thought the war was almost over and the Chinese presence in strength obviously did not fit in with the anticipations of various intelligence groups. None were anxious to acknowledge Chinese intervention because it cast doubt on their own ability to measure adequately enemy capabilities and intentions. If there were any "strategic surprises" or "intelligence failures" in the Korean War, this initial encounter with the Chinese appears to have been a genuine one.

Certainly, it was a rather clear-cut warning to Washington that intelligence units in Korea were severely limited in forecasting enemy moves. As shown by the tentative qualifying remarks attached to intelligence reports, moreover, Washington had another indication that strategic information was being discounted. Just as MacArthur had discounted the possibility of Chinese intervention while he was at Wake, US intelligence units now were discounting the reality of it.

At this critical time, as the JCS in Washington reviewed the deteriorating military situation, all the evidence pointed toward an increasing Chinese threat. Indeed, on October 29 Chinese spokesmen again publicly stated that the PRC was opposed to US action in Korea and Chou En-lai pointed out that the American "action of extending the war has continued to develop toward the northeastern part of China," and was therefore a threat to Chinese territory.[54] The PRC radio again

---

[54] NYT, October 29, p. 3.

denounced the United States and rallied the Chinese for war against the US while PRC troops launched strong counter-attacks against ROK troops in North Korea.[55] In the western sector of Korea General Walker became convinced "at last" of Chinese military involvement in North Korea and by October 31 US intelligence units began to acknowledge the fact of Chinese intervention.[56] General Almond conferred with his X-Corps staff in Northeast Korea and concluded that a confrontation with the Chinese was inevitable if American forces continued to unify Korea.[57]

Yet optimism at the higher levels of government was extremely resistant to change. According to William Sebald (US State Department liaison to General MacArthur):

> By October 30 it was clear from all available intelligence that Eighth Army was faced by major Chinese Communist forces in North Korea. In retrospect, however, I cannot recall that MacArthur showed concern during this period over the possibility that Peking would enter the war. To the best of my recollection, the subject was not mentioned during several conversations between the General and me at this time, the latest being on October 27. Perhaps there was no reason why the General should have indicated concern or mentioned the subject to me. But for several weeks General Willoughby, during intelligence briefings, had pointed out the capabilities of the Chinese Communist Army and had provided identifications of its major formations in Manchuria.[58]

"As for the intervention of the Chinese," General Ridgway has written, "MacArthur simply closed his ears to their threats and apparently

---

[55] NYT, October 30, p. 2.

[56] Collins, op. cit., p. 188. See also Appleman, op. cit., pp. 761-2; Truman, op. cit., p. 372; and Lichterman, op. cit., p. 572.

[57] Montross and Canzona, op. cit., pp. 58-9.

[58] Sebald, op. cit., p. 201.

ignored or belittled the first strong evidence that they had crossed the Yalu in force."[59]

Certainly, our data show that US officials avoided firm conclusions about Chinese involvement and accepted a minimum of the accumulated evidence. The Chinese military presence in North Korea was "bad news" for the advocates of unification, hence none were anxious to hear about it or to believe what they could not avoid hearing. Intelligence units were equivocating, high level officials were passing the buck, and all, thereby, were avoiding unpleasant conclusions. Although by October 30 X-Corps intelligence had established the formal identity of captured Chinese troops,[60] Eighth Army intelligence still was insisting that there was no indication of open intervention by the Chinese.[61]

General Willoughby has attempted to explain away such contradictions, arguing that MacArthur

> . . . felt that he could not ignore the assumption that Red China had determined upon a limited commitment of Chinese, and at the same time he certainly could not yet assume from the evidence at hand that the decision had been made in Peiping for all-out war in Korea. The logical source for information on any such policies decisions [sic] made in Peiping was, of course, Washington, and not the front line in Korea.[62]

---

[59]Ridgway, op. cit., p. 47.

[60]Collins, op. cit., pp. 191-9.

[61]Appleman, op. cit., p. 753.

[62]Willoughby, op. cit., pp. 403-4 and MacArthur, op. cit., p. 366.

But, in Washington, General Collins was dispatching General Bolte (Army G-3, Operations) on reconnaissance to Tokyo to find out what MacArthur was doing![63]

When strategic information was "bad" US officials avoided accepting it, perhaps for differing rationale, but generally for the same reasons: it threatened their political commitments.

The Flood of Information

Whatever reasons US officials may have had for not accepting intelligence on Chinese intervention in late October there was no way to deny that the war was escalating in November. From the Chinese side of the Yalu River US planes were fired-on and, for the first time in the war, were attacked over Korea by unidentified jet fighters on

---

[63]Collins, op. cit., p. 198. See also Schnabel, Policy and Direction, pp. 223-4. Meanwhile, in the public press, US officials were denying that Chinese units were even in North Korea. In an apparent effort to quash public awareness, the Pentagon issued a public statement on the matter. According to the New York Times, "The Defense Department on October 31 . . . said that it had no information about the reported entry of Chinese Communist units into the fighting in North Korea." NYT, October 31, p. 3. This statement was issued six days after the ROK II Corps had been "badly beaten" and the 8th Cavalry Regiment had been attacked by Chinese troops! There was no doubt about their identity, as Army historian Appleman has noted: "From the very beginning the Chinese fought in Chinese organizations and were never mixed as individuals into North Korean organizations. In the offensive against the Eighth Army and ROK II Corps at the end of October and the first week of November the action was almost entirely by Chinese troops." See Appleman, op. cit., p. 719. Fast moving events naturally forced disclosure of what was really happening, as reported in the New York Times, November 1, p. 1.

November 1.[64] In addition, the North Korean government announced publicly that Chinese "volunteers" were involved in the Korean fighting, and this was corroborated by the PRC press on November 3.[65] Many US officials still were "simply undeterred by evidence of Chinese intervention," and Colonel Homer Litzenbergh's 7th Marines moved to engage Chinese troops in Northeast Korea, even though he "suspected that they had infiltrated toward his left rear."[66]

In the western section of North Korea, the situation was even more precarious. Army historian Roy Appleman has written that by November 1

> . . . the CCF had driven back the ROK II Corps, crippling it disastrously, and was south of the Ch'ong Ch'on on the open right flank of Eighth Army. And disaster was also threatening in the center of the Eighth Army front at Unsan.[67]

Yet, US officers continued the action to unify Korea, as per their orders, and continued discounting Chinese intervention. Describing one of the many unusual situations, General Collins has written,

---

[64]This was the first appearance of Communist jet aircraft in the Korean War, thus marking a significant increase in foreign military assistance to North Korea. See Futrell, op. cit., pp. 205-7; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 601; MacArthur Hearings, p. 3493; Rovere and Schlesinger, The President and the General, p. 136; and Cagle and Manson, op. cit., pp. 223-4.

[65]Appleman, op. cit., p. 762; Long, op. cit., p. 214; and Rees, op. cit., p. 131.

[66]Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 82.

[67]Appleman, op. cit., p. 676. According to Appleman Eighth Army's advance on November 1 was the high water mark of its drive to reach the Yalu River.

> Realizing the threat to his 1st Cavalry Division in its dispersed and exposed position, Hap Gay telephoned I Corps headquarters on November 1 requesting authority to withdraw the 8th Regiment from Unsan. This request was refused. Apparently, Milburn and the I Corps staff did not accept fully the reports of strong Chinese forces on the Corps front. . . .[68] [Italics not in the original.]

Finally, on November 2, General MacArthur acknowledged that US forces were facing organized Chinese units, but his own realization was too late to prevent a major new disaster. On November 3 the US 8th Cavalry Regiment at Unsan was attacked and defeated by Chinese troops, losing over half its authorized battle strength, and, according to the Army's G-3 (Operations Division) officers, was rendered "inoperable."[69] This new Chinese assualt dealt a serious blow to the US 8th Army in North Korea. In Washington, General Bolte concluded that "The Chinese had destroyed the 8th Regimental Combat Team."[70] [Italics not in the original.]

These developments could not be brushed aside so the JCS wired MacArthur asking his views on "what appears to be overt intervention by Chinese Communist units."[71] He replied at once, boldly stating, ". . . increased resistance being encountered by United Nations forces,

---

[68]Collins, op. cit., p. 186. Major General Hobart R. Gay was Commander of the First Cavalry Division and Lt. General Frank W. Milburn was Commander of the I Corps.

[69]Appleman, op. cit., p. 708. Appleman has written that the 8th Cavalry Regiment had only 45 per cent of its authorized strength after this battle.

[70]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 257.

[71]Collins, op. cit., p. 198.

remove the problem of Chinese intervention from the realm of the academic, and turn it into a serious immediate threat."[72] He has written that:

> On November 3rd, I furnished Washington a Communist battle order, listing in complete numerical detail strength and locations in Manchuria of fifty-six regular army divisions in sixteen corps--a total of 498,000 men. In addition, there were district service forces of 370,000, or an aggregate of 868,000 in all. Meanwhile, other forces were still converging northward from central China. This intelligence was furnished not only to Washington, but to the United Nations, either of whom could have stopped our troops at any point in North Korea if they had taken the mounting Chinese threat seriously.[73]

This report by MacArthur is a revelation that deserves careful scrutiny for the several interpretations it implies. When compared to his report to Truman at Wake the new figures disclosed here show an increase of at least 198,000 troops in Manchuria thus suggesting that MacArthur was ill-informed at Wake; or, that he did not disclose the actual figures he had; or, that the PRC had rushed nearly a quarter of a million new men into Manchuria in three weeks. Moreover, the aggregate figure suggests that there was a greater military potential in Manchuria than had theretofore been appreciated with any seriousness by US officials. Whatever interpretation may be placed on these figures, certainly they show a dramatic increase in the level of the Chinese threat and in the government's level of awareness of that threat.

---

[72]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 366.

[73]Ibid.

MacArthur does not mention in his memoirs whether he supplied data on the number of Chinese troops in Korea, nor does he record the argument he expressed in this report to Washington that led General Collins to comment that when he read the report "it gave no hint of impending emergency."[74] In part this appears to have been the result of the way MacArthur presented his new information. According to Collins, General MacArthur presented the data and then argued:

> The Chinese might be following one or more of four possible courses of action: open intervention in full force, covert intervention concealed for diplomatic reasons, use of "volunteers" to gain a foothold in Korea, an entry on the assumption of encountering only ROK forces that could easily be defeated. As to the first course, he said that "while it is a distinct possibility, and many foreign experts predict such action, there are many fundamental logical reasons against it and sufficient evidence has not yet come to hand to warrant its immediate acceptance." Finally, he advised the JCS, "I recommend against hasty conclusions which might be premature and believe that final appraisement should await a more complete accumulation of military facts."[75] [Italics not in original.]

The substance and timing of MacArthur's November 3 report support the hypothesis that he was manipulating information to avoid policy changes he did not want. Clearly, it signalled the acceptance by him of Chinese military intervention, since all of the explanatory hypotheses he offered treated Chinese intervention as a reality, and, certainly, his

---

[74]Collins, op. cit., p. 199. Collins goes on to say that, "This is difficult to understand in view of General Almond's personal report on October 30 definitely identifying the CCF 124th Division in the area of the Changjin Reservoir and the confirmation on October 25 from General Paik of the presence of Chinese troops north of the Chongchon River on the front of the Eighth Army."

[75]Ibid.

recommendation against "hasty conclusions" was an overt effort to avoid a change in his military mission.

The ambiguous tone of his message and the tentativeness of his reasoning encouraged officials in Washington to belittle, and perhaps to overlook MacArthur's own unequivocal warning that Chinese intervention was a "serious, immediate threat." So, no action was taken to change US policy. Instead, the matter was left hanging until MacArthur felt that he had "sufficient" information. In effect he left his superiors little choice but to wait for his own news report, but the more US officials delayed a change in policy, the more the Chinese hardened their own commitment to intervene in North Korea.

At this time, the PRC re-stated its position publicly. "A joint declaration issued on November 4 by all parties participating in the Peking regime" re-affirmed the original PRC opposition to American action in Korea.[76] In addition, the PRC radio again warned that American action was threatening to force Chinese intervention in Korea. One broadcast

> declared the Korean War was a direct threat to the safety of China and that the Chinese people should take the initiative and exert utmost efforts to resist the United States and assist North Korea. The Far East Command G-2, in commenting on this broadcast, said that preceding ones had sounded like "bombast and boasting. The above did not."[77]

Again on November 5 PRC news sources stated Chinese opposition to military action in Korea, while Chinese troops renewed attacks on

---

[76]Tsou, America's Failure in China, p. 576.

[77]Appleman, op. cit., p. 762.

UN forces.[78]

This situation clearly threatened the policy of unification and led MacArthur to issue a Special Report to the UN on November 5 listing twelve verified incidents of military contact between Chinese and UN forces in North Korea. He openly condemned Chinese intervention as "an act of international lawlessness," calling for further action to deal with the PRC.[79] At the same time, his intelligence agency warned Washington that ". . . Chinese Communist Forces had the potential to launch a large-scale counter offensive at any time and without warning."[80]

Thus, with the issuance of MacArthur's Special Report, the Sino-American confrontation in Korea became openly acknowledged as a serious international crisis facing the American government. Publicly the US (and the UN) was committed to Korean unification while the PRC was committed to intervention, so there was no way to deny the discrepancy between these two positions and no way to dismiss either unification or intervention as remote policy contingencies. Yet US officials took no steps to change the policy of unification, to negotiate with the PRC, or even to limit US military operations.

---

[78]Ibid., pp. 714-15. See also Higgins, op. cit., p. 67.

[79]MacArthur Hearings, p. 1833; Goodrich, U.S. Policy in the U.N., p. 141; Rees, op. cit., p. 130; Sebald, op. cit., p. 202; and Spanier, op. cit., pp. 115-18.

[80]Appleman, op. cit., p. 762; Collins, loc. cit.

Quite the contrary, US forces initiated further military action only to find themselves face to face with disaster. On November 6, General Walker reported to MacArthur:

> An ambush and surprise attack by fresh, well-organized and well-trained units, some of which were Chinese Communist Forces, began a sequence of events leading to complete collapse and disintegration of ROK II Corps of three divisions. Contributing factors were intense, psychological fear of Chinese intervention and previous complacency and over-confidence in all ROK ranks. . . . The collapse of ROK II Corps on the east flank together with heavy attack on the 1st ROK Division and 8th Cavalry RCT on the east flank of the I U.S. Corps seriously threatened the only road supplying the I Corps and dictated temporary withdrawal of exposed columns of 24th Infantry Division on the west, a regrouping of forces, an active defense, a build-up of supplies pending resumption of offensive and advance to the border. . . .[81] [Italics not in the original.]

But, even with his offensive halted by enemy action and in the face of an increasing Chinese threat, Walker was quick to reassure MacArthur that the offensive would be continued! He accepted Chinese intervention "in stride," telling MacArthur:

> There has never been and there is now no intention for this Army to take up or remain on a passive perimeter or any other type of defense. Every effort is being made to retain an adequate bridgehead to facilitate the resumption of the attack as soon as conditions permit. All units continue to execute local attacks to restore or improve lines. Plans have been prepared for the resumption of the offensive employing all forces available to the Army to meet the new factor of organized Chinese Communist forces. These plans will be put into action at the earliest possible moment and are dependent only upon the security of the right flank, the

---

[81]Collins, op. cit., p. 197. Ridgway has written that by the first week of November "General Walker well knew that he lacked the force and the equipment for a sustained offensive against an enemy whose numerical superiority now seemed clear." See Ridgway, op. cit., pp. 59, 55-60.

> marshalling of the attack troops and the restoration of vital supplies. In this connection there now exists in the forward areas only one day of fire. Opening of port of Chinampo and extension of railroad to Pyongyang is essential to movement of supplies and troops.[82] [Italics not in the original.]

Walker's statement clearly shows the strength of his own commitment to Korean unification. He was not alone. Paralyzed by piecemeal defeats, forced to withdraw and consolidate, and threatened with serious supply shortages, the military establishment still clung to the hope of resuming the offensive to unify Korea. Indeed, we can see from MacArthur's response at this time not only a willingness to continue the action, but to increase the extent of the American war effort to whatever proportions necessary to achieve the government's objectives.

From Tokyo, General MacArthur immediately directed two weeks of maximum air efforts "to knock the North Koreans and their allies out of the war." According to Army historian James Schnabel, MacArthur was unflinching in his determination to "win" the war even if it meant total destruction of North Korea:

> "Combat crews," he ordered, "are to be flown to exhaustion if necessary." From the Yalu southward . . . the Far East Air Forces would "destroy every means of communication and every installation, factory, city, and village."[83]

On November 6, moreover, he ordered that the Yalu River bridges between China and Korea be destroyed and that US pilots pursue enemy aircraft into China. This enlargement of the war prompted the JCS to restrain MacArthur by vetoing the bridge bombing and the "hot pursuit" because

---

[82]Collins, op. cit., p. 197.

[83]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 241.

those actions were certain to provoke PRC retaliation for unavoidable American attacks on Chinese territory. In other words, the government now was faced with a situation where its commitment to unify Korea conflicted with its commitment to avoid a larger war.[84] This again was a "warning" sign that showed something was seriously wrong with the government's strategy in dealing with the Korean situation, but again US officials put the warnings aside and chose to increase the level of their military involvement.

MacArthur, reacting immediately and strongly to the JCS action, argued against any restraints on his operations, mustered new arguments and evidence to support his position. In a communique to Washington on November 6 he admonished the JCS that:

> Men and material in large force are pouring across all bridges over the Yalu from Manchuria. This movement not only jeopardizes but threatens the ultimate destruction of the forces under my command.[85] [Italics not in the original.]

He argued that failure to bomb the bridges would result directly in greater allied casualties and specifically requested that the decision be reversed. In concluding, he stated

> I cannot overemphasize the disastrous effect, both physical and psychological, that will result from the restrictions which you are imposing. I trust that the matter immediately be brought to the attention of the President as I believe your instructions may well result

---

[84]See Acheson, op. cit., p. 463; Appleman, op. cit., pp. 715-16; Berger, op. cit., p. 124; Collins, op. cit., pp. 196-204; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 602; MacArthur Hearings, p. 964; Rees, op. cit., pp. 130-1; and Whitney, op. cit., pp. 406-8.

[85]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 375.

> in a calamity of major proportion for which I cannot accept the responsibility without his personal and direct understanding of the situation.[86] [Italics not in the original.]

He not only went "over the heads" of his superiors, he requested, as General Collins has noted, that the President share with him the responsibility for action in the field.[87] In other words, General MacArthur was avoiding a change in his mission at the risk of having his own command destroyed and possibly causing a wider war. At no time did he counsel that the goal of unification should be abandoned, and that it was already compromised.

US officials in Washington were "surprised at the sudden sense of urgency revealed in this message," and the JCS Chairman General Bradley conferred with the President immediately.[88] President Truman has written that "since General MacArthur was on the scene and felt so strongly that this was of unusual urgency, I told Bradley to give him the 'go-ahead.'"[89] [Italics not in the original.]

---

[86] Ibid. In this particular communique MacArthur made it plain that he placed total confidence in his air power. As Truman has written, "And he went on to say: 'I deem it essential to execute the bombing of the targets under discussion as the only resource left to me to prevent a potential buildup of enemy strength to a point threatening the safety of the command.'" [Italics not in the original.] See Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 377.

[87] Collins, op. cit., p. 201. MacArthur's bridge bombing order, in Collins' words, "had a touch of panic, which disturbed Washington military and civilian authorities alike." Page 200.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 376.

On November 7 the JCS authorized MacArthur to bomb the bridges and their message read in part:

> In view of first sentence your message of November 6 you are authorized to go ahead with your planned bombing in Korea near the frontier including targets at Sinuiju and Korean end of Yalu bridges provided that at time of receipt of this message you still find such action essential to safety of your forces.[90] [Italics not in the original.]

At the same time, General MacArthur was instructed to furnish an updated report on the situation.

According to General Collins, "MacArthur replied at once with his estimate, which confirmed that the Chinese threat was real and growing and that it could force a withdrawal of United Nations forces if permitted to increase in strength."[91] [Italics not in the original.] This in part, is what General MacArthur reported to Washington:

> Unquestionably . . . organized units of CCF have been and are being used against U.N. forces; that while it is impossible to determine accurately the precise strength, it is enough to have taken the initiative in the west and to have slowed appreciably our offensive in the east. The pattern seems established that such forces will be used and increased at will, probably without a formal declaration of hostilities. If this enemy build-up continues, it can easily reach a point preventing our resumption of the offensive and even force a retrograde movement. An attempt will be made in the west, possibly within ten days, again to assume the initiative if the flow of enemy reinforcements can be checked. Only through such an offensive can an accurate measure of the enemy strength be taken.[92] [Italics not in the original.]

---

[90] Ibid.

[91] Collins, op. cit., p. 202.

[92] Appleman, op. cit., pp. 764-5. Again in this message, MacArthur stressed his complete faith in air power to solve the problem of Chinese intervention. Appleman has quoted him as saying: "I believe that with my air power, now unrestricted so far as Korea is

In other words, MacArthur's air power had not interdicted Chinese intervention and his offensive drive continued to be stalled for at least ten days. And, as the Chinese poured into North Korea, winter weather set in.

MacArthur's announced plan "again to assume the initiative," shows his resistance to any change in policy, and suggests that his own commitment to the existing policy limited the options open to government policy makers in Washington. Despite his emphasis on the uncertain aspects of Chinese intervention, his hope of resuming the offensive, his willingness to fight the Chinese and his insistance on an attack, the threat of disaster was not diminished, and Korean unification was not any more feasible. His advocacy of an offensive position simply complicated matters and submerged the critical political issues at hand. As Dean Acheson has written, "MacArthur's messages of November 6 and 7 confused the situation for those of us in Washington even more than it had been before."[93]

But, officials in Washington were not dependent on MacArthur alone for intelligence or command decisions. General Collins has written,

---

concerned except as to hydro-electric installations, I can deny reinforcements coming across the Yalu in sufficient strength to prevent the destruction of those forces now arrayed against me in North Korea." No one challenged this estimate.

[93]Acheson, op. cit., p. 464. For detailed accounts of the communications between MacArthur and officials in Washington see the following: Appleman, loc. cit.; Collins, op. cit., pp. 196-204; Lichterman, op. cit., pp. 601-4; Rees, loc. cit.; Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 241-52; Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 373-80.

> Meanwhile intelligence agencies in Washington, pooling information from all sources, estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 Chinese were already in Korea and that as many as 350,000 enemy troops could be transferred and supported there within a month or two.[94]

Moreover, a CIA report to the President dated November 6 stated that there were possibly 200,000 troops entering North Korea. According to the President,

> The estimate concluded by pointing to one inescapable fact: with their entry into Korea, the Chinese Communists had staked not only their forces but also their prestige in Asia. It had to be taken into account that they were ready for general war.[95]

The intelligence not only became more threatening but more accurate as well. William Sebald, who was briefed on the situation by General Willoughby on November 7 has recalled that that intelligence officer "gave a clear and succinct analysis of the order of battle of the Chinese army engaged in North Korea." Moreover, Sebald has written, "I specifically asked Willoughby at that time whether his identifications and unit locations were firm. His answer was an unequivocal affirmative."[96]

---

[94]Collins, op. cit., p. 202.

[95]Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 376-7.

[96]Sebald, op. cit., p. 203. "This exchange was to come back to me many times," Sebald has added, "when it appeared later that the United Nations forces were 'reeling' from the 'sudden onslaught' of the Chinese Communist forces and when charges were made in the world press that intelligence was taken by surprise and hence was the cause of the United Nations 'defeat' in the first Chinese offensive. The years have not dimmed my belief that, contrary to achieving tactical surprise, the Chinese movements were well known to the United States intelligence officers."

At this critical point, the Chinese issued another public warning that showed their concern over US military operations in Korea and disengaged on the battlefield,[97] leaving the ROK II Corps in "complete collapse and disintegration" and the 8th US Cavalry Regiment "inoperable." In effect, they turned over the initiative to the US government after having issued verbal warnings against UN action to unify Korea, and after having supported those warnings with a demonstrative use of force. Their troops did not withdraw from Korea. On the contrary, their numbers grew daily. So, while MacArthur regrouped his forces and consolidated military losses, US officials studied the situation fully aware of the dangers and fully capable of minimizing the risks they faced.

The Air Power Myth

That there was a serious, immediate possibility and probability of disaster is obvious from our data. Since the government was committed to unification the policy problem was defined in military terms which encouraged increasingly militaristic responses even though, under the circumstances, such actions were decreasingly effective. In particular, General MacArthur's insistance on unrestrained use of his air power as the solution to the problem of Chinese intervention was being systematically disconfirmed. Despite maximum efforts by the US pilots, the Chinese kept pouring into North Korea. According to

---

[97]Rees, loc. cit.; Collins, op. cit., p. 208.

US Marine historians:

> . . . Marine air men made nightly strikes from the 1st to the 9th against Sinuiju at the mouth of the Yalu, and they repeatedly reported a steady stream of trucks moving into Northwest Korea from Antung, Manchuria.
>
> Time after time [US planes] blasted Sinuiju with bombs, rockets and 20 mm shells, and though parts of the city were continuously aflame, it still seethed with activity. They [US pilots] described southward bound traffic as 'heavy,' 'very heavy,' and even 'tremendous,' and at least one convoy was reported to be 'gigantic.'[98]

This is not to say, of course, that air power was useless or unimportant, but simply that American officials expected too much from that particular tactical device.

And, these expectations had an adverse effect on the formulation of American military and political strategy. As General Collins has written, "General MacArthur's confidence in . . . and over-reliance on airpower . . . led him to a wholly unrealistic appraisal of the projected operation of the Eighth Army and the X-Corps."[99]

---

[98]Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 124. Cagle and Manson have noted, "In the air meanwhile reconnaissance revealed that Communist reinforcements and supplies were steadily streaming across the Yalu River bridges into North Korea." See Cagle and Manson, op. cit., p. 223. Rees has noted that "79 B-29s and 300 fighter bombers destroyed much of the town on 8 November . . . [but] most of the Chinese Communist troops were already in Korea by this time. If anything, the strike was too late." Rees, op. cit., p. 131.

[99]Collins, op. cit., p. 216. Collins neglects to point out that everyone seemed to share in this "overconfidence," since, as we have seen, MacArthur repeatedly gained authorization to extend his air operations on the theory that air strikes would stop the Chinese. The fact that he had to keep increasing the number and strength of his air strikes was evidence that they were not solving the problem.

Likewise, it led US officials to assume that they could place unrealistic restrictions on their pilots and still get effective results. Thus, they ordered US pilots to attack only the Korean end of the Yalu bridges as a political hedge against violating Chinese territory and further antagonizing the PRC. But, as General Stratemeyer stated, "it cannot be done."[100]

So, most of the bridges remained intact despite US bombing, the Chinese kept moving men and supplies into North Korea and the political and military strategy disintegrated. General Collins has written,

> As was proven in Germany in World War II and demonstrated again in Korea and later in Vietnam, no amount of aerial bombing can prevent completely the forward movement of supplies, particularly in regions where ample manpower is available.[101]

"As a matter of fact," General Ridgway has stated, "we had a prime example of how mistaken it is to imagine that an enemy's lines can be 'interdicted' through air power alone." According to the General,

---

[100]Futrell, op. cit., p. 210. See also, United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to investigate the Administration of the Internal Security act and other Internal Security Laws of the Committee of the Judiciary, Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments, 83rd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954-55), pp. 1319-22. Hereinafter this document will be identified as Subversion Hearings. See Cagle and Manson, op. cit., pp. 224-5 and Lichterman, op. cit., p. 604. Collins has written that, "Starting November 8, the Far East Air Force bombed all the main Yalu bridges from Sinuiju to Hyseanjin [sic]. Under the restrictions imposed from Washington the bombing was relatively ineffective yet unusually hazardous for our fliers." See Collins, op. cit., p. 203.

[101]Collins. op. cit., p. 313.

> We had almost no opposition in the air over the battlefields in North Korea and we were free to attack the enemy's supply lines without hindrance except from ground fire, and not even that during the first year. As a result we did indeed destroy much of the enemy's equipment and supplies on the road and undoubtedly we hampered him severely and cost him a high price in lives and machinery. Yet the enemy still remained strong on the ground, where we had to fight him, and he still kept his armies intact and the vital real estate in his possession.[102]

In other words, the idea that air power could stop Chinese intervention or end the war was a myth that contributed to the impending disaster.

Conclusion

The Wake Island conference is a prime example of how political expectations affect decision making. US officials went to Wake seriously expecting the war to end soon and the Chinese to back down from their threatened intervention. So, as we have seen, they were content to seek and accept interpersonal reassurances that reinforced their expectations. They had neither eyes nor ears for information

---

[102]Ridgway, op. cit., p. 76. General Ridgway goes on to say that: "It has always been tempting for men removed from the conflict to envision cheap and easy solutions, through naval blockades and saturation bombing. But any man who has fought a war from close up must know that, vital as are the sea and air arms of our combat forces, only ground action can destroy the armed forces of the enemy--unless, of course, resort is had to obliteration attacks with nuclear weapons. There is simply no such thing as "choking off" supply lines in a country as wild as North Korea, or in jungle country either. And when the enemy soldier is self-sufficient, as in Asia, and where he can move at night or travel by day along foot trails not visible from the air, it is self-delusion to think that he can be defeated by dropping bombs on him. Even were he to be rendered quiescent for a time by endless bombardment, it would still be necessary to meet him face to face on the ground to subdue him and keep him subdued."

that challenged those expectations, and the fact that they had intelligence data warranting a probing re-examination of their policy made no difference in the outcome of the meeting.

The period following Wake shows what happens when prevailing expectations are not met. The initial attacks by Chinese troops surprised and defeated both ROK and American units in North Korea, but, MacArthur's command was undeterred. Instead, we have seen that there was wide spread frustration over these events and a general unwillingness to believe either that the Chinese were serious or that they could significantly interfere with the American offensive. This was manifested in MacArthur's willingness to escalate the war and to increase the American military commitment. Rather than calling for a review of American policy, he called for another offensive. The fact that US officials finally had "hard" intelligence on the capabilities and intentions of Chinese military units was less important than the fact that such intelligence conflicted with official expectations about what should be happening.

Finally, the events in this period demonstrate some of the ways in which strategic information becomes distorted and mis-interpreted. We have seen that many of the reports on Chinese intervention were laced with qualifying statements and subordinating clauses that confused and contradicted the information being reported. Repeated references to the "real" intentions of the Chinese, to the need for a "complete" collection of facts left vital intelligence questions hanging on the assumption that there was some kind of definitive <u>answer</u>

to be gained about Chinese intentions and capabilities. MacArthur's repeated claims about what his air power could do and about what the Chinese could not do were interesting abstractions but when attached to his intelligence reports they submerged critical realities and clear-cut "certainties" about what was happening in Korea. As shown here, the form in which intelligence is reported has a decisive impact on how it is used.

CHAPTER VII

PHASE 5--CONSENSUS FOR A CONFRONTATION

(November 9 - November 24)

General MacArthur's alarming communiques of early November were taken seriously by policy makers in Washington, who decided that the situation should be thoroughly reviewed at once. On November 9 a meeting of the National Security Council was called and all the issues were completely discussed at that time. We will review the substance of that meeting in this chapter and discuss the actions and decisions of US officials from November 9 through November 24, when the final offensive was chosen.

Our data support the hypothesis that American officials were fully aware of all the dangers inherent in further offensive action but chose to ignore strategic information that conflicted with their policy goals. This action was consistent with the general trend of discounting intelligence and emphasizing the desirability of unification that had begun as early as July. It was not a sudden change in American policy for dealing with the discrepancy between unification and intervention.

We have already seen how General MacArthur gained policy making influence by the way he presented information to officials in Washington, and, even though he was not present when top officials gathered to discuss matters, he still influenced the proceedings. We shall examine his influence briefly here in terms of the nature and character

of the feelings he expressed in his communications to Washington just prior to the NSC meeting. The attitude he conveyed in these reports to the JCS represented a consensus of thinking in the Far East Command and was consistent with the basic premises of US policy.

On November 8, the JCS, reacting "cautiously to the mounting evidence of Chinese intervention," decided to warn MacArthur that the conditions stated in their September 27 orders to him about possible Chinese intervention had now been met and that his mission would have to be reviewed.[1] MacArthur responded strongly, pointing to the obvious fact that their October 9 orders superceded all others and "demanded to be allowed to continue his original line of action in Korea," because it was clear that, as James Schnabel has written, "a change of mission in the face of Chinese pressure could mean abandoning the drive to the Yalu, going on the defensive, and consolidating the ground seized since Inch'on."[2] [Italics not in the original.] The situation then entailed a change of policy, "but MacArthur was of no mind to abandon his drive to the Yalu," so, according to Schnabel, he argued forcefully against any change of policy and once again "proclaimed his faith in the

---

[1]Schnabel, Policy and Direction, p. 250. This paraphrases Schnabel's description of the JCS approach which was not only cautious, but belated. He points out, however, that the JCS move came ". . . after examining intelligence from the theater and other sources."

[2]Ibid., pp. 250-3. The fact that the JCS referred MacArthur to the September 27 orders again raises serious questions about the credibility of the October 9 orders and again suggests that they were simply written-in "for the record." Cf. ante, pp. 127-8.

effectiveness of air interdiction . . ." to stop the Chinese.[3]

His arguments on November 8 show that General MacArthur was very upset about the situation, not because his forces might be destroyed by the Chinese, but because the goal of unification might be abandoned. His communique is an example, par excellence, of his own emotional attachment to that goal and shows the lengths to which he was motivated to preserve it. He argued that if the goal were abandoned, it

> ". . . would completely destroy the morale of my forces and its psychological consequence would be inestimable. It would condemn us to an indefinite retention of our military forces along difficult defense lines in North Korea and would unquestionably arouse such resentment among the South Koreans that their forces would collapse or might even turn against us."[4] [Italics not in the original.]

He conjured up preconceptions and negative images of communism to bring home his point. James Schnabel has written,

> In an unusually vehement burst of impatience, MacArthur directed a scathing comment at what he termed, "The widely reported British desire to appease the Chinese Communists by giving them a strip of Northern Korea," and cited British action at Munich in 1938 as historic precedent for their present attitude.
>
> He charged that any such appeasement of the Communists carried the germs of ultimate destruction for the United Nations. "To give up any portion of North Korea to the aggression of the Chinese Communists," General MacArthur declared, "would be the greatest defeat of the free world in recent times. Indeed, to yield to so immoral a proposition would bankrupt our leadership and influence in Asia and render untenable our position both politically and militarily."[5] [Italics not in the original.]

---

[3] Ibid., p. 251. Cf. ante, pp. 94, 175-8.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

He did not hesitate in the least to assert that any political dealings with the Chinese Communists "would follow clearly in the footsteps of the British who by the appeasement of recognition lost the respect of all the rest of Asia without gaining that of the Chinese segment."[6]

These communications from MacArthur to the JCS show a clear shift from a substantive to an emotional basis of argument about Chinese intervention. His analysis of the military situation was not in terms of available intelligence data, but in terms of the anxieties and fears he had about communism. The language he used in describing the situation shows that he was attempting to elicit similar emotional reaction from the JCS. Moreover, "he concluded his protest on a note of confidence," Schnabel has written, "as he told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that complete victory could be achieved if 'our determination and indomitable will do not desert us.'"[7] Thus, in MacArthur's mind, the real issue was not what the enemy would or could do, but was a matter of what he and his own government wanted to do. In this context, at least for MacArthur, strategic intelligence became meaningless because he recognized no constraints on his own military capabilities.

---

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid. MacArthur's statements to the JCS on this occasion are interesting for the insight they provide about his own state of mind. Obviously, the terms he used in describing the possible effects of abandoning unification were extreme and absolute.

The November 9 NSC Meeting

Irrespective of what MacArthur may have hoped to achieve with his November 8 "protest," the JCS were not "cheered" by it because they saw it as another sign that the problem of Chinese intervention was serious. According to Schnabel they felt that it "merely underscored the critical need for a firm course of action to meet the Chinese interference . . . ," and this led the President to call a meeting of the NSC for November 9 with the specific purpose of considering "on an urgent basis what the national policy should be toward Chinese participation."[8] US policy was clearly threatened and available resources were apparently inadequate to achieve unification, as admitted by American officials themselves, yet the outcome of the NSC meeting was renewed agreement of the desirability of unifying Korea.

This agreement was largely a reflection of the general trend in policy making that had been established and reinforced over time, and rested primarily on the feeling of commitment US policy makers shared about unification. In addition to their feelings of commitment, their decisions at this time are difficult to reconcile with the evidence that they, themselves, adduced to analyze the situation, unless we recall also the strength and nature of their feelings about communism. As shown below, these sentiments ultimately had a greater impact on

---

[8] Ibid., p. 252. General Collins too has written that MacArthur's communiques "underscored the urgent necessity for an authoritative review of United States policy in the light of the Chinese intervention." See Collins, War in Peacetime, p. 205.

what they chose to do than did the strategic intelligence they gathered to "maintain national security."

When the Council met, the JCS briefed members on the military aspects of the situation and concluded explicitly that Chinese intervention was incompatible with American policy in Korea and was a threat to US foreign policy in general. In view of the relative military strengths of the opposing sides, they believed that defense positions should be set up to resist further Chinese intervention. But, in order to unify Korea they had to modify their calculations. General Collins has written that,

> The JCS recommended that every effort be made to settle the problem of Chinese intervention by political means. As to MacArthur's assigned mission we were willing to await clarification of the Chinese Communist forces' military objectives before interfering in his plan to drive to the Yalu. And with respect to the United States' overall military posture, we recommended that plans and preparations be made on the basis that the risk of global war had been substantially increased by the Chinese action in Korea.[9] [Italics not in the original.]

Obviously, the Chiefs equivocated in concluding that MacArthur's orders should not be changed in the hope that new developments would allow for unification. They knew at this time that available information was more than adequate to justify a change in MacArthur's orders, but they stressed the uncertainty of the situation and basically chose a course of inaction.

---

[9]Collins, loc. cit. General Bradley (Chairman of the JCS) spoke for the Chiefs and was the only member of the JCS present at the NSC meeting.

Here again we have an example of military commanders perfectly aware of enemy capabilities but insisting on verification of the enemy's intentions before taking action. Yet, we have already noted that these same military commanders had no confidence that enemy intentions would or could be revealed with any certainty through strategic intelligence channels. As General MacArthur declared some months later in the Senate Hearings on his relief, "I don't see how it would have been humanly possible for any men or group of men to predict. . . ." enemy intentions for an attack.[10] We can hypothesize that the JCS'

---

[10] MacArthur Hearings, p. 240. This statement by MacArthur was in response to a query put to him regarding the surprise of US troops in North Korea. His comments were specifically addressed to the November 28 Chinese counter-attack and to the problems of gathering and analyzing strategic intelligence. He was firm in his contention that enemy intentions are almost impossible to predict. He stated in part, "There is nothing, no means or methods, except the accidental spy methods--if you can get somebody to betray the enemy's higher circles, that can get such information as that. It is guarded with a secrecy that you cannot overestimate. Not even, probably, the commanding officers of the units, military units, concerned knew what was going on until they got the order to march." For his full statement see pp. 239-40. In conjunction with this, General Collins has observed, "As was to prove the case in later years, notably the Cuban affair in the 1960's, the Central Intelligence Agency and all other United States intelligence agencies which based their conclusions on probable intentions of the enemy rather than on his capabilities were wrong. This time the Central Intelligence Agency had plenty of company; everybody was wrong." See Ibid., p. 175.

Ironically, George Kennan has noted that the surprise reaction of US military men at the outbreak of the Korean War initially led US officials in the opposite direction, that is, in concentrating solely on military capabilities of an adversary. Accordingly, he has written:

"The unexpectedness of this attack--the fact that we had had no forewarning of it--only stimulated the already existent preference of the military planners for drawing their conclusions only from the assessed capabilities of the adversary, dismissing his intentions, which could be safely assumed to be hostile. All this tended to heighten the militarization of thinking about the cold war generally,

emphasis on enemy intentions at this point worked simply as a political device to divert official attention away from the fact that the Chinese were in Korea and onto the possibility that Korea could still be unified.

Yet, the more the NSC discussed the matter, the more contradictions they raised. As Collins has noted,

> Bradley said that he doubted that bombing of the Yalu bridges would stop the Chinese from entering Korea in strength. General [Bedell] Smith [head of the CIA] interpolated that the Yalu would soon be frozen over and thus passable almost anywhere.[11]

Clearly, the military situation was likely to get worse, from the American standpoint, before it got better, and there were likely to be more Chinese in Korea the longer US forces remained in the North. In addition,

> Secretary Marshall pointed out that the X-Corps was widely dispersed and had little depth, to which Bradley replied that this was accounted for by the fact that MacArthur had been directed to occupy all of Korea.[12]

In other words, the US policy objective was actually interfering with development of a sound military strategy.

---

and to press us into attitudes where any discriminate estimate of Soviet intentions was unwelcome and unacceptable. In addition, it encouraged the military planners in another tendency against which I had fought long and bitterly but generally in vain: the tendency, namely, to view Soviet intentions as something existing quite independently of our own behavior. It was difficult to persuade these men that what people in Moscow decided to do might be a reaction to things we had done." See Kennan, Memoirs, pp. 524-5.

[11]Collins, op. cit., p. 207.

[12]Ibid.

When it came down to making adjustments in the situation that were consistent with these conclusions, however, the NSC re-defined the situation to maintain the policy of unification and the members equivocated to avoid unpleasant conclusions. For example,

> Secretary Acheson inquired whether there was any line that was better from a military point of view than the current positions. Bradley said that the farther back it was, the easier it would be to support logistically, but that any rearward movement would depress the Koreans' morale and lessen their will to fight.[13] [Italics not in the original.]

When the evidence seemed to threaten US policy, American officials created abstruse arguments to justify discounting hard information and to maintain their policy goals.

All the evidence at the National Security Council meeting pointed to the immediate necessity of changing US policy, but no one wanted to make a change because that meant dealing with the communists, and losing out on unification. This was revealed by Secretary of State Acheson who

> . . . speculated on the possibility of persuading the Chinese to agree on a 20-mile-wide demilitarized zone, 10 miles on each side of the Yalu, to meet their concern with the electrical output of the Yalu dams, which supplied some of their power to Manchuria, and to reassure them that the border would not be violated. He went on to say that the trouble with any such proposal was that the Chinese would insist on the withdrawal of all foreign troops, which would abandon Korea to the Communists.[14]

This is the only evidence available of a formal discussion of Chinese interests and it is notable that even when those interests were finally

---

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

considered, nothing was done about them. In fact, Acheson's proposal went so far as to suggest that the Chinese demilitarize part of their own country to accommodate US policy, a position no foreign government would want to accept. His remarks point out the extent to which the government was willing to go in order to avoid a change in policy.

The National Security Council repeatedly drew conclusions that signalled a need for abandoning the policy of unification, but no one wanted to give it up. The Council thus redefined the situation, instead of changing it. The members rationalized their calculations and manipulated information to suit their own preferences because they were too heavily committed at that point to see the matter objectively. They recognized that they already had incurred losses and that those losses were probably going to increase and ought, therefore, to be consolidated and minimized. And, they knew that prolonging or renewing the offensive increased the danger of disaster. But, they disliked the alternatives they perceived.

The members recognized three basic choices. They could: (1) continue the action; (2) create defensive lines; or, (3) withdraw. The NSC judged that continuation of the offensive was infeasible without augmentation of the UN forces already operating in Korea and that consolidation of defensive lines seemed safe and expedient, while withdrawal was out of the question. Yet, the obvious, compelling choice to consolidate was not chosen. Our evidence supports the hypothesis that this occurred because US policy makers were worried about the impact that such action would have on their anti-communist

image. While they differentiated physically the act of withdrawing from the act of consolidating their forces, they apparently did not differentiate the acts politically. Any form of "retrograde" movement meant, for US policy makers, a retreat from communism and appeasement of aggression. Certainly, in the case of making a withdrawal, there was strong sentiment among the JCS against such an action, and their rationale in this regard seems to hold for the choice of consolidating as well. According to Schnabel the JCS felt that, "'if conducted voluntarily it [withdrawal] would so lower the world-wide prestige of the United States that it would be totally unacceptable. . . .'" And, they argued that, ". . . any backward movement on MacArthur's part would reduce U.N. prestige. . . ."[15] [Italics not in the original.]

On November 9 the JCS and the rest of the NSC were making decisions based on their fears and anxieties about communism, just as MacArthur was doing. Indeed, the Chiefs relied heavily on their Russian-agent theory to explain and interpret events in Korea. Schnabel has written that they felt,

> the continued involvement of United States forces in Korea would . . . be in the interests of Russia and of world communism by imposing a heavy drain on U.S. military and economic strengths. They still considered Korea a "strategically unimportant area" and felt that, in a global war, fighting in Korea would leave the United States off-balance while Russia completed its plans for global conquest.[16]

---

[15]Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 254-5. This remark is attributed to General Bradley, speaking for the JCS.

[16]Ibid., p. 253. In General Collins' words, "We still considered Korea strategically unimportant in the context of a possible global war, in which Russia, not China, would be the chief antagonist." See Collins, op. cit., p. 205.

Likewise, President Truman felt that Chinese political support of communist-oriented factions in Indo-China and Tibet was evidence of a larger communist conspiracy in Asia. He has written that:

> We were seeing a pattern in Indo-China and Tibet timed to coincide with the attack in Korea as a challenge to the Western world. It was a challenge by the Communists alone, aimed at intensifying the smoldering anti-foreign feeling among most Asian peoples.
>
> I had no intentions of allowing our attention to be diverted from the unchanging aims and designs of Soviet policy.[17] [Italics not in the original.]

This intense preoccupation with the world communist "conspiracy" headed by Russia, combined with the repeated US commitments to unify Korea, left American officials blind to the fact that MacArthur, just a few days earlier, had explicitly warned them that Chinese intervention "threatened the ultimate destruction" of his command. Likewise, their strong desire to thwart "aggression" and to reject "appeasement" supported their feelings that any course but offensive action was unthinkable. Although they thought it prudent to take up defensive positions that could save American troops they simply disliked that choice.

At this point in time, over two weeks before MacArthur's disastrous final offensive, all the dangers were known, the alternatives were discussed and everyone of consequence within the American decision making establishment was fully informed about the Korean situation. By their own admission, members of the NSC knew that defensive action was the safe course to pursue and that offensive action was inappropriate

---

[17]Harry Truman, Memoirs, Volume II, p. 380.

to the developing military situation in Korea. But, while the Chinese were pouring into North Korea and laying the groundwork for a massive attack on MacArthur's command, the NSC advised the President to continue trying to unify Korea. This, according to Truman, is what the NSC suggested:

> 1. Every effort should be expended as a matter of urgency to settle the problem of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea by political means, preferably through the United Nations, to include reassurances to the Chinese Communists with respect to our intent [to unify Korea], direct negotiations through our Allies and the Interim Committee with the Chinese Communist Government, and by any other available means.
>
> 2. Pending further clarifications as to the military objectives of the Chinese Communists and the extent of their intended commitments, the mission assigned to the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, should be kept under review, but should not be changed.
>
> 3. The United States should develop its plans and make its preparations on the basis that the risk of global war is increased.[18] [Italics not in the original.]

Truman has noted that, "General Marshall, as Secretary of Defense, concurred in these conclusions." And, Schnabel has written that "these recommendations represented the combined sentiments of the nation's policy makers."[19]

US officials were not willing to wage a world war for unification but they were willing to accept an increase in the risk of a world war in order to meet their commitment to that goal. The fact that no one counseled a change in policy illustrates the extent of the Council members' agreement and the strength of their political commitment.

---

[18] Ibid., p. 378.

[19] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 255.

The substance of their recommendations to President Truman show an emphasis on the uncertainty of events rather than on the established facts of Chinese intervention as shown by strategic intelligence. In sum, we can agree with General Collins' observation that,

> . . . the most important outcome of this meeting was that it permitted General MacArthur to go ahead with his plans for an attack, or reconnaissance in force to the Yalu, a move that was destined to lead to one of the few military defeats in United States history.[20]

Unlike some critical decisions, the choices made at this time were not pressured by an onrush of fast moving events. In fact, the Chinese had disengaged three days earlier and MacArthur did not plan to resume the offensive for ten days because his forces were bogged down. There were doubts about specific Chinese intentions, but their presence in Korea was a fait accompli. The dangers, the risks, the unpleasant possibilities, all were known, but, the government was committed to unification. And, with renewed agreement on that commitment in the face of an overwhelmingly threatening strategic situation, the stage was set for disaster.

---

[20]Collins, op. cit., p. 208; see also pp. 205-8. Only two official accounts of the NSC November 9 meeting are in readily available sources: Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 252-6 and Harry Truman, op. cit., pp. 378-81. President Truman himself did not attend the meeting but never raised any objections to the recommendations made there. For a semi-official account, based in part on an interview with Dean Acheson, see McLellan, "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," pp. 27-31. For alternative discussions of the meeting see: deRivera, Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy, pp. 284-7; Janis, Victims of Groupthink, pp. 21-5; Lichterman, "To the Yalu," pp. 606-8; Neustadt, Presidential Power, pp. 135-8; and Rees, Korea, pp. 131-2.

The Aftermath

Following the NSC's November 9 decision making, the groundwork was laid for a Sino-American military confrontation. US forces prepared for another attempt at unifying Korea, US air attacks continued on the Yalu bridges, without significant results, and Chinese intervention continued, without significant reduction. Limited US offensive action continued on the ground but American troops were seriously hampered by weather, terrain and supply problems.[21] The only sure thing they could count on was that they would meet the Chinese.

Not only was Chinese intervention a "sure thing" but the information on it just kept getting more voluminous and more ominous daily. According to Schnabel,

> American and other intelligence analysts might disagree on Chinese motives and intentions. But all corroborated that Chinese armies had massed in great strength along the Yalu in Manchuria, disposed for early action in Korea if the signal came, and that an unknown number had entered Korea. It was indeed a time of careful treading and sober consideration.[22]

The day after the NSC meeting, November 10, General Willoughby again reported on a crucial build up of Chinese forces that posed a "serious threat" to Marines in Northeastern Korea. He told Washington authorities that, "'It is believed that this enemy concentration even now may

---

[21]See Collins, op. cit., p. 195; Marshall, The River and the Gauntlet, pp. 12-16; Montross and Conzona, U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, Volume III, pp. 130-48, 218; and Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 222-32 and 256-73. The situation was so bad that the Marines advanced only one mile per day even without enemy opposition. See Appleman, op. cit., p. 773.

[22]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 257.

be capable of seizing the initiative and launching offensive operations.'"[23] And, on the following day, he estimated that 76,800 Chinese troops were in North Korea in addition to 50,000 North Korean troops ready for action. In addition, US intelligence agencies credited the Chinese with an "ability to reinforce at the rate of 24,000 men per day." Since this was at the height of US bombing efforts, this figure was particularly ominous. Projected over time, it showed that approximately a quarter million more Chinese troops would be facing MacArthur within ten days.

Yet, even these estimates downgraded the Chinese threat as it then existed. Schnabel has noted in his discussion of US intelligence in mid-November that while Willoughby was reporting Chinese strength as 76,000+, the actual figure was closer to 300,000 Chinese troops in Korea on the front lines! He indicates that this figure was established through "later analysis" by Roy Appleman in his official history of US Army operations, so there is no way to be certain that US officials were entirely aware of the magnitude of Chinese strength. We know, however, that US intelligence had identified at least eleven Chinese divisions in Korea at this time (a total of 110,000 men) and there are strong similarities between the organization of Appleman's evidence and evidence presented by General Willoughby in his own personal history of events. We are left, however, with a confusing and incomplete accounting of what the intelligence picture was because

---

[23] Ibid., p. 259.

no one, including the Army's official historians, has specified what data was known at what particular points in time. The serious shortcomings and discrepancies in available evidence suggest that we can accept General Ridgway's authoritative conclusion on the matter. "Our intelligence reports were not really wanting," Ridgway has written. "The failure lay once more in the interpretation of the facts rather than in the gathering of them."[24]

Regardless of what strategic intelligence showed, US officials were now predisposed to ignore it because of the NSC's decision to wait for MacArthur's offensive. In the meantime some American officials sought a politically negotiated settlement with the Chinese. On November 10 the US government supported a six power UN resolution reassuring the Chinese on the border issue, and warning the PRC to discontinue intervention in the war.[25] On November 11 Secretary

---

[24]Ridgway, Korean War, p. 63. See also Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 143. They state: "Little fault can be found with current G-2 estimates of CCF numbers, which hold up surprisingly well even when viewed with the wisdom of hindsight. Quite as much depended on interpretations of CCF intentions by the UN command, and there can be no doubt that an end-of-the-war atmosphere prevailed on the eve of the Eighth Army offensive of 24 November." Their historical account is based on official government intelligence and other documents. Likewise, see deWeerd, "Strategic Surprise in the Korean War," p. 451, who states: "It was not the absence of intelligence which led us into trouble but our unwillingness to draw unpleasant conclusions from it. We refused to believe what our intelligence told us was in fact happening because it was at variance with the prevailing climate of opinion in Washington and Tokyo." See also Appleman, South to the Naktong, pp. 768-9; Schnabel, op. cit., p. 259, and pp. 260-73; and Willoughby, MacArthur, pp. 394-5.

[25]Goodrich, U.S. Policy in the United Nations, p. 153; Lichterman, op. cit., p. 607; Spanier, Truman-MacArthur Controversy, p. 120. During this same time, however, the US government was actively

Acheson reassured the PRC on the inviolability of their border area and (ironically) warned the Chinese that if they continued to misunderstand US motives, a "world-wide tragedy of the most colossal nature was in the making."[26] In essence, this effort simply strengthened the US commitment to unify Korea, and increased the PRC's motivation to intervene. A statement by Chou En-lai at this time simply dismissed the US position as unnegotiable, and again acknowledged that Chinese forces were fighting in Korea.[27]

Likewise, on November 15, the PRC sent a message to the UN through the Soviet delegation restating Chinese intent to aid North Korea,[28] while Secretary Acheson continued to state American intent to unify Korea.[29] Although the US repeatedly reassured the PRC that American unification would not interfere with hydro-electric production from North Korea to Manchuria, such reassurances were doomed to failure because they ignored the PRC's political position vis-a-vis the policy of unification per se. The sum total of the US government's "political efforts to settle" the Korean situation appear to have been an increase

---

seeking to persuade its UN allies to authorize "hot pursuit" for UN aircraft into Chinese territory. See MacArthur Hearings, pp. 1723-4; 1912-13; 2277-9; 3583-4. See also Goodrich and Simons, U.N. and the Maintenance of International Peace, pp. 475-6; Lichterman, op. cit., pp. 573, 607; and Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 249-50.

[26]Spanier, loc. cit. and Poynter, China and U.S. Far East Policy, p. 54.

[27]Rees, Korea, p. 131; Goodrich, op. cit., p. 153; and, Ibid.

[28]Poynter, loc. cit.

[29]Ibid., and Lichterman, op. cit., p. 607. For a discussion of US efforts to reassure China see: Goodrich, op. cit., pp. 149-57.

of Sino-American hostility and a reinforcement of the American commitment to unification. Indeed, as time passed many US officials became more determined than ever to unify Korea.

Even though, on November 12, MacArthur's G-2 (intelligence unit) concluded that the PRC had decided to go to war in Korea, General MacArthur himself again insisted on offensive operations.[30] Interviewed two days later by William Sebald he stated that he was prepared to go into Manchuria if necessary, irrespective of US diplomatic promises to respect Chinese border areas. Moreover, Sebald has written, at this time there was strong sentiment among MacArthur's staff officers for enlarging the war in addition to general agreement on the importance of unification. As Sebald has described the situation:

> With the Chinese entry into Korea there was increased impatience and frustration among the high command in Japan over the restrictions placed on United Nations military operations by policies of the United States government and, later, those of the United Nations itself. Lieutenant General G. E. Stratemeyer, Commander of the Far East Air Forces, told me in mid-November, for example, that he could flatten China with his airpower if authorized to do so. He was not alone in his fierce determination to conduct hostilities as fully as seemed necessary to the military commanders directly involved.[31]

---

[30]Appleman, op. cit., p. 763. This conclusion was based on a re-evaluation of intelligence previously gathered in the formative stages of the crisis, with special reference to high-level conferences held in Peiping. Cf. ante, p. 58, ff. 30, p. 91, ff. 52, and p. 107, ff. 12.

[31]Sebald, With MacArthur, p. 203. General Ridgway, by contrast, has written: "There is of course the school that argues for immediate use of nuclear weapons when a stalemate threatens, that talks of 'reducing the enemy to the Stone Age' by blowing his homeland to dust. This to me would be the ultimate in immorality. It is one thing to do this in retaliation, or as a measure of survival as a nation. It

Yet, the more US officials insisted on victory, the more they blinded themselves to the fact that it could not be achieved.

They were walking straight into a corner with their eyes open. Indeed, by November 15 US officials estimated that Chinese intervention had significantly increased the enemy's strength in North Korea by 300 per cent,[32] and General MacArthur was forced to alter attack plans for the X-Corps Marine unit in order to give support to the Eighth Army at this time. According to the Marines' history of events,

> This was the first indicated change in mission, according to the X-Corps command report, since CINCFE's directive late in October calling for a drive to the border. The amendment "was made necessary," the report continued, "by the enemy build-up in front of the Eighth Army and the fact that the enemy action had halted the first attempt . . . to advance Eighth Army to the border. An estimate of the Eighth Army situation . . . fixed the relative combat power as 100,000 UN to 100,000 enemy with UN forces having air superiority and superior artillery support. . . . The enemy was given an offensive capacity which he could implement with an estimated reserve of 140,000 CCF troops north of the Yalu River. In view of the enemy's offensive capacity, Eighth Army adopted a conservative plan to make a general advance. . . .[33] [Italics not in the original.]

---

is quite another to initiate such an operation for less basic reasons. We have not, it may be argued, advanced too far from the jungle, over the ages; but what little advance we have made, whatever margin still exists between us and the beasts, I believe we should cling to. If we put 'victory' at any cost ahead of human decency, then I think God might well question our right to invoke His blessing on our Cause." See Ridgway, op. cit., p. 76.

[32] MacArthur Hearings, p. 3432.

[33] Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 133.

Yet, the Marines themselves were facing a precarious military situation and were counting on the Eighth Army's push to relieve pressure on X-Corps units.[34]

In fact, in North Korea General Oliver P. Smith (Commanding the 1st Marine Division of General Almond's X-Corps) was very disturbed by the Chinese threat to his units, and "expressed frank concern over what he considered to be General Almond's unrealistic planning and his tendency to ignore enemy capabilities when he wanted a rapid advance."[35] Smith himself "did not share in the renewed optimism as to the course of the UN war effort," but instead, he accepted the "possibility of imminent and formidable CCF intervention . . . [and] made preparations to meet it."[36] On November 15 he briefed Rear Admiral Albert K. Morehouse (Chief of Staff to Admiral C. Turner Joy) and Captain Norman W. Sears (Chief of Staff to Admiral James H. Doyle) on the dangers inherent in continuing offensive action but apparently his warning fell on deaf ears. There is simply no evidence of a response from MacArthur's General Headquarters in Tokyo.[37]

Smith himself, however, was so overwhelmingly concerned by the military situation that he took further action of his own. In a move

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 132-4 and Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 260-1.

[35] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 261.

[36] Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 133.

[37] Ibid., and see Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 260-2. These two sources discuss Smith's action in detail and describe his predicament, but neither gives an indication of a serious response to his efforts.

that was quite extraordinary for a military commander, he went "over the heads" of his superiors by writing a personal letter directly to General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps. In plain language he stated his views and openly challenged the proposed offensive. "Someone in high places," Smith wrote to Cates, "will have to make up his mind as to what is our goal. My mission is still to advance to the border. . . ." There was no end in sight, Smith went on, because "if the Eighth Army push does not go, then the decision will have to be made as to what to do next." And, he added:

> I believe a winter campaign in the mountains of North Korea is too much to ask of the American soldier or marine and I doubt the feasibility of supplying troops in this area during the winter or providing for the evacuation of sick and wounded.[38]

Schnabel has written that General Smith ". . . frankly admitted that he felt Almond's orders were wrong and that he, as Marine Commander in Korea, was not going to press his own troops forward rashly to possible destruction."[39]

Throughout this period the X-Corps was getting "further out on a limb" with every day that passed and, according to the official

---

[38] Ibid.

[39] Schnabel, op. cit., p. 261. Schnabel quotes Smith as saying: "Our orders still require us to advance to the Manchurian border. . . . However, we are the left flank division of the Corps and our left flank is wide open. [Schnabel then observes:] Smith pointed out that there was no Eighth Army unit closer to his flank than eighty miles southwest. While the X Corps, according to Smith, could assure him 'when it is convenient' that there were no Chinese on his flank, he observed, 'if this were true, there could be nothing to prevent the Eighth Army from coming abreast of us. This they are not doing.'"

history of Marine operations, Smith clearly "believed that the possibilities of large-scale CCF intervention" were imminent and he "lost no time in putting into effect preparations for trouble in the shape of a formidable CCF attack."[40] He initiated construction of a landing strip at Hagaruri, in Northeast Korea for the purpose of evacuating his units in case of disaster,[41] and "deliberately stalled on the advance" to the Yalu.[42] In retrospect, his forethought and independent action were decisive in facilitating the eventual Marine withdrawal and in all probability saved much of the X-Corps from destruction when the November 24 offensive failed.

Here again, though, we have an example of a high level government official raising serious questions about the propriety of a proposed course of action with no evidence of a serious response from those superiors, including in this case, Marine Commandant Cates. Unbeknown to Smith, of course, his superiors, including General

---

[40]Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 135; see also pp. 136-9.

[41]Ibid., and Collins, op. cit., p. 195 and Schnabel, loc. cit.

[42]Schnabel, loc. cit. General Collins has written that MacArthur's operational orders just didn't square with the intelligence available. "Studying this order [for an attack] and its Intelligence G-2 annex, which indicated the presence of elements of four CCF divisions in the Corps zone of action," states Collins, "one is forced to wonder whether the men who prepared and approved it really believed that it was susceptible of successful implementation with the forces available."

Certainly Smith, commanding the Marines, had doubts about the outcome, as was indicated in his log written at the time. Commenting on his mission, he concluded with the most perceptive understatement of the war: "'Our line of communications will be very tenuous.'" See Collins, op. cit., p. 215.

MacArthur, the NSC and the President, were even more aware than Smith was of the dangers, but they all had committed themselves to unification. And, apparently, that commitment was so strongly held and widely shared that their ability to respond to strategic warning signals (even from colleagues in a position to know exactly what was happening) was seriously impaired. Neither Smith nor his superiors lacked strategic information but all except Smith lacked the incentive to act on it.

The situation was growing more critical daily and adjustments at the top simply had to be made. Consistent with our hypothesis, available evidence shows that such adjustments were made to the information and not to the situation. That is, US officials manipulated information and changed it to fit in with their plans and preconceptions about events in Korea. For example, James Schnabel has written that the JSPOG (Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group) simply concocted false arguments to justify General Almond's advance in Northeast Korea. Schnabel has observed,

> The advantages which the staff read into Almond's plans were so innocuous as to seem fabricated. On the other hand, the disadvantages, or more exactly, the dangers of Almond's intended advances, were plainly and honestly stated. An objective appraisal would have weighed the advantages against the disadvantages and found the scale tipped completely on the side of disadvantages and danger. Had this been done, it is entirely likely that MacArthur's advisers would have urged immediate changes in Almond's planned operations to include more limited objectives, more co-ordinated advances, and, possibly, even preparations for defensive action.[43]

---

[43]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 262.

But, at the time the problem was not how to make an objective analysis, but how to make "negative" intelligence conform to pre-existing commitments and expectations. When intelligence units did not produce what policy planners wanted, it was created. And, when government officials found what they did not like, they discounted it.[44]

Despite such efforts, there was almost no way to avoid collecting, processing and thus recognizing more bad news, because the intelligence system was alive and well and functioning efficiently. Thus, more and more information kept pointing to disaster. As the situation developed the NSC met again on November 17, the members again concluded that the situation was serious and that an offensive might be disastrous, but again took no action to change MacArthur's mission or his orders, or the policy of unification. Instead, the JCS decided only to caution MacArthur on the strategic situation he already knew about, and called his attention to the widening gap between the center of UN lines because it could easily be exploited by the enemy with disastrous effect if uncorrected. MacArthur's response was to postpone the offensive for another week, with a new target date of November 24![45] Thus, it would appear, at this point the government's

---

[44]Ibid., p. 260. Schnabel has written that: "It is apparent that the joint planning staff did not like the look of the situation in northeast Korea and did not completely endorse Almond's plan for operating there. But the planners hedged," p. 262.

"The JSPOG planners had either not consulted or did not believe intelligence estimates forwarded to Washington by Willoughby, since their planning assumptions credited the Chinese with less strength than shown in Willoughby's reports of the same date," p. 260.

[45]Collins, op. cit., p. 213.

commitment to unification was unshakeable.

In the meantime, of course, the Chinese kept pouring into North Korea and General MacArthur's intelligence unit in Tokyo continued to report on their build-up, but US officials like General Almond were busy discounting and ignoring bad news. According to the US Marine's history of events, as late as November 18, "General Almond himself . . . did not think that the Chinese had intervened in the Korean War in force," and, incredibly, his X-Corps G-2 concluded at this time that the Chinese were withdrawing from Korea.[46] In fact, they were making their most concentrated intervention and warnings were coming into Washington from foreign sources as well as official US intelligence channels at the front. The Australian Prime Minister advised Washington in November that Chinese intervention could no longer be ignored. Likewise, the Swedish, Burmese, and Dutch envoys in Peiping informed Washington that information they had indicated an all out PRC commitment in North Korea.[47]

Not only were US forces facing increasingly strong Chinese forces, but US air attacks were failing to interdict Chinese movement into North Korea. After ten strike days on the Yalu River bridges, four of twelve were destroyed and the rest were still intact. And, Air Force historian Robert Futrell has written:

---

[46]Appleman, op. cit., p. 756.

[47]Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 266-7. See also Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur, p. 70.

> On November 19, moreover, the Yalu was already frozen over between Sinuiju and Uiju and it was fast freezing across as far up as Manpojin. Japanese railway engineers told FEAF intelligence officers that the Yalu River ice could support great weights. On one occasion they had laid railway track across the ice and had moved railway trains across it.[48]

Yet, two days later, General Walker again informed MacArthur that he still planned to resume offensive operations.[49]

Meanwhile, in Washington, resistance to a change in MacArthur's mission hardened as government officials rationalized their decisions, redefined the situation and ignored unpleasant realities. General Bolte made it clear to General Collins on November 20 that he definitely felt MacArthur's orders ". . . should not be changed." As Schnabel has observed,

> The Army's top planning officer felt that the only grounds on which MacArthur should be ordered to halt his advance would be that further offensive action would cause too great a risk of global war and conversely that cessation of the offensive would tend to minimize that risk.[50] [Italics not in the original.]

Obviously, Bolte was begging the question. US officials were predisposed toward an offensive, and in Bolte's case, available evidence shows that his position was based on his intense anti-communist feelings. As he told General Collins, there was no point in trying to deal on a non-military basis with the Chinese because, in Bolte's

---

[48]Futrell, U.S. Air Force, p. 214 and Montross and Canzona, op. cit., p. 143.

[49]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 365. Schnabel gives the date as November 22, which coincides with the completion of supplying Eighth Army. See Schnabel, op. cit., p. 259.

[50]Schnabel, op. cit., p. 267.

words, ". . . 'history has proved that negotiating with Communists is as fruitless as it is repulsive. The present case is no exception.'"[51] [Italics not in the original.]

Again, on November 21, Secretaries Marshall and Acheson met with the JCS and discussed the prevailing situation in Korea and Acheson pointedly concluded that:

> An attempt to establish a United Korea by force of arms against a determined Chinese resistance could easily lead into general hostilities, since both the Chinese and the Russians, as well as the Japanese, had all regarded Korea as a road to somewhere else rather than an end in itself.

Nevertheless, no decision was made to change MacArthur's offensive plans. Acheson has written that,

> Apparently General MacArthur could not determine the degree of Chinese intervention without some sort of a "probe" along his line; therefore we did not oppose that. When I privately expressed a layman's concern to Generals Marshall and Bradley over MacArthur's scattering of his forces, they pointed out that the Chiefs of Staff seven thousand miles from the front, could not direct the theater commander's dispositions. But under this obvious truth lay, I felt, uneasy respect for the MacArthur mystique. Strange as these maneuverings appeared, they could be another 5,000-to-1 shot by the sorcerer of Inchon. Though no one could explain them, and General MacArthur would not no one would restrain them. [Italics not in the original.]
>
> My own views were that we were closer than we had yet been to a wider war. There had always been a Chinese involvement in Korea. It had been progressively uncloaked until now we faced a full-scale attack.[52]

---

[51] Ibid., p. 268. Schnabel's account shows distinctly that Bolte's arguments were based on the "strong sentiments" he felt, more than on the intelligence he had available to him. Indeed, he was, in the face of overwhelmingly pessimistic intelligence reports, "optimistic."

[52] Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp. 467-8.

Acheson's remarks indicate clearly that there was a distinct shift in the way US officials interpreted strategic information prior to and following the November 9 decision to await General MacArthur's offensive. Before that time, information coming in was interpreted as showing a significant, serious threat, but after that time, US officials began to focus more on uncertainties and ambiguities in their information. They became more concerned with what they did not know and they emphasized the need to know more. Consistent with our line of argument throughout this study, we can conclude that this was a result of the fact that incoming intelligence conflicted with the existing commitment to unify Korea. Thus, the claims that enemy capabilities and intentions could not be determined and that US officials needed more information, were simply devices to reduce the conflicts that strategic intelligence had forced them to recognize.

Moreover, we can see from Acheson's remarks that distinctions developed between the way US policy makers responded to intelligence as individuals and as government "officials." Acheson, himself, definitely saw Chinese intervention as a serious, vital issue of national security and made clear-cut, straightforward conclusions about it in his own mind. But, when he approached the problem from an official point of view he was not forced to make such conclusions. Indeed, he found a variety of ways to avoid them in an official capacity. As Secretary of State he found it comfortable, and quite appropriate to view the crisis in military terms for the generals to solve and satisfied his own anxieties by expressing his concerns

privately and therefore, unofficially. Secretary Acheson himself has written,

> As I look back, the critical period stands out as the three weeks from October 26 to November 17. Then all the dangers from dispersal of our own forces and intervention by the Chinese were manifest. We were all deeply apprehensive. We were frank with one another but not quite frank enough. I was unwilling to urge on the President a military course that his military advisers would not propose.[53]

Thus, we can conclude that the institutional (bureaucratic) context in which strategic intelligence was being used by American policy makers had a decisive impact on the conclusions they drew from it and the way they shared it.

Our evidence suggests that in the latter days of the Korean crisis these high-level policy meetings became vehicles for the members to reduce their own individual conflicts about what they saw happening. As we have observed, the commitment to unification was generalized and thus represented a common reference point that superceded any one individual's doubts or concerns about its feasibility. And, the fact that it was so popular predisposed US officials to seek ways in which to preserve or enhance it, even in the face of serious threats. Thus, the acquisition of strategic intelligence became a motivating force to produce consensus and agreement on pre-existing policy positions.

As we might expect, there emerged from the meeting of November 21 a renewed agreement that Korea should be unified. Army historian James Schnabel has recorded that:

---

[53] Ibid., p. 468.

> The consensus among American political and military leaders in Washington, crystallized at the meeting of Department of Defense and State officials, had been that no change should be made in MacArthur's immediate mission; but that the highest officials in the American government should at once draft a course of action to permit the establishment of a unified Korea and, at the same time, reduce the risk of more general involvement.[54]

The official rationale was that "Russian concern was at the root of the pressure on the Chinese to interfere in Korea," and that a show of force would deter Russia and its agent, China. When the meeting began, US policy was threatened with disaster, but when it ended, the dangers had disappeared in the minds of the members present.

Although some precautionary "suggestions" were made to MacArthur that he consolidate his forces, he rejected any changes out of hand. Any major action, other than an offensive, he felt, would be viewed as "weakness and appeasement of the Communist Chinese and Russians." He insisted that only by "resolutely meeting those commitments" that had been established could there be any hope of checking Chinese or Russian "aggression." [Italics not in the original.] And, he continued to reassure his superiors that his air power would solve the problem of Chinese intervention.[55]

The Final Offensive

On November 24 most US officials were still discounting the threat of Chinese intervention, and intelligence units were "still

---

[54]Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 268-9.

[55]Ibid., pp. 270-1 and 277-8. See also MacArthur Hearings, p. 1148. Cf. ante, pp. 94, 175-8, 183.

searching for final answers" about Chinese intent, even though the Chinese threat had been growing astronomically. Our evidence suggests that this official "uncertainty" was a natural outgrowth of the NSC's decision on November 9 to continue offensive action and to accept the Chinese threat. According to the Army's history of events,

> A careful study of 8th Army daily intelligence reports for the month of November 1950 reveals that, despite daily reference to the Chinese potential north of the Yalu River in Manchuria, there was a tapering off of concern about full Chinese intervention from about 10 November until 24 November, when Eighth Army resumed its offensive. In this connection it should be noted that the controlling Eighth Army viewpoint could scarcely avoid being influenced somewhat by that of the Far East Command, which seems to have been that China would not intervene with major forces.[56] [Italics not in the original.]

MacArthur has written that he was worried over the situation at the front on November 24, and he had good reason to be. His troops were outnumbered by (approximately) eleven Chinese divisions in the West and seven divisions in the East, in addition to North Korean military strength. He was hampered by bad weather, rugged terrain and poor supply routes. His troops were harrassed by guerrilla units that had infiltered to his rear and his forces were divided so that the entire right flank of Eighth Army was exposed to enemy attacks. These facts were known at the time, and, Truman has written, on November 24

> . . . a national intelligence summary of the CIA had been made available to General MacArthur which stated that the Chinese Communists would "at a minimum" increase their operations in Korea, seek to immobilize our forces, subject them to prolonged attrition, and maintain the

---

[56]Appleman, op. cit., p. 755.

> semblance of a North Korean state in being. It also stated that the Chinese possessed sufficient strength to force the U.N. elements to withdraw to defensive positions.[57]

Yet, the evidence we have on the response of US officials to this and the other strategic intelligence which signalled an impending disaster, is consistent with our original hypothesis that it was ignored.

We have noted above the serious discrepancies in the reporting and assessment of intelligence on Chinese intervention, and these appear to have been a manifestation of the willingness of US officials to ignore what their own intelligence was telling them. In particular, the downgrading or minimizing of troop figures themselves became a means of making the ill-fated offensive appear more feasible as it became less so, especially as shown by General Willoughby's intelligence estimate on November 24. On that date he reported that Chinese troop strength in Korea was between 40,000 and 70,935, a figure that actually showed a decrease of 6,000 from his November 12 estimate. Considering that intelligence had established a reinforcement rate of 24,000 men per day on November 12, Willoughby's figure lacks credibility.[58] By November 24, of course, "strategic intelligence" had no place in the decisions being made.

General MacArthur has written that he received a message from Washington just prior to his offensive telling him that:

---

[57]Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 381; deWeerd, op. cit., p. 448 and Lichterman, op. cit., p. 613.

[58]Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 273 and 259. MacArthur himself acknowledged on November 20 that he faced an enemy force of over 200,000. See MacArthur Hearings, p. 3534.

> The consensus of political and military opinion at a meeting with the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials was that there should be no change in your mission, but that immediate action should be taken at top governmental level to formulate a course of action which will permit the establishment of a unified Korea and at the same time reduce risk of more general involvement.[59]

This was the "go-ahead" for a major attack, in the face of an overwhelming enemy threat, agreed upon by the highest level policy makers in the US government.

Whatever misgivings MacArthur may have had, they were secondary to his desire to unify Korea. Whether his subordinates had misgivings or not, they followed orders; and, as General Ridgway has written, "whatever the private attitude of MacArthur's superiors might have been, no voice was raised against him."[60] Instead, just prior to the offensive, "optimism and enthusiasm as to the chances of the attack succeeding seemed to prevail."[61]

On November 24, General MacArthur launched his final offensive with the declaration that it would "for all intents and purposes end the war and unify Korea," and within four days his entire command was in full retreat and threatened with annihiliation.

---

[59]MacArthur, op. cit., p. 373 and Whitney, op. cit., p. 417.

[60]Ridgway, op. cit., p. 61.

[61]Appleman, op. cit., p. 776.

Conclusion

This final period of American decision making shows the strength and longevity of political preconceptions. Although there was a plethora of dire warning signals flooding into Washington and the Far East Command, US officials clung to their preconceived notions about what should be happening and evaluated their decisional alternatives in terms of their own prejudices. They still felt that the Chinese were bombastic diplomatic blackmailers and that the Chinese Armies, even though in Korea, were simply being used to save face for the communist cause.

Likewise, this period represents the complete breakdown of the government's system for dealing with national security crises. When faced with unpleasant or unwanted information, and when confronted with difficult choices, participants involved in decision-making councils retreated to narrow bureaucratic boundaries to avoid responsibility. There was no overwhelming determination to protect national security among US officials but, instead, a general air of temerity that added to the mounting dangers. No one moved quickly and decisively to prevent a slaughter in North Korea, or even to admit to that possibility. Indeed, no one even made a move to bring the possibility into the open, either among policy makers or among policy constituencies. Indeed, US officials actively avoided any conclusions or conditions that might expose the folly of their policy.

As with previous phases of this crisis, there is no rhyme or reason for the way US officials made decisions on November 9 and thereafter unless we emphasize again the ideological component of their

policy. When their ideological attitudes and beliefs are brought into focus it is clear that their decisions were a response to conflicts that had less to do with the actual military events in Korea than with their own anxieties and fears about communism. As a result of their fears and anxieties, they had neither eyes nor ears for strategic intelligence which brought home to them the ugly choices that communist China's presence in North Korea presented for them. Instead of making decisions to remedy the deteriorating military situation, they made choices that reduced conflicts between their beliefs and their intelligence. They ignored information, re-organized their means of interpreting it, and redefined the conflicts in a manner consistent with their policy preferences.

Just as they had misconstrued Chinese involvement in the early stages of the war, they misunderstood it in the latter stages, not because of faulty intelligence, but because of their preconceptions. Ironically, they were "up in arms" about the possibility of Chinese intervention at the start of the war, but by late November discounted it, even though Chinese armies were present in North Korea. In both instances, and in the intervening months, this was because they evaluated the possibility of Chinese intervention less according to the strategic intelligence they had than according to their preconceived attitudes about it. In retrospect, their attitudes, not their information, were the controlling influence on their decisions throughout the crisis.

Much that was said and done during this final decision-making period of the crisis had happened before. The choices were not new and the approach (or response, depending on how one looks at it) was no different than it had been from the start of the war. Even the dangers were not new, although they were more immediate and clearcut. All along, US officials had manipulated intelligence to suit their political purposes and they had used their theory of a Sino-Soviet alliance as an excuse to justify their policy predispositions, even to the point of fighting the Chinese. Repeatedly, they avoided opportunities to reduce the dangers by adjusting their policy goals to constantly changing military and political events until finally it was too late to achieve a balanced military and political strategy without a major reorganization of their policy framework.

On the basis of what we have observed, we can accept our original hypothesis without serious reservations. Not just on November 24, but throughout the first five months of the Korean War, US officials ignored strategic intelligence because it conflicted with their policy goals.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In retrospect it is clear that the strategic surprise of American forces in Korea did not result from a lack of intelligence on Chinese intervention. From the time the war began on June 25 until MacArthur launched his final offensive on November 24, strategic information, coming from a variety of sources and reaching the highest officials in the American government, consistently demonstrated that the Chinese had the capability and the intention of intervening. A brief review of the situation makes this point quite clear.

Retrospect

The Chinese moved troops into Manchuria and deployed them along the Yalu River border throughout the Korean crisis. Beginning with negligible increments during the early months of the war, Chinese troop movements began to increase noticeably in August as the chances of a North Korean victory dwindled. When MacArthur launched his Inchon offensive and the defeat of the North Koreans became evident, the Chinese began a major campaign to mass battle units along the Yalu River and to prepare domestically for war. By late October and early November the number of PRC troops in the area near the Yalu had risen by approximately 400 per cent from the initial number deployed in June. With close to a million soldiers on the Manchurian border, the PRC began filtering forces into North Korea during October and by mid-November

were deploying at a rate of two divisions daily, which allowed them to put over a quarter million men into the battle zone in the last two weeks of November.

The Chinese repeatedly made statements from June through November showing hostility for the American war effort in Korea and signalling their intention to intervene. During the early part of the war PRC officials focused on Taiwan as a source of military and political concern, but that focus shifted toward Korea as the North Korean war effort bogged down. Official Chinese spokesmen became increasingly explicit in stating their opposition to the course of the war following MacArthur's Inchon landing and publicly stated that they could not tolerate an invasion of North Korea. When South Korean forces crossed the 38th Parallel in pursuit of the defeated North Korean Army, the Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai specifically warned the Indian government that the PRC would intervene if the US crossed also. This message was conveyed to the US government through official diplomatic channels. With the movement of US forces across the Parallel the Chinese restated their intentions and moved organized units into North Korea. During late October and early November US forces engaged Chinese troops, captured Chinese POWs and learned the identity of organized units of the Chinese PLA (People's Liberation Army) actively operating in North Korea. In early November the PRC re-grouped its forces, acknowledged publicly that Chinese troops were in Korea and re-iterated its firm commitment to aid North Korean forces.

Chinese intentions and capabilities were known to US officials in several ways. Public news reports covered the prospect of Chinese intervention comprehensively from the beginning of the war, and revealed a trend showing an increasing and consistent Chinese willingness to intervene in Korea. In the early weeks of the war evidence showing that the Chinese might intervene was negligible but as the war progressed the PRC gained more and more attention in the public press. Chinese troop movements to Manchuria were freely reported and there were constantly increasing amounts of evidence in the press of Chinese hostility and concern about what was happening in Korea. By October the Chinese were reported as being in opposition to a US invasion of the North and by early November the public press reported that Chinese troops were pouring across the Yalu. The fact that the US offensive had been halted by Chinese forces by November 7 was common knowledge in the American press, and there was abundant speculation about the next Chinese move. By November 24, information on Chinese troop movements into North Korea, official Chinese statements threatening intervention, US-PRC hostility, and other dangers confronting a renewed offensive, was available to anyone who could read an American newspaper.

Through official channels information on Chinese intervention flooded into the Far East Command Headquarters and into Washington throughout the first five months of the war. US forces operating in Korea constantly monitored Chinese troop movements and reported all information from the battlefront that related to the possibility of Chinese intervention. US air reconnaissance covered all of North Korea,

including the borders of China, special intelligence teams were set-up to gather information on Chinese intervention specifically, and special arrangements were made within the US intelligence community to prevent the kind of intelligence shortcomings that took US officials by surprise when the war first broke out.[1]

Information gathered in Korea was sent to General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo where it was processed by his G-2 intelligence unit commanded by General Charles A. Willoughby. General MacArthur, under strict orders to report all intelligence on Chinese intervention to Washington, was briefed personally by Willoughby on a daily basis, and copies of Willoughby's reports were sent to the JCS in Washington. There, the Departments of Defense and State pooled information from MacArthur's command, together with information from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Intelligence Division of the Army's General Staff and other Defense related intelligence agencies, to form a composit picture of what was happening. The National Security Council, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Bradley, Secretary of Defense Marshall, evaluated and interpreted all available intelligence in the process of making recommendations for Presidential decisions.

---

[1]Because the American government was surprised at the outbreak of the Korean War, General Collins (Army Chief of Staff) arranged with the Secretary of Defense for intelligence reports on possible enemy attacks in Korea to get "special handling" throughout the war. "This will prevent a repetition of the Korean situation," Collins told the Secretary of Defense, "and will insure, if there has been any vital intelligence data pointing to an imminent attack, that it will not be buried in a series of routine CIA intelligence reports." See Collins, War in Peacetime, pp. 76-7.

The President himself was kept fully informed on the military situation through daily briefings from General Bradley and through frequent meetings with members of his cabinet. The Far East Command and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington exchanged all available intelligence on Chinese intervention on an active and regular basis. Well in advance of MacArthur's final offensive every American official with a "need to know" and a responsibility to safeguard American national security was aware that Chinese armies were in North Korea, in strength and in opposition to MacArthur's offensive. In sum, US officials at the highest levels of command were extraordinarily well informed on the extent and nature of Chinese intervention prior to the Yalu disaster.

Given all of this, why were American forces in North Korea taken by surprise?

Our conclusion is that US forces were surprised because officials in a position to act did not want to believe the intelligence they had. Information showing that the Chinese were capable of intervening and willing to intervene conflicted with prevailing preconceptions of the PRC as a weak and impotent pawn of a world communist conspiracy headed by Russia. US officials believed that the PRC would act if and only if ordered to do so by Moscow, and that the Soviet Union would not be willing to give such an order in the face of an American political and military commitment to unify Korea. When the Chinese began moving into North Korea US officials assumed that the PRC was making a token effort to save face for the cause of international communism and would disengage when faced with firm resistance. Neither

the PRC nor the Soviet Union, it was assumed, could seriously afford to undertake a war against the United States to save North Korea.

American officials seriously believed that PRC leaders were fanatic communists acting out their ideological hatred of American culture, with neither the capacity nor the fortitude to wage war against the United States. In this context, US officials could not conceive that a ragtag army of Chinese peasants could be mobilized and equipped to confront the most powerful and technologically advanced military force in the world. The Chinese army, as it was conceived by the Americans to be, glued together with political indoctrination and supplied with inferior weapons, would wilt in the face of superior American firepower or melt away when served with an ultimatum to "cease and desist" their intervention.

In addition, intelligence on Chinese intervention conflicted with the expectations of a quick and easy victory which US officials shared among themselves. Once the North Korean invasion of the south had stalled and MacArthur launched a counter-attack, the fate of the North Korean army was sealed. Since US officials seriously expected to end the war shortly after moving into North Korea, their expectations of Chinese intervention diminished. They assumed that even if the Chinese were "foolish" enough to intervene in support of a "lost cause," the Chinese simply would not have enough time to get a major fighting force into the war.

The Inchon landing significantly contributed to a major change in these official attitudes toward the war, as well as to a change in

the military situation. The Inchon victory, which encouraged passage of the October 7 UN resolution and led to the historic Wake agreement, generally strengthened expectations of victory and suppressed expectations of Chinese intervention. The sudden, rapid change in events obscured Chinese involvement and made the Chinese threat appear remote. Although US officials knew that the possibility of Chinese intervention had increased after Inchon, their expectations of victory far outweighed any anxieties that new possibility may have caused. While the Chinese threat increased radically after Inchon, it lacked visibility because of the dramatic character of the military reversal in Korea. Consequently, the Chinese reaction in October simply appeared to US officials to be another minor increment in the PRC's ideological hostility toward the United States. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the PRC evoked only a token response from US officials in early October. Neither the October 9 orders to MacArthur nor the Wake Island agreement were serious precautions against Chinese intervention, but symbolized instead the high expectations of victory which most US officials shared.

The armed confrontation between Chinese and American troops late in October frustrated prevailing American expectations of victory. Since, at that point, American troops were committed to action in North Korea and the American government was publicly committed to unification, US officials were predisposed to fight the Chinese. The thought of having to withdraw in the face of military pressure from an inferior army or having to negotiate with the communists was anathema to US

officials. They may not have been fanatically zealous about their commitment to unify Korea, but US officials were angry and frustrated about Chinese intervention and, overcommitted to the goal of unification because they had worked long and hard to achieve it.

They started making their commitment gradually with contingency planning in July, and by August they were talking about it in public. Time and again various spokesmen for the government had stated the American desire to see Korea "free, united and independent" and repeatedly they had taken steps to promote UN sponsorship of that goal. US officials were the architects of the October 7 resolution and they had placed American military and political prestige on the line in exchange for a free hand in Korea. The effect of this commitment on US decision making, ironically, appears not to have been fully understood by US officials themselves because of the gradual nature of their actions. With every instance that the government had identified itself with unification that commitment had become stronger and more resistant to change. So, by the time Chinese and American armies came face to face in Korea the goal of unification was no longer a contingency, but an imperative. The American investment of prestige and military power made the abandonment of Korean unification unthinkable to US officials no matter what dangers strategic intelligence showed.

In sum, these beliefs account for the surprise of US forces in Korea. Official preconceptions that the Chinese government as a fanatic, impotent puppet of the Russians led US officials to seriously underrate the PRC's motivation, capability and intention to intervene.

American expectations that victory was "just around the corner" suppressed and distorted expectations about Chinese intervention. And, the government's commitment to unify Korea pre-determined the range of options open to American decision makers, and pre-disposed them to make choices favoring unification. These preconceptions, expectations and commitments were critical components of a belief structure that led US officials to ignore strategic intelligence.

Alternative Explanations

Other contributing causes of the American surprise in Korea are reflected in our data. The intelligence picture was complex and "noisy." Chinese signals showing official concern over the Korean situation were heavily laden with propaganda and rhetoric that reinforced the American tendency to write off the Chinese as bombastic diplomatic blackmailers. The form of Chinese communications obscured their substance, so American officials were never very certain as to whether the Chinese intended to intervene or whether the PRC simply wanted to make a "grandstand play" to demonstrate its own ideological fidelity in the public eye. The Chinese warnings appeared in many instances to be hollow threats, at least until the armed conflict in late October.

Throughout the Korean crisis the Chinese also appeared to be making military threats on other parts of the Asian continent. The safety of Taiwan was never very much in jeopardy but attracted a great deal of attention from US intelligence analysts by virtue of the

intense verbal hostility between Chiang Kai-shek and the PRC. Moreover, the Nationalist Chinese were quick to "cry wolf" and freely manipulated their intelligence reports to the US in a manner that confused events. Most reports from the Nationalist Chinese were misleading, factually incorrect and tailored to exploit various opportunities for influencing American policy in favor of Taiwan.

Even though the American intelligence establishment was alive to the political biases of the Nationalists there was also noise generated by PRC troop movements in South China. During the Korean crisis Chinese troops massed along the Tibetan border and the PRC proclaimed that area as part of China, while also promoting the Viet Minh in Indo China. What US intelligence agencies knew and concluded about PRC activities in these other areas is unclear but information on those activities may have caused confusion about when, where and whether the Chinese would attack.[2]

In a larger context, the close ideological affinity between Russia and China during this time was a source of "noise" or irrelevant signals. US officials repeatedly speculated about the possibility that a combined Sino-Soviet strategy was being pursued to "drain US resources" in Korea and to lay the groundwork for Soviet military action in Europe. This was one of the concerns raised at Wake, and even though a "shooting war" was taking place in Korea, US officials were

---

[2]See Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu, pp. 145-6. See MacArthur Hearings, p. 1234 for General Collins' evaluation of the credibility of Nationalist Chinese intelligence.

anxious to transfer troops from the Far East to Europe as soon as possible. The Soviets were maneuvering and massing troops in the Balkan area of the Mediterranean and had the capability of moving swiftly and decisively across the plains of central Europe.[3]

While there definitely was "noise" that confounded US officials, much of it was a product of their own preconceptions about the nature of the Korean War. Events in Southeast Asia and eastern Europe were, literally and figuratively, far removed from the situation as it developed in North Korea. The events in Korea as they unfolded after Inchon were a product of American initiative and signals about Chinese intervention were in response to that initiative. Chinese warning signals were, at times, unclear and US officials never had exact, definitive data on Chinese intentions, but all along there was a remarkable correlation between what the Chinese said and did vis-a-vis Korea, and extraordinary consistency in the various reports US officials had on the Chinese. In that sense, the noise surrounding intelligence on Chinese intervention was negligible.

Statements made by some US officials following the failure of General MacArthur's final offensive not only raised questions about the clarity of Chinese warning signals but suggested treachery on the part of the PRC in planning and launching an attack against the US forces in North Korea. Secreatry Acheson, and other US officials, in responding to questions during the MacArthur Hearings, created the

---

[3]See Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman, pp. 372-82.

impression that the Chinese had deceived the US government in order to produce and exploit a situation of strategic surprise. In particular, one colloquy summed up this impression:

> Senator Saltonstall: They really fooled us when it comes right down to it, didn't they?
>
> Secretary Acheson: Yes, Sir.[4] [Italics not in the original.]

General MacArthur stated plainly after the Chinese counterattack of November 28,

> It now appears to have been the enemy's intent in breaking off contact with our forces some two weeks ago, to secure time necessary surreptitiously to build up for a later surprise assault. . . .[5] [Italics not in the original.]

The Chinese disengagement, the "volunteer" theme and their apparent unwillingness to negotiate in November have been advanced as evidence to support the idea that the PRC purposefully deceived the American government to maximize the element of surprise.

Events in Korea disconfirm that idea in several ways. In particular, General MacArthur himself pointed out to the JCS the possibility of a Chinese plan of deception as early as November 7, thus alerting the government to it three weeks before the Chinese struck in full force. And, the JCS analysis of available intelligence for the NSC November 9 meeting specifically acknowledged but rejected the possibility of a Chinese deception plan because Chinese staging areas, troop movements, numbers and unit identifications were so well known

---

[4] MacArthur Hearings, p. 1835.

[5] NYT, November 29, p. 4.

to US officials. In all, the possibility that the PRC purposefully misled US officials seems nil. "The 'volunteer' approach, the limited initial attack, and the subsequent disengagement," writes Allen Whiting, "suggest that China intervened in Korea with due consideration of the risks and a determination to minimize them."[6] In this respect, Whiting argues:

> Once the Chinese had ordered their units into action, it was necessary to preserve tactical surprise, as far as this was possible after the warnings of the political phase. It was also desirable, no doubt, to conceal military movements so as to reduce the likelihood of a United States counterblow in the deployment stage and to maintain flexibility in case there was a softening of U.S. policy. A certain caution and diffidence is indicated by the 'volunteer' status accorded to the People's Liberation Army as units in Korea, which may have stemmed from a belief that minimizing the ostensible involvement of the People's Republic of China would lessen whatever political and military penalties the intervention might bring in its wake.[7] [Italics not in the original.]

Contrary to an attempt to deceive the US, the Chinese approach was instead an attempt to reduce military risks by avoiding full scale intervention if at all possible. If US officials were "fooled" in North Korea, it was a result of their willingness to disbelieve information they did not like, and to discount information that conflicted with their expectations.

Another implication made by US officials after the final offensive failed was that they were victims of their own rational, but inaccurate calculations. The Chinese build-up in North Korea was so

---

[6] Whiting, op. cit., p. 138.

[7] Ibid., p. 117.

swift and Chinese strength was so much greater than reported, US officials simply took a "calculated risk" in launching the final offensive. Thus, the surprise has been attributed to imprecise information and erroneous calculations about the level of the military risk accepted to maximize the government's policy. General MacArthur, who was the chief architect of the final offensive, has written the most carefully argued rationale for launching it. "There were but three possible courses," he has recorded in his memoirs:

> I could go forward, remain immobile, or withdraw. If I went forward, there was the chance that China might not intervene in force and the war would be over. If I remained immobile and waited, it would be necessary to select a defense line and dig in. But there was no terrain with natural obstacles to take advantage of, and with my scant forces it would be impossible to establish a defense in depth against the overwhelming numbers of Chinese. They had enough divisions to surround the army if it remained stationary, and every day they would increase their force by fresh divisions from Manchuria. This would mean the ultimate annihilation of our entire command. I estimated our forces would have to be at least tripled to cope with such a situation, but no promise of reinforcements by Washington was forthcoming. If the Chinese intended to intervene, this is exactly what they would want me to do. If I withdrew, it would be in contradiction to my orders and would destroy any opportunity to bring the Korean War to a successful end.[8]

The main problem with MacArthur's decision making seems not to have been his ability to calculate risks carefully, but his willingness to apply his calculations selectively. Obviously he calculated risks only for those alternatives he did not like and calculated payoffs for the choices he preferred. This was the same kind of problem that arose in

---

[8]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 371. See also MacArthur Hearings, pp. 20-1 and Subversion Hearings, pp. 2034-5.

regard to the NSC November 9 meeting. US officials simply chose to make those calculations and judgments that favored their predispositions and avoided those which did not.

General MacArthur stated after the disaster that "even if the enemy had sent over a copy of his attack orders 72 hours in advance there could have been little difference in the outcome," because equipping and mobilizing an army for action is just as problematic as calculating the risks and payoffs of decisions.[9] Many examples of US operations in Korea show that organizational routines partially contributed to the Yalu disaster. During the early phases of the war, for instance, US military planners in Tokyo selected bombing targets against the enemy on the basis of maps provided by the Army map service, without consulting with the pilots who flew the missions in Korea. As a result, US military resources were wasted because, in some instances as many as 20 per cent of the bombing targets selected did not even exist on the ground.[10]

While many such problems were solved as they arose, other more serious difficulties complicated the offensive drive into North Korea solely because of the way US military operations were organized. General MacArthur established separate commands for the X-Corps Marines (which had landed at Inchon) and the 8th Army (which broke out of the Pusan perimeter. The result was a debilitating lack of coordination

---

[9]MacArthur Hearings, pp. 240-1.

[10]Schnabel, Policy and Direction, pp. 108-10.

and communication between the two units that plagued the offensive continuously. In early October, when orders came from Tokyo directing the X Corps to continue the offensive by making an amphibious landing at Wonsan on the Northeast coast of Korea, 8th Army personnel seriously challenged the new strategy. Their primary objection was that the

> . . . GHQ plan to outload X Corps would unnecessarily delay pursuit of the defeated North Korean Army and would impede the advance of Eighth Army northward. It also believed that the ROK advance on the east coast would capture Wonsan before the X Corps could be landed there.[11]

Not only was the Eighth Army's objection well taken, but the strategy led eventually to a chain of events that crippled the American offensive at a critical time.

The disembarkation of the X Corps from Inchon tied up shipping facilities in that port that were sorely needed because US forces were in hot pursuit of the North Korean army. General Walker's logistics became snarled with the added burden of supplying the X Corps until it could leave Inchon, and in the process the Marines lost contact with their own supply agency in Tokyo. The disrupted communications and limited shipping facilities resulted in serious supply problems. Because of difficult tidal conditions, mud flats in the harbor, and limited pier space the logistics situation at Inchon became a military nightmare. Army historian Appleman has noted that this

> . . . resulted in the necessity of unloading from ships in the harbor and reloading on others, and also of reloading on X Corps shipping considerable supplies from the dumps ashore that

---

[11]Appleman, South to the Naktong, pp. 611-12.

> otherwise could have been left for Eighth Army. From Japan by air came 32,000 C rations to Kimpo Airfield, and from there they were taken to the port for outloading.[12]

Even the basic necessity of preparing daily meals for the troops became problematic. For example,

> Rations arrived on large ships, bulk loaded. In order to assemble logical menus for issue to troops, almost the entire ship had to be unloaded before a balanced meal could be provided. This required emergency airlift of rations into the Corps area.[13]

Likewise, supplies expected for the 7th Division were delayed ". . . due to a misunderstanding based on a cancellation of what Tokyo planners . . . thought to be a duplication" of standing orders. So, special supply shipments had to be sent to the victorious Marines on an emergency basis.

As the Eighth Army was moving north across the parallel, the X-Corps Marines were just beginning to board ship at Inchon, while the 7th Marine Division headed south by rail to board ships waiting at Pusan. The 7th Division's trip took seven days during which the unit was attacked several times by North Korean guerilla units and elements of the North Korean Army that had been by-passed during the 8th Army's advance to the Parallel. They arrived on October 12 and both the Navy and Marines cooperated extraordinarily well to meet the October 16 loading deadline. But, when the Marines were ready to sail on October 17 they were ordered to sit idle in the harbor for nearly a week because

---

[12] Ibid., p. 621.

[13] Schnabel, op. cit., pp. 207-8.

the Navy had discovered mines in the Wonsan harbor.[14]

Even as the Wonsan operation was being planned in late September, Admiral Joy had warned the Far East Command that there was a "strong probability" that the target areas were newly mined, but his warning was ignored. When the Navy discovered 3,000 new mines in Wonsan harbor while the Marines were loading at Inchon, the only choice left was to sweep the landing area clear. In an effort to save time, Navy pilots dropped fifty tons of bombs in the harbor with the hope of setting off chain reaction explosions, but when minesweepers entered the harbor on October 12 they found that the strategy had not worked. Two US ships were immediately blown up by mines and attempts to rescue survivors were hampered by North Korean shore batteries. The minesweeping operation lasted until October 25.[15]

In the meantime, not only was the 7th Division sitting idly in Pusan harbor, but the rest of the X Corps was at sea. They boarded at Inchon on October 9 and were headed around the pensula to Wonsan when word of the minesweeping difficulties came through. The ships promptly reversed course and headed south, causing some Marines to believe that the war had ended and they were on their way home. But, twelve hours later they found their ships headed north again. The Navy was simply sailing them up and down the coast until the minefields were cleared.

---

[14] Ibid. See also Appleman, op. cit., pp. 631-3.

[15] Montross and Canzona, U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, Volume III, pp. 10-31. See also Ibid., pp. 633-5 and MacArthur Hearings, p. 2952.

From October 19 to October 25 (approximately) the US ships sailed alternately twelve hours north, then twelve hours south, in what became dubbed as "Operation Yo-yo."[16]

Meanwhile, the ROK I Corps had captured Wonsan on October 11, and the US Eighth Army captured the North Korean capitol of Pyongyang. Numerous US military personnel flew in and out of Wonsan following its capture by ROK troops, but nothing could be done to land the nearly fifty thousand Marines stranded on their ships. Even sanitary conditions on board the ships became problematic. As food supplies ran low, gastro-entiritis and dysentary reached epidemic proportions, claiming as many as 750 casualties on one ship alone.[17]

When the Marines finally landed on October 25 they found that the Eighth Army was farther North than expected and was separated from X Corps by nearly fifty miles of rugged, guerilla infested mountains spanning Eighth Army's left flank and X-Corps' right flank. As the two divided commands moved up the inhospitable terrain, winter weather set in, and even without enemy resistance the X-Corps gained only one mile a day. As supplies for the offensive began to arrive at Wonsan,

---

[16] Ibid., and Schnabel, loc. cit.

[17] Montross and Canzona have written: "The sense of frustration which oppressed the Marine ground forces during Operation Yo-yo would have been increased if they had realized that the air maintenance crews had beaten them to Wonsan by a margin of twelve days. Even more humiliating to the landing force troops, Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell were flown to the objective area. On the evening of the 24th they put on a USO show spiced with quips at the expense of the disgruntled Leathernecks in the transports." Montross and Conzona, op. cit., p. 31.

General Smith began building his airstrip in the Northeast in case emergency evacuation was required! And, by the time the final offensive got under way, the gap between 8th Army and X Corps was still wide open and the Chinese exploited it with devastating effect.[18]

While these difficulties were real and serious problems of organization, they appear in large measure to have been a result of General MacArthur's overconfidence in his own military capabilities and a product of his desire to retain complete control over the military operations in Korea. He not only appointed General Almond as Commander of the X Corps, but kept him on as his own Chief of Staff throughout the offensive operations. By keeping Almond independent of 8th Army and responsible only to Tokyo headquarters, General MacArthur closely identified himself with what he expected to be

---

[18]General Collins has written that, "it is impossible to assess with any certainty the effect of the lull in the pursuit of the North Koreans. . . ." Collins, op. cit., pp. 169-70. The split between the 8th Army and X Corps, which was exploited tactically by the Chinese, became the subject of controversy as a contributing cause of the Yalu disaster. While it is clear that the division of the two units gave the Chinese a definite tactical advantage, it is also clear that that advantage was only one result of larger problems of government decision making following the Inchon success. MacArthur's initiative in splitting the Marines from the 8th Army command to launch the Wonsan operation, and his colleagues' acquiescence in it, were simply another manifestation of the heightened expectations of victory engendered by Inchon. For a discussion of the 8th Army-X Corps split see the MacArthur Hearings, pp. 972-83; 1141-3; 1190-1; 1205-7; 1251. See also Appleman, op. cit., pp. 610-35; 773; Collins, op. cit., pp. 155-71 and 209-13; Montross and Canzona, loc. cit.; Schnabel, loc. cit.; and Subversion Hearings, pp. 2101-4. In addition to the problems resulting from the Wonsan debacle, MacArthur's troops were operating at only 85 per cent of their authorized battle strength when the final offensive was launched. See MacArthur Hearings, pp. 1205 and 1370.

another victorious amphibious operation. Although the Navy's delay in landing the Marines at Wonsan was a serious organizational breakdown, it was also an act of caution. Navy personnel simply were unwilling to risk moving troop ships into a previously mined area until that area was completely safe for the ships to pass. Thus, the confusion and the loss of X-Corps' fighting power for three critical weeks seems primarily to have been a result of MacArthur's complex and elaborate strategy of operations that was designed to fit his own expectation of victory. He was unable to judge accurately the difficulties involved in that strategy because of his preoccupation with duplicating the Inchon success.

General MacArthur figured prominently in most major government decisions during the Korean crisis and did not hesitate to influence and guide the development of US policy. He flew personally to Korea, which lent his personal prestige to the war effort, and flew also to Taiwan, which angered the Chinese and aggravated President Truman. McArthur's public statements in support of Taiwan brought him a large share of support from the powerful China lobby in the US and gave him added influence in determining what decisions were made. Although Truman issued public statements that made US policy toward China appear neutral, MacArthur set the tone for more hostile relations. When the initial planning for unification came down to a decision as to whether to go ahead or scrap the plans Acheson found himself in the middle of a political vise. The China lobby, represented by Dulles and reinforced by MacArthur, pushed for an aggressive policy, while Kennan and

the Policy Planning Staff advised caution. Pressure from the right (i.e. Dulles, MacArthur and the China lobby) was too much for Acheson to resist, so he gave the go-ahead for a public statement on it in August.

When detailed plans for a counteroffensive were being drawn up in late August, again MacArthur influenced the final decision. General Collins and Admiral Sherman traveled to Tokyo to oversee the planning but found when they arrived that MacArthur had established things his own way. He had already lined up key members of his staff in favor of a landing at Inchon and Collins, though skeptical, fell into line quickly out of respect for MacArthur's military judgment. Navy personnel who were to conduct the operation were members of MacArthur's staff and subject to his orders, so their objections were quieted also. That left only Admiral Sherman to convince, and when he found himself confronted by MacArthur and in a minority opposition, he too gave reluctant approval for the Inchon landing. When the landing succeeded so spectacularly, MacArthur's prestige was greatly enhanced.[19]

At Wake, MacArthur was again influential. He immediately convinced the President, in a personal private conference, that the Chinese would not intervene, so when they went into the joint conference with

---

[19]General Collins has written that, "the success of Inchon was so great, and the subsequent prestige of General MacArthur was so overpowering, that the Chiefs hesitated thereafter to question later plans and decisions of the General, which should have been challenged. In this we must share with General MacArthur some of the responsibility for actions that led to defeats in North Korea." Collins, op. cit., p. 142.

Truman's advisers MacArthur appeared to have the President's prestige (if not Truman's wholehearted support) on his side. The military members present deferred to MacArthur's military expertise and reputation and the remaining members of the group followed along with the President, who appeared to support the General.[20]

Again, when the Chinese intervened, MacArthur played an important role in determining how the government responded. When the Chinese engaged ROK and US forces and took Chinese POWs in late October and early November, MacArthur kept the information to himself. It was not until the JCS got word of what was happening via other channels that they bewilderedly wired him on November 3 requesting a report on ". . . what appears to be overt Chinese intervention." When he finally presented the facts to Washington, he did it in such a way as to cause confusion over what was happening and coupled his reports with his own plans for meeting the new situation. Thus, as Washington officials learned the extent of Chinese intervention, MacArthur already was preparing for a new offensive, lobbying for extended military authority and giving every appearance that he had the situation under control. When he reached the limits of his military powers he manufactured evidence to suggest that the Chinese were bluffing, and by the time the November 9 NSC meeting was held, he faced US Military officials with a fait accompli. Again, they deferred to his expertise

---

[20]Ironically, General Collins has written that after the Wake conference, "Mr. Truman was apparently convinced that he had persuaded the General to accept his views on Korean policy." [Italics not in the original.] Ibid., p. 154.

in military affairs and agreed to another offensive. As Truman put it, "we leaned over backwards in our respect for the man's military reputation."[21]

Because MacArthur was such a controversial and colorful General his activities during the Korean crisis were highly visible. The effect of his thinking on the development of US policy is immeasurable, but he alone was not responsible either for the surprise in North Korea or for launching an offensive. Throughout the crisis he was under strict orders from the JCS and at all times he was carrying out policy developed in Washington. After the Yalu disaster occurred he heaped abuse on those whom he felt were most responsible (excluding himself, of course) and his inflammatory public statements disturbed President Truman greatly. Accordingly, Truman has written, "I should have relieved MacArthur then and there but I did not want him to think it was because of the offensive."[22]

---

[21]Harry Truman, Memoirs, Volume II, p. 443. General Ridgway has commented that "General MacArthur was not merely a military genius. He was a brilliant advocate who could argue his points with so much persuasiveness that men determined to stand up against him were won to enthusiastic support." Ridgway, Korean War, p. 33.

[22]Harry Trumen, op. cit., p. 384. Roy Appleman has concluded that, "The evaluation by General MacArthur and his intelligence officers of Chinese intervention and Chinese military capability in Korea in October and November 1950 seems to have been the determining factor in shaping the future course of U.N. military action in the country. . . . But apparently the Central Intelligence agency and the administration generally did not evaluate the available intelligence so as to reach a conviction on the question as to whether the Chinese intended to intervene in the Korean War different from that held by General MacArthur. It must be inferred that either Washington was undecided or that its view coincided with that of the Commander in Chief, Far East, since it did not issue directives to him stating a different estimate. The

In sum, these additional factors contributed to the American surprise in Korea. Noise about other possible points of attack either from the Soviet Union or China cluttered the intelligence picture. Chinese claims that their troops were "volunteers" and the Chinese disengagement appeared deceptive to US officials. Miscalculation of alternative risks and payoffs led to excessive risk taking. Organizational procedures for carrying out offensive operations bogged down at critical times. And, the political activities of General MacArthur strongly influenced the decisions US officials made.

Findings

The Korean case demonstrates the power of preconceptions in shaping political decisions. Many factors may have contributed to the American surprise in North Korea, but when reduced to bare essentials, it originated in the beliefs of US officials regarding the nature and character of the Korean War. In particular, the surprise was a derivative of American attitudes toward the Chinese communists and toward Korean unification. Given these findings we can see similarities between the Korean crisis and other cases of strategic surprise.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 was preceded by numerous warning signals communicated to American decision makers via official and unofficial sources, and there were numerous opportunities

---

conclusion, then, is that in the developing situation of November the views of the Far East Command were decisive on the military course to be taken in Korea at that time." Appleman, op. cit., p. 757.

to uncover and avert that disaster. Yet, when the Japanese struck, they achieved total surprise and devastated the American fleet anchored at Pearl. In her study of the disaster, Roberta Wohlstetter has suggested that US officials were surprised because the intelligence picture was clogged with "noise" (i.e. irrelevant warning signals). But, she points out that in many instances US officials failed to prevent the surprise because of their ". . . very human tendency to pay attention to signals that support[ed] current expectations about enemy behavior." "Apparently," she writes, "human beings have a stubborn attachment to old beliefs and an equally stubborn resistance to new material that will upset them."[23]

The blitzkrieg German invasion of Russia in 1941 was preceded by a flood of warning signals monitored by Russian intelligence. Soviet officials were alive to the German threat well in advance, knew of German troop masses on the Russian border and received direct

---

[23]Roberta Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 392-3. Wohlstetter's main emphasis is on the signal picture which faced US decision makers and her study is based on the hypothesis that: "To understand the fact of surprise it is necessary to examine the characteristics of the noise as well as the signals that [only] after the event are clearly seen to herald the attack." See p. 3. In discussing American confusion over possible points of a Japanese attack Wohlstetter indicates that US intelligence personnel felt that "it would have been almost a military intelligence miracle had we been able to spot a task force in forming and have known before it sailed where it was going." See p. 291. This is particularly interesting when we recall that US intelligence knew that Chinese armies were massing along the Yalu River for four months prior to their attack in 1950 and knew, before MacArthur's final offensive, where those armies were going.

warnings from other governments including the United States and Great Britain. Yet, the German attack completely surprised the Russians and disastrously crippled the Soviet Army. In his study of that case, Barton Whaley argues that the German intelligence service "duped" the Russians with false signals as part of Hitler's strategy to conquer Russia. By sending misleading clues, the Germans made Stalin ". . . quite certain, very decisive, and wrong" about German intentions. According to Whaley,

> The Soviet intelligence services . . . delivered the true signals in abundance and with speed, but these were unavailing given Stalin's faulty hypotheses about the probable course of German action.

But, he points out that Stalin's preconceptions about the Germans outweighed the intelligence he received. "Unwilling to entirely abandon his preconceived policy of appeasement," Whaley has written,

> . . . Stalin was partly deafened to the authentic signals of doom and preferred listening to the soothing misinformation and disinformation that allowed him a false sense of mastery over the approaching catastrophe.[24] [Italics not in the original.]

The German invasion, like Pearl Harbor, achieved strategic surprise at least in part because of the pre-existing beliefs of government

---

[24]Barton Whaley, Codeword: BARBAROSSA (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1973), p. 226 and pp. 242-4. Whaley's study is a variation of the same theme and approach used by Wohlstetter, but he has concluded that the "concept" of noise has to be expanded to include what he terms "disinformation" (i.e. false intelligence signals deliberately sent by one adversary to another). "The purpose of disinformation," writes Whaley, "is to reduce ambiguity, confusion and uncertainty by making its victim more certain and wrong. Thus disinformation is best considered a special type of signal--a false signal in contrast to authentic ones." See p. 244.

officials. Even though both cases antedated the sophisticated information technology introduced into government intelligence processes in the 1960's, new techniques for gathering and processing intelligence quickly and accurately have not eliminated the problem of strategic surprise. Even Robert MacNamara's streamlining of the US Department of Defense was not enough to prevent strategic surprise in Viet Nam.

Throughout late 1967 and early 1968 US intelligence units in Viet Nam gathered extraordinarily complete and accurate information forecasting a major offensive by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong during the Tet holiday. Yet, when the offensive was launched on January 31, 1968 it came as a "surprise" which, according to Townsend Hoopes (Former Under Secretary of the US Air Force), ". . . burst with the suddenness of a giant bombshell all over South Vietnam. . . ." and led to ". . . mounting casualties, destruction, and irreversible political consequences for the allied [American] war effort."[25] Although the surprise has not yet received the kind of detailed and thorough public scrutiny afforded the Pearl Harbor attack, preliminary evidence indicates that American preconceptions about the nature of the Viet Nam War in general and about the North Vietnamese in particular, encouraged US officials to discount the intelligence they had. For example, President Johnson has written in his memoirs that he considered the Tet offensive a disaster for the North, but adds:

---

[25]Townsend Hoopes, The Limits of Intervention (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1969), pp. 139-40.

> This is not to imply that Tet was not a shock, in one degree or another, to all of us. We knew that a show of strength was coming; it was more massive than we had anticipated. We knew that the Communists were aiming at a number of population centers; we did not expect them to attack as many as they did. We knew that the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were trying to achieve better coordination of their countryside moves; we did not believe they would be able to carry out the level of coordination they demonstrated. We expected a large force to attack; it was larger than we had estimated. Finally, it was difficult to believe that the Communists would so profane their own people's sacred holiday.[26] [Italics not in the original.]

Apparently, US officials gave more credence to their own preconceptions of communist capabilities and intentions than they did to their own intelligence. With nearly a half-million American troops in Viet Nam to back up the South Vietnamese army, US officials could not conceive how the North Vietnamese would be willing to risk heavy losses from an American counterblow "just" to achieve a temporary political or military advantage.

Also in 1968, just prior to the Tet offensive another instance of strategic surprise confounded American officials. The US intelligence ship Pueblo was approached several times off the coast of North Korea and was followed by North Korean torpedo boats. Yet, when these boats finally attacked the Pueblo, the ship's skipper and crew were completely surprised and lost their ship to the North Koreans. Commander Lloyd Bucher's personal account of the incident shows that he was surprised largely because of his preconceptions about the North Korean intentions and capabilities. When he was first approached by

---

[26]Lyndon Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 384.

North Korean torpedo boats he concluded that they

> . . . had come out to let us know we were irritating but harmless capitalists conducting oceanographic research in the Sea of Japan, were now ignoring us and had withdrawn into their hermetic Communist isolation.[27]

And, when they surrounded his ship, he concluded that it was merely a part of the harrassment he had been briefed to expect. He had the backing of US Navy and Air forces in the Far East and had a special emergency code to signal those forces when he needed their support, so he could not conceive how North Korean torpedo boats would risk attacking a ship of the largest, most powerful Navy in the world. When he finally realized that his preconceptions about the North Koreans were incorrect, his call for help was too late to save the Pueblo.

On a much larger scale, the Arab attack on Israel in October, 1973 also demonstrates the impact of preconceptions on political decision making. There were numerous warning signals coming into Tel Aviv prior to the Yom Kippur attack and the Israeli intelligence service was alive to the Arab military build-up as early as two years before the war. The American intelligence community worked with Israeli intelligence agencies and both appear to have had warnings of the attack as much as three weeks in advance. Throughout the last two weeks of September and the first week of October both intelligence communities gathered evidence on Arab capabilities and intentions that showed an offensive was imminent. And, the Israeli government

---

[27]Lloyd M. Bucher, BUCHER: My Story (New York: Dell, 1971), p. 167.

apparently knew twenty-four hours in advance that the attack was coming.[28] Yet, the Yom Kippur attack took Israeli forces by complete surprise and dealt them crippling and costly military losses. Apparently, Israeli government officials were misled by their own preconceptions about the Arabs.

The 1967 war left the Israelis with an impression of the Arabs as inept strategists and incompetent soldiers. Although they knew the Arabs were avowedly hostile toward Israel and were seriously determined to recapture lost territory, Israeli officials discounted the possibility of an Arab attack because they could not conceive that the Arabs could transform their listless army into an effective fighting force. And, they could not see how the Arabs would be willing to risk losing more territory to the superior Israeli army. When the Arab attack finally came, US officials too misinterpreted available intelligence because of similar preconceptions about the Arabs. Indeed, for the first eight hours of the fighting, many US officials believed that the Israelis had surprised the Arabs! In an October 12 (1973) news conference, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger pointed out that the surprise illustrates the "gravest danger of intelligence"; which is, in Kissinger's words, trying "to fit the facts into existing preconceptions and to make them consistent with what is anticipated."[29]

These examples point out that in order to explain the causes of strategic surprise and attendant "intelligence failures" we need to

---

[28] NYT, October 31, 1973, pp. 1, 15.

[29] Ibid., p. 15.

study the belief structures of government officials who make judgments about strategic intelligence. To assume, as many political theories do, that decision makers will respond to strategic intelligence by choosing the least costly, most beneficial alternative is nonsense.[30] A more realistic assumption is that strategic intelligence, regardless of its content and credibility, has meaning only in relation to a predefined set of beliefs policy makers hold and those beliefs exercise a controlling influence on how they respond to intelligence. In the Korean case we have seen many examples that bear out this conclusion.

In particular, the NSC's November 9 (1950) decision to launch the final offensive illustrates very well the relationship between belief structures and decision making. In that instance, we have seen that US officials chose the final offensive (one of three feasible alternatives) primarily because it was consistent with their political beliefs about the war. It satisfied their commitment to unification and represented a fulfillment of their overall policy goals. The two unchosen alternatives, by contrast, were by-passed because they seriously contradicted those beliefs and objectives. The point is that both of the two unchosen alternatives, if selected, would have required a major reorganization of policy makers' beliefs about the war.

---

[30]As Graham Allison reminds us, ". . . an imaginative analyst can construct an account of value-maximizing choice for any action or set of actions performed by a government." See his Essence of Decision (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 35. He provides an interesting review of alternative conceptual models for explaining political decision making.

We need only recall that the choice to halt the offensive represented a loss of prestige and required that US officials abandon their policy goal of unification; while the alternative of total withdrawal carried with it the stigma of retreat which gave the American government an image that US officials found totally unacceptable. Why US forces were fighting in Korea, what US goals should be and what the official policy toward the PRC should be, all were at issue in regard to those two alternatives. In the short run, US officials simply found it easier and more satisfying to choose the high risk offensive because it allowed them to avoid dealing with those complex issues. The choice to launch an offensive required fewer adjustments in their beliefs about the conflict, whereas both of the "safe" alternatives faced them with immediate frustration of their political goals and entailed drastic changes in their beliefs about the war. In sum, the alternatives developed by the NSC were just as important for what they represented in terms of official beliefs, as for how they reflected calculations of costs and benefits. And, what seems significant about the choice to launch the final offensive is that it reduced conflicts involving official beliefs.

Many other American decisions during the Korean crisis reflected this kind of dilemma, as government officials time and again were faced with the same basic choices. When strategic intelligence conflicted with their goal of Korean unification, they found that they had essentially three alternatives. They could choose to: (1) try to change the prevailing situation (through military action); (2) change their

goals (i.e. change their feelings about unification); and (3) ignore (i.e. discount) information (about Chinese intervention). At no time did they seriously consider changing their goals because that would have frustrated their policy and the beliefs on which it was based. Instead, they attempted to change the military situation to attain their policy objectives and ignored strategic intelligence to avoid changing their goals.

In retrospect, the Korean crisis began and escalated when choices were made that denied or discounted strategic intelligence. Although the decisions by which US officials initially discounted intelligence were relatively unimportant in a substantive sense, their action established procedures for reducing conflicts between incoming intelligence and established policy. Thus, the more they manipulated strategic intelligence to fit their own political purposes, the more inclined they became to ignore increasing danger signs. The longer the crisis continued the more they became accustomed to ignoring danger and, thus, they accepted greater risks in the face of circumstances that called for prudence and caution. The crisis ended, of course, when the Chinese defeated the 8th Army and left US policy makers no choice but to believe their intelligence and change their policy goals.[31]

---

[31]Even with the Chinese onslaught in late November and early December, US officials were not quick to change their minds about US policy in Korea. General Ridgway has written that during the JCS meeting of December 3 he was unable to elicit any positive response from his colleagues in regard to taking action that might reduce mounting American losses in North Korea. According to Ridgway, "I blurted out--perhaps too bluntly but with deep feeling--that I felt

To restate our main point, we need to analyze systematically the relationship between intelligence inputs and policy outputs on the basis of data relating to the belief structures of policy makers. By shifting our focus in this direction we can, perhaps, study political crises such as the Yalu disaster in the making without the necessity of knowing all the exact intelligence data that political officials themselves are getting. We can approximate the basic elements of their belief structures by comparing what politicians say with what they do and by giving more attention to the impact of institutionalized beliefs

---

we had already spent too damn much time on debate and that immediate action was needed. We owed it, I insisted, to the men in the field and to the God to whom we must answer for those men's lives to stop talking and to act. My only answer, from the twenty men who sat around the wide table, and the twenty others who sat around the walls in the rear, was complete silence--except that I did receive from a Navy colleague sitting behind me a hastily scribbled 'proud to know you' note that I acknowledged with an appreciative note of my own.

"The meeting broke up with no decision taken." Ridgway, op. cit., p. 62.

Even after the Chinese attack, President Truman insisted that "in my opinion the Chinese Communists were Russian satellites." See Harry Truman, op. cit., p. 399. And, General Ridgway himself, as he took over the Far East command in 1951, persisted in his belief that the "real issues are whether the power of Western civilization . . . shall defy and defeat Communism . . . and whether Communism or individual freedom shall prevail. . . ." Ridgway, p. 265. Not until 1951 did the JCS concede that Korean unification was infeasible and not until 1953 did American statements on the matter make it clear just how US policy had changed. In correspondence with South Korean President Rhee in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower stated in part that "The unification of Korea is an end to which the United States is committed . . . but we do not intend to employ war as an instrument to accomplish the world-wide political settlements to which we are dedicated and which we believe to be just. . . . The United States will not renounce its efforts by all peaceful means to effect the reunification of Korea." [Italics not in the original.] See Ridgway, p. 269.

such as ideologies on their thinking. Given this, and a rough estimate of the strategic information picture, we can construct intelligent explanatory hypotheses about their responses to various political situations. Some of the data we need is as obvious as a lapel pin, but it may well lead us to some non-obvious conclusions about political decision making.[32]

In sum, our study of the Korean case raises more questions than answers about the relationship between strategic intelligence and national policy making, but it may provide us with a useful perspective on the problem of strategic surprise. We might hypothesize, for instance, that strategic surprise does not simply represent an initiation of hostilities through a surreptitious attack by one party against another, but may be viewed additionally as the outcome of a conflict in which myths and symbols have obstructed effective communication between adversaries. If this is the case, we might propose that one way to reduce the possibility of strategic surprise in the future is for policy makers to articulate and test their own political assumptions and beliefs and to set up direct lines of communication with their adversaries. If this is not done and policy makers continue to interpret

---

[32]See for example, de Rivera, Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy; Marray Edelman, Politics as Symbolic Action (Chicago: Markham, 1971); Janis, Victims of Groupthink; John Kautsky, "Myth, self-fulfilling prophecy, and symbolic reassurance in the East-West conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 9 (March, 1965), pp. 1-17; David Lampton, "The US Image of Peking in Three International Crises," Western Political Quarterly, Volume XXVI (March, 1973), pp. 28-53; and Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence.

intelligence in the light (or darkness) of their own preconceptions, and continue to impute to their adversaries their own models of reality, then we will continue to suffer the consequences of strategic surprise.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. DATA SOURCES: Public Documents, Official and Semi-official Histories, Memoirs and Personal Records.

Acheson, Dean. Present at the Creation. New York: W. W. Norton, 1969.

Appleman, Roy. South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu. A volume in the series entitled The United States Army in the Korean War. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1960.

Bohlen, Charles. Witness to History. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973.

Cagle, Malcolm, and Frank Manson. The Sea War in Korea. Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1957.

Collins, Joseph Lawton. War in Peacetime. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969.

Futrell, Robert. The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-53. New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1961.

Karig, Walter. War in Korea. Volume VI of Battle Report, Walter Karig, editor. 6 vols. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944-52.

Kennan, George F. Memoirs, (1925-1950). Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967.

Lowitt, Richard (ed.). The Truman-MacArthur Controversy. Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1967.

MacArthur, Douglas. Reminiscences. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Marshall, S.L.A. The River and the Gauntlet, Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November, 1950, in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970.

Montross, Lynn, and Nicholas Conzona. The Chosin Reservoir Campaign. Volume III of U.S. Marine Operations in Korea. 4 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957.

The New York Times. June-November, 1950.

Panikkar, K. M. In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat. London: G. Allen, 1955.

Poynter, Henrietta and Nelson (eds.). China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1966. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967.

Ridgway, Matthew B. The Korean War. New York: Doubleday, 1967.

Schnabel, James. Policy and Direction: The First Year. A volume in the series entitled The U.S. Army in the Korean War. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1972.

Sebald, William. With MacArthur in Japan. New York: W. W. Norton, 1965.

Truman, Harry S. Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-52. Volume II of Memoirs. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1956.

Truman, Margaret. Harry S. Truman. New York: William Morrow, 1973.

United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Military Situation in the Far East and the Facts Surrounding the Relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Hearings before the joint committees, 82nd Congress, 1st Session. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951.

United States Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary. Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments. Hearings before subcommittee, 83rd Congress, 1st Session. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954-55.

United States Department of State. The China White Paper. 2 vols. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967. Originally issued as United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30.

Whitney, Courtney. MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History. New York: Knopf, 1956.

Willoughby, Charles A. MacArthur, 1941-1951. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES: Articles, Books and Periodicals.

Allison, Graham. Essence of Decision. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971.

Berger, Carl. The Korea Knot. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.

Bucher, Lloyd. BUCHER: My Story. New York: Dell, 1970.

Brehm, Jack, and Arthur Cohen. Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance. New York: Wiley, 1962.

Chapanis, Alphonse and Natalia. "Cognitive Dissonance: Five Years Later," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. LXI, pp. 1-22.

Cohen, Warren I. America's Response to China. New York: Wiley, 1971.

de Rivera, Joseph H. The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1969.

de Weerd, Harvey A. "Strategic Surprise in the Korean War," Orbis, VI (Fall, 1962), pp. 432-52.

Dulles, Foster Rhea. American Policy Toward Communist China, 1949-1969. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972.

Edelman, Murray. Politics as Symbolic Action. Chicago: Markham, 1971.

Festinger, Leon. A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Friedman, Edward. "Problems in Dealing with an Irrational Power: America Declares War on China," America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations, Edward Friedman and Mark Selden, editors. New York: Random House, 1971.

Geer, Andrew. The New Breed. New York: Harper, 1952.

Gelb, Leslie. "Vietnam: The System Worked," Foreign Policy (Summer, 1971), pp. 140-67.

George, Alexander. "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea." Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, May, 1972. (Mimeographed)

Goodrich, Leland. Korea: A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956.

Goodrich, Leland, and Anne Simons. The U.N. and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1955.

Higgins, Trumbull. Korea and the Fall of MacArthur. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Hoopes, Townsend. The Limits of Intervention. New York: David McKay, 1969.

Janis, Irving. Victims of Groupthink. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1972.

Johnson, Lyndon. The Vantage Point. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

Kautsky, John. "Myth, self-fulfilling prophecy, and symbolic reassurance in the East-West conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, IX (March, 1965), pp. 1-17.

Kolko, Joyce and Gabriel. The Limits of Power. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Lampton, David. "The U.S. Image of Peking in Three International Crises," Western Political Quarterly, XXVI (June, 1973), pp. 28-53.

Lee, Clark, and Richard Henschel. Douglas MacArthur. New York: Holt, 1952.

Lichterman, Martin. "To the Yalu and Back," American Civil Military Decisions, Harold Stein, editor. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1963. Pp. 571-639.

Long, Gavin. MacArthur as Military Commander. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1969.

McLellan, David S. "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXVI (March, 1968), pp. 16-39.

Neustadt, Richard. Presidential Power. New York: Wiley, 1964.

Paige, Glenn D. The Korean Decision. New York: The Free Press, 1968.

Ransom, Harry Howe. Central Intelligence and National Security. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Ransom, Harry Howe. The Intelligence Establishment. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Ransom, Harry Howe. Strategic Intelligence. Morristown, New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1973.

Rees, David. Korea: The Limited War. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1964.

Rovere, Richard, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965.

Simmons, Robert R. "The Korean War: Containment on Trial." A paper presented at the American Political Science Association convention, Washington, September 5-9, 1972.

Spanier, John. The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War. Revised Edition. New York: Norton, 1965.

Stone, Isidor F. The Hidden History of the Korean War. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952.

Tedeschi, James T., Barry R. Schlenker and Thomas V. Bonoma. "Cognitive Dissonance: Private Ratiocination or Public Spectacle?" American Psychologist, XXVI (August, 1971), pp. 685-95.

Tsou, Tang. America's Response to China. New York: Wiley, 1971.

Weng, Byron S.J. Peking's UN Policy. New York: Praeger, 1972.

Whaley, Barton. Codeword: BARBAROSSA. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1973.

Whiting, Allen. China Crosses the Yalu. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960.

Wilensky, Harold. Organizational Intelligence. New York: Basic Books, 1967.

Wohlstetter, Roberta. Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962.

Zelman, Walter. Chinese Intervention in the Korean War: A Bilateral Failure of Deterrence. Security Studies Paper Number 11. Los Angeles: University of California, 1967.