

# 美國對中共介入韓戰的對策

一九五〇年夏至一九五一年春

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## 摘 要

中共介入韓戰，使美軍遭遇自珍珠港事變以後最大的挫敗。在有關的美國外交、軍事檔案未開放前，對於這項失敗原因的探討，多著重於杜魯門總統與麥克阿瑟將軍的爭執，以追究責任的歸屬。檔案開放後，英、美研究此段歷史者大抵同意，麥帥與杜魯門的看法差異不大。這些學者認為美國之所以無法避免與中共的軍事衝突，主要是杜魯門政府對中共懷有難以妥協的敵意，所以堅拒與中共談判，並且採取孤立中共的政策，期望透過擴大戰爭，並施予經濟、政治壓力，以脅迫中共就範所致。而大陸與英、美學者對中共參戰動機的研究，亦認為中共的介入，是受美國敵對行動所迫，不是基於戰略考量所作的理性抉擇。

本文利用美方的外交、軍事檔案，分析杜魯門政府因應中共參戰所作的各項考量、其對與中共談判及停戰條件的看法，以及其對「軍事報復」、經濟和其它形式的「制裁」所作的考量與執行，以補充、甚或批駁英、美史家對此段歷史解釋；最後並分析美方決策過程與外交政策本質上的一些缺失，以進一步瞭解美國與中共衝突的原因。本文總結認為，杜魯門政府對韓戰的政策一直相當有彈性，也很願意透過外交途徑，解決與中共的爭端。但是華府自我中心與一廂情願的決策方式，使中共只能感受到其敵意，而無法相信其和平意願；而杜魯門政府既輕估對手的決心，又不願付出相對的代價來貫徹其目標，使得美國受挫於軍事、經濟力量均遠遜的中共，也無法依其所願，早日以談判的方式來解決韓戰問題。

**THE LIMITED WAR CONTROVERSY:  
U.S. Policy toward Communist China's Intervention  
in Korea, Summer 1950—Spring 1951**

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Four months after the Korean War broke out, the United States found itself fighting the Chinese Communists. The ensuing U.N. debacle caught Washington off guard. As then Secretary of State Dean Acheson commented, Peking's advance into North Korea "was the greatest disaster which occurred to the Truman administration."<sup>(1)</sup> The military confrontation between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC), many agreed, consolidated anti-Communist ideology, militarized and globalized U.S. foreign policy, and prevented rapprochement of the two countries for two decades. Searching for causes of the fiasco, President Truman and his key advisers lay most of the blame on the miscalculation, ambition, and insubordination of U.N. Commander General Douglas MacArthur. The general (and his subordinates as well as supporters), on the other hand, argued that Washington politicians confused military with political objectives, thereby depriving his command of victory.<sup>(2)</sup>

Recent scholars, transcending the "Truman-MacArthur controversy" interpretation, largely agree that the differences between the theater commander and his Washington superiors were not so great. Instead of being pivotal on "marching to the Yalu" and bringing about Peking's

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(1) Princeton Seminars, February 13, 1954, Dean Acheson Papers, box 76, Truman Library (hereafter cited as HSTL).

(2) See *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman*, vol. 2, *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), chapters 23-28; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), chapters 48-50, 53-55; or Acheson, *The Korean War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), chapters 2-5; Omar N. Bradely and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), chapters 57-69; "MacArthur and Truman Tell About a War U.S. Didn't Win," *U.S. News and World Report* (February 17, 1956), pp. 48-54, 168-175; Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), part 9.

intervention, these scholars argue, MacArthur merely strengthened the pre-existing inclinations of the administration.<sup>(3)</sup> Searching for reasons for the U.S.-PRC confrontation, they criticize the administration as a whole for being too cold war oriented and too arrogant in dealing with Peking. The latter's repeated warnings that it would intervene if U.S./U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel were ignored. The last opportunity to settle the conflict early, that is during the period the Chinese Communists broke off contact after the success of their initial attack, was lost. British scholars in particular stress London's efforts to bring about a diplomatic settlement, only to find Washington aloof to the idea of negotiation with the Communists. Instead, the U.S. elected to isolate and to coerce Peking into submission. Economic sanctions, the U.N. aggressor resolution, and sporadic threats of military retaliation, these historians maintain, all demonstrate irreversible U.S. hostility toward Communist China.<sup>(4)</sup> Studies

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(3) See William Stueck, "The March to the Yalu: the Perspective from Washington," in Bruce Cummings, ed., *Child of Conflict: the Korean-American Relationship, 1943-53* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), pp. 195-237; David S. McLellan, "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," in *Political Science Quarterly* 83:1 (1968):16-39; Barton J. Bernstein, "The Policy of Risk: Crossing the 38th Parallel and Marching to the Yalu," *Foreign Service Journal* 54:3(1977):16-22; Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: the War before Vietnam* (London: the MacMillan Press, 1986); Edward Friedman, "Problems in Dealing with an Irrational Power: America Declares War on China," in Friedman and Mark Selden, eds., *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations* (New York: Vintage, 1971), pp. 207-252; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), chapter 4, "Drawing Lines: The Defensive Perimeter Strategy in East Asia, 1947-1951," pp. 72-104; Peter Farrar, "Britain's Proposal for a Buffer Zone South of the Yalu in November 1950: Was it a Neglected Opportunity to End the Fighting in Korea?" in *Journal of Contemporary History* 18:2 (April 1983):327-351. But Michael Schaller remains convinced that MacArthur was primarily responsible for the expansion of the conflict with China. See Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), chapters 12-13.

(4) See scholarly works cited in note 3 and also Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: the Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), chapter 16; James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, Vol. 3, *The Korean War* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979, hereafter cited as *History of the JCS*), pp. 299-309. For British historians' arguments, see Rosemary J. Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean War Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 95-101; and Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: the Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), chapter 2; Foot, "Anglo-American Relations in the Korean Crisis: the British Effort to Avert an Expanded War, December 1950 — January 1951." *Diplomatic History* 10:1 (Winter 1986):43-58; Farrar, "A Pause for Peace Negotiations: The British Buffer Zone Plan of November 1950;" Peter

on the Communist side of the story also reach a consensus that Peking's decision to intervene was dictated by Washington's hostile actions rather than careful strategic design.<sup>(5)</sup>

But was the U.S. so arrogant and reckless that it totally ignored Peking's warnings of intervention? Did it adopt an adamantly hostile attitude toward the PRC after the latter's entry into the Korean conflict? Was the idea of negotiation with the Communists absolutely unacceptable to the policymakers? How close were they toward recommending an expansion of the conflict into China? In order to modify and/or supplement existing answers to the above questions, this paper intends to analyze the deliberations of Washington planners on how to handle Peking's intervention throughout the acute stage of the Korean crisis. It will focus on their concepts regarding negotiation and political settlement, their thoughts on military retaliation and economic sanctions, as well as other forms of "punishment" against the "aggressor." In the end, it will delineate the problems in the policymaking process which made U.S.-PRC military confrontation inevitable.

## I

Although not recognizing the new PRC government, the Truman

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續 Lowe, "The Frustration of Alliance: Britain, the United States, and the Korean, 1950-1951;" above two in James Cotton and Ian Neary, eds. *The Korean War in History* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1989). Very few still believed that the Truman administration made a right decision in attempting to unify Korea. But James I. Matray argued that crossing the 38th parallel to unify Korea was a popular course and the Truman administration would have received more criticism had the 38th parallel not been crossed. See Matray, "Truman's Plan for Victory: National Self-Determination and the Thirty-Eighth Parallel Decision in Korea," *the Journal of American History* 66:2 (September 1979):314-333.

(5) Xu Yao, "K'angmei Yuanchao te Yingming Chuehts'e" (The Brilliant Decision to Resist America and Aid Korea), in *Tangshi Yanjiu* (Studies in Party History), 1980:5 (October):5-15; Anthony Farrar-Hockley, "A Reminiscence of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the Korean War," *China Quarterly* 98 (June 1984):287-304; Farrar-Hockley, "The China Factor in the Korean War," in Cotton and Neary, eds., *The Korean War in History*, pp. 4-10; Jonathan D. Pollack, "The Korean War and Sino-American Relations," in Harry Harding and Ming Yuan, eds., *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1989), pp. 213-237; Yufan Hao and Zhihai Zhai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," *China Quarterly* (March 1990):94-115.

administration intended to establish a working relationship with the Peking regime up to the spring of 1950.<sup>(6)</sup> Enthusiasm, especially in the State Department, toward such an early accommodation had begun to wane before the outbreak of the Korean War, but hope for an eventual split between Peking and Moscow remained.<sup>(7)</sup> Wishing to prevent Taiwan from falling into hostile hands amidst the conflict, Truman's advisers never envisaged nor recommended policies that would make an enemy of Mao Tse-tung's regime. Instead, the State Department and the White House remained "neutral at heart"<sup>(8)</sup> after Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait at the onset of the Korean War.

At the initial stage of the conflict, both military and civilian planners were quite alert to the probability of Chinese intervention. Such a concern nourished the debate as to whether U.S./U.N. forces should attempt to unify Korea militarily. Within the State Department, Ambassador at Large Philip C. Jessup, Charles E. Bohlen and George F. Kennan of the Policy Planning Staff, and Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs John M. Allison all suggested that Peking might intervene if U.N. forces began to enjoy military success. A CIA memorandum concluded in mid-August that if U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel the U.S. might become involved in hostilities with the Chinese Communists. Military leaders initially objected

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(6) For discussions, see Warren I. Cohen, "Acheson, His Advisers, and China, 1949-1950," in Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs, eds., *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 13-52, and Su-Ya Chang, "Pragmatism and Opportunism: Truman's Policy toward Taiwan, 1949-1952" (Ph.D. Dissertation, the Pennsylvania State University, 1988), chapters 3-4.

(7) The consensus within the State Department at the time was that western efforts could not speed up a Peking-Moscow split in the foreseeable future. Besides, the U.S. had never wanted to hasten the normalization process which might appear to be kowtowing to Peking. See, for example, Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, October 26, 1950, 306.001 TS U.S. Policy toward Communist China 1950, RG 59, CA Records, box 17, NA. For discussions of the "wedge strategy" under the Truman administration, see David Allan Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: U.S. Policy Against Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1955* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), chapters 2-4; and Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, chapter 6.

(8) "Neutral at heart" is my own description for the attitude of Truman and his key advisers who, due to equal distaste of both the Chinese Nationalists and Communists, wished, and tried hard, to maintain its pronounced policy of neutrality. For efforts to maintain neutrality, see Chang, "Pragmatism and Opportunism," Chapter 4, pp. 81-88.

to advancing northward for the same reason.<sup>(9)</sup> Foreign sources indicated that the Chinese Communists were transferring some troops from south and central China to Manchuria.<sup>(10)</sup> Intelligence from the Korean front also indicated the presence in the North Korean armed forces of ethnic Koreans who previously had served in the Manchurian units of the People's Liberation Army (PLA, armed forces of the Chinese Communists) and technical personnel of Chinese origin. These bits of information deepened the concern that Peking might intervene. State had acknowledged in early October that the question was not whether Peking intended to intervene, but to what extent the intervention would be.<sup>(11)</sup>

Several factors worked to mitigate this apprehension. Attitudes of and information from the western allies might have contributed to the change. Britain, for example, was convinced that the PRC would not enter the war because it had yet to consolidate its internal position. Peking would have to sacrifice plans for economic reconstruction and industrialization if it chose to intervene. This was highly unlikely, the British government contended, because Korea was not of great interest to the Chinese. Besides, whether Peking was capable of military intervention was still an open question. Up to mid-September, information from Indian Ambassador to the PRC M. M. Panikkar indicated that, unless Moscow decided to intervene, Peking did not intend to enter the Korean conflict even if U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel. The same source also showed that not even elementary precautions against air raids were being taken in Peking and other major industrial

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(9) Memorandum of conversation by F. E. Nolting, July 6, 1950; Agreed Memorandum of U.S.-U.K. discussions on the Present World Situation, July 20-24, 1950; Draft Memorandum by Allison, August 19 and 21, 1950; CIA Memorandum, August 18, 1950; above all in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter cited as *FR*), 1950, 7:258, 310, 462, 521, 568, 600, and 622. Also see Matray, "Truman's Plan for Victory," p. 324.

(10) Memorandum of Teletype Conference, Department of the Army with CINCFE, August 30, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:659. The Chinese Communists had begun to transfer Lin Biao's Fourth Field Army and Chen Yi's Third Field Army from southeastern coast to the northeast in May 1950. The purpose of such transfer is not clear. But intensive training to maintain combat readiness for these troops began after the onset of the war. See Farrar-Hockley, "A Reminiscence of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the Korean War," pp. 287-289; Pollack, "The Korean War and Sino-American Relations," p. 216.

(11) Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, September 27 and 30, 1950; Tel. 411 from Taipei, September 23, 1950; Tel. 504 to New Delhi, October 4, 1950; above in *FR1950*, 7:795, 829, 829n, 765n, 874.

cities, and that apart from strengthening defenses in Manchuria there was no evidence of military preparations elsewhere in China. The Netherlands Foreign Office even suspected that reports of troop movements to the Manchurian-Korean border might have been "planted" by the Nationalists for U.S. consumption. Reports from Hong Kong also stressed that Peking's paramount concern was admission to the United Nations, which made it implausible that the PRC would intervene and become an enemy of that organization.<sup>(12)</sup>

Uncertain of Peking's intention, the U.S. initially adopted a cautious approach toward the question of Korean unification and aimed merely at restoring the *status quo ante*. To dissuade Peking from entering the conflict, the United States repeatedly assured the Chinese Communists, through Indian Ambassador Panikkar and through public statements by President Truman, that it had no "imperial design" on either Taiwan or Korea. The administration even attempted to establish direct contact, with the Indian government playing intermediary, with the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi to convey U.S. intentions and sincerity. The Chinese declined such contact.<sup>(13)</sup>

Battlefield success gradually tipped the balance in favor of military unification of Korea, though prudence was not totally forsaken. In early September, the National Security Council decided that only when the Russians and the Chinese both clearly indicated a hands-off attitude toward the Korean War would U.N. forces conduct ground operations in or occupy North Korea. To avoid provoking Peking and Moscow, General MacArthur was instructed that no non-Korean forces should be used near the Manchurian border after crossing the 38th parallel. He was "not to

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(12) Agreed Memorandum of U.S.-U.K. Discussions on the Present World Situation, July 20-24, 1950; Memorandum, the British Embassy to the State Department, September 28, 1950; Tel. 716 from New Delhi, September 20, 1950; Tel. 397 from the Hague, September 12, 1950; Tel. 642 from Hong Kong, September 22, 1950; above in *FR1950*, 7:462, 813, 742, 723, 765. See also Stueck, "March to the Yalu," p. 210.

(13) For U.S. efforts to communicate with Peking, see Memoranda, Jessup to Rusk, July 21 and August 8, 1950, 611.94A/7-2150 and 793.00/8-850, RG 59, NA; Tel. 330 to New Delhi, September 1, 1950, and Editorial Note of the same date; Tel. 405 to New Delhi, September 16, 1950; Tel. 842 from New Delhi, October 6, 1950, and Memorandum of Conversation by Rusk of the same date; Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, October 26, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 6:478, 480, 733, 889, 893, 1000.

aggravate" the situation when facing large numbers of Russian or Chinese troops south of the parallel, and was to continue his mission of unifying Korea "only" when the scale of such intervention was small and U.N. forces had a reasonable chance of success.<sup>(14)</sup>

The momentum of the Inchon success in September temporarily led to an easing off of the administration's extreme caution. Policymakers gradually discounted the possibility of Peking's intervention and decided that U.N. forces should cross the 38th parallel—a decision one historian terms as the most disastrous one of the Truman presidency.<sup>(15)</sup> The British assessment of factors that would deter Peking's intervention was then embraced by both the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The CIA also asserted that Peking lacked the military capability to intervene without Soviet assistance. Such assistance would increase Peking's dependence on Moscow, the CIA report contended, and enhance the latter's control over Manchuria. This result would be unacceptable to the Chinese people and to the nationalistic faction of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Defense Department suggested that, from a purely military perspective, the most favorable time for either the Soviets or the Chinese to enter the war would be before the Inchon landing. General MacArthur further assured that the Chinese Communists commanded neither ground nor air potential to counter U.N. forces in Korea. If they tried to intervene, the general asserted, it would result in great slaughter. The administration therefore became firmly convinced that the best timing for a Chinese intervention had passed, and concluded that Peking would intervene only when the Soviets decided to provoke a general war. Since it was estimated that Moscow was unlikely to precipitate a global war at the time, the fear of Chinese intervention gradually receded when advancing U.N. troops met with little resistance.<sup>(16)</sup>

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(14) NSC 81/1, September 9, 1950, which was approved and instructed for implementation by President Truman on September 11, 1950. See *FR1950*, 7:712n, 714. For the JCS directive to General MacArthur (sent as JCS 92762, September 27,) see Tel. 317 to USUN and Tel. 615 from USUN, September 26, 1950, in *ibid.*, 7:781, 785, 796n.

(15) MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 37.

(16) CIA Memorandum, October 4, 1950; Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference, by Bradley, October 15, 1950; Letter, Matthews to General Burns, October 19, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:933, 953, 980.



As U.N. forces swept northward, Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai announced that his government would send troops to participate in the defense of North Korea if U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel. Similar warnings were conveyed through the Indian and Netherlands governments. State Department officials' reactions to Chou's *démarche* varied. Some, such as Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs O. Edmund Clubb, thought it should not be dismissed as a mere bluff and recommended reconsideration of the decision to unify Korea by force. Others, such as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Alan G. Kirk, believed that it was merely a Communist attempt to bluff the U.N. on the 38th parallel issue. Acheson told British delegates to the United Nations that U.N. forces were in motion and plans were being made to advance into North Korea. It was too late, the Secretary asserted, to stop the process and the United Nations should not be frightened by the latest Communist bluff. Under Washington's influence, the U.N. General Assembly adopted on October 7 a resolution calling for the unification of Korea. It implicitly authorized military actions across the 38th parallel.<sup>(17)</sup> Expecting an easy victory, the administration thus chose to brush aside both Peking's warnings through diplomatic and public channels and intelligence reports of Peking's decision to send 25,000 troops to fight in Korea and their actual crossing of the Yalu.<sup>(18)</sup> The momentum to unify Korea proved hard to resist. The NSC decision that operations in North Korea should be undertaken only when there was "no entry or announcement of intended entry" by either the Soviets or the Chinese was therefore modified by default.

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(17) Tel. 1934 from London, Tel. 813 from Moscow, Tel. 828 from New Delhi, October 3, 1950; Memorandum, Clubb to Merchant, October 4, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation by Allison, October 4, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:839, 850, 852, 864, 893. The U.N. resolution was printed in *ibid*, 7:904-906. Ra Jong-yil argues that due to allied reluctance, the resolution terms were veiled in order not to commit the U.N. to the unification of Korea through military means. See Ra, "Political Settlement in Korea: British Views and Policies, Autumn 1950," in Cotton and Neary, eds., *The Korean War in History*, p. 57. For discussions of factors that made the U.S. decide to cross the 38th parallel despite Peking's warnings, see Stueck, "March to the Yalu," pp. 209-213; MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 52-56.

(18) Tel. 411 from Taipei, September 23, 1950, in *FR1950*, 7:765n; CINCFE to 8th Army and X Corps, October 20, 1950, Radiograms, Outgoing-Misc., 16-31 Oct 1950, RG 9, box 50, MacArthur Library (hereafter cited as DML).

## II

Recent historians believe that, even after the initial contact between U.N. troops and the "Chinese People's Volunteers" (CPV, as Peking called its intervening forces) in late October, it was still possible to settle the Korean conflict early. Following their initial success, the CPV mysteriously broke off contact with U.N. forces on November 7.<sup>(19)</sup> Many agree with Acheson that the interval between the disengagement and the MacArthur's "end-the-war" offensive on November 24 provided the best opportunity for the policymakers to try to negotiate a settlement and avert a disaster. The historians of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regretted that "through indecision, vacillation, and faulty judgment this opportunity was lost."<sup>(20)</sup> But was there a real opportunity for a political settlement in November 1950? If so, why did the policymakers miss it? Attributing this to Washington's hostility toward Peking and its aversion to the idea of negotiation with the Communists do not seem sufficient to answer the question.

The short encounter with the CPV left Washington puzzled as to the former's strength and intentions. The CPV's skillful camouflage and movement by night on foot, combined with the rugged terrain close to the Yalu, prevented the U.N. Command (UNC) intelligence and reconnaissance from verifying its strength.<sup>(21)</sup> The UNC therefore greatly under-

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(19) MacArthur reported on November 28 that the Communists severed contact in order to build up for a spring offensive to destroy all U.N. forces in Korea. C-69953, CINCPAC to the JCS, *FR1950*, 7:1237. However, before the setback of MacArthur's "end-the-war" offensive, U.S. officials might have interpreted the disengagement by the CPV as an indication of the limited nature of Peking's intervention. Some were convinced that U.S. warnings against further operations and assurances that the Manchurian border would not be violated had dissuaded Peking from taking further actions. Most U.N. members were apparently convinced that since Peking was going to send its delegation to the U.N., no further actions were required before the arrival of the Chinese. See Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3(1):311-312.

(20) Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3:299-309; and Acheson, *The Korean War*, chapter 3. See also Stueck, *Road to Confrontation*, pp. 241-250; Stueck, "March to the Yalu," pp. 223-232; Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 95-101; Peter Farrar, "Britain's Proposal for a Buffer Zone;" Farrar, "A Pause for Peace Negotiations," in Cotton and Neary, eds., *The Korean War in History*, pp. 66-79. But Callum MacDonald does not agree. See MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 64-68.

(21) For the strength, organization, training, and night march strategy of the CPV, see P'eng Teh-huai, *P'eng Teh-huai Tzushu* (Autobiography of P'eng Teh-huai, Peking: People's

estimated the number of CPV already in North Korea.<sup>(22)</sup> Consequently, the purposes of Peking's intervention remained unclear. Was it trying to prove it was not bluffing about the 38th parallel, to protect its Manchurian border and power plants, or to expel U.S./U.N. forces from Korea? Was the intervention a limited action under Russian pressure, or was it part of Moscow's aggressive design toward the Far East?<sup>(23)</sup> Most of the planners were inclined to believe that, given China's restricted military capacity as well as its economic and political constraints, the intervention had only limited goals of halting the advance of U.S./U.N. forces and to preserve a Communist regime in North Korea.<sup>(24)</sup> This assumption made it difficult for the policymakers to revoke their decision to unify Korea militarily after the initial setback.

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續 Press, 1981), chapter 14; Nieh Jung-chen, *Nieh Jung-chen Hwei-i-lu* (The Memoirs of Nieh Jung-chen, Peking: Liberation Army Press, 1986), pp. 737-765; Farrar-Hockley, "A Reminiscence of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the Korean War;" MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 63; Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War."

(22) The UNC estimated there were only about 25,000 to 30,000 CPV in North Korea with 77,000 guerrillas, as opposed to the figure of 400,000 from Taipei's intelligence. According to the memoir of Nieh Jung-chen, initially 18 divisions crossed the Yalu together. After the setback of the end-the-war offensive, MacArthur estimated in early December that his command was fighting with 26 divisions of CPV plus 200,000 in the rear. See Doris M. Condit, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 2, *The Test of War, 1950-1953* (Washington, D.C: Historical Office/Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1988), pp. 81, 87; *Central Daily News*, November 8, 1950; and Nieh, *Hwei-i-lu*, p. 742.

(23) Peking did not make clear to what extent would it stop its intervention. The slogan for the intervention was "to resist the American, to assist the Koreans, and to preserve peace" (or to protect the country) and Peking vowed in public to drive the U.N. forces into the sea. Chou En-lai told the Standing Committee of the People's Consultation Council on October 24, 1950 that the PRC would frustrate the U.S. then to solve the problem, that it would not provoke a world war but was ready to handle one. See Chou, "To Resist the Americans, Assist the Koreans, and Preserve Peace," in *Chou En-lai Hsuan-chi* (The Selected Works of Chou En-lai), vol. 2, (Peking: People's Press, 1984), pp. 53-54. For Washington's speculation of Peking's intention, see Memorandum, C. A. W. to Commander-in-Chief, FEC, on Brief of "Trends of High Level Washington Estimates on Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," February 23, 1951, with two enclosures, Correspondence, General, January-April 1951, FECOM, General Files, box 1, RG 6, DML.

(24) For speculations on Peking's intentions, see Tel. 2344 to London, November 6, 1950; NIE-2, November 8, 1950; Tel. 1164 from Hong Kong, November 17, 1950; Memorandum, Jessup to Acheson, November 20, 1950; NIE-2/1, November 24, 1950; above all in *FR1950*, 7:1051, 1101, 1183, 1194, 1220; and Memorandum on Psychological Implications of the Chinese Intervention in Korea, by the Policy Advisor of the Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs, November 10, 1950, 693.951/11-1050, RG 59, NA. See also Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3(1):312.

Assessment of the restrained nature of Peking's intervention did not boost U.S. ambitions to unify Korea by force at any cost. In fact, during the period when the Chinese broke off contact, both State and Defense officials showed more interest in reaching a political settlement than in conquering North Korea. In a memorandum to Secretary of Defense George Marshall on November 9, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that "[e]very effort should be expended as a matter of urgency to settle the problem of Chinese intervention in Korea by political means." Both the military and civilian leaders preferred to hold a line of defense, and to seek eventual withdrawal of U.S./U.N. forces from the Peninsula. Though accepting the *status quo ante* was regarded as a show of weakness and a waste of the whole operation, both the State and Defense Departments considered it acceptable to halt advancement along the line held by the UNC when Peking intervened, or even to fall back to a more defensible line.<sup>(25)</sup>

For three weeks before MacArthur's offensive, the possibility of proposing a demilitarized zone (DMZ) in various forms as the basis for Korean settlement was discussed within the administration. Britain was quite enthusiastic about the idea and intended to propose it in the U.N. along with the suggestion to halt UNC advance. Acheson and some State officials initially favored such an idea, but they also feared that the zone would constitute gains for the Chinese Communists. Truman eventually acquiesced to Acheson's judgement that any idea of such nature should not be proposed before the offensive. Britain, sharing the optimism that the offensive would be successful, did not push its case.<sup>(26)</sup>

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(25) For recommendations on restraint, see Memorandum, the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, November 9, 1950; Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, November 7 and 10, 1950; Memorandum, Merchant to Rusk, November 16, 1950; War 97287, CS/USA to CINCUNC, November 24, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1120, 1089, 1125, 1164, 1223; State Policy Advisory Paper on Psychological Implications of the Chinese Intervention in Korea, November 10, 1950, 693.95/11-1050, RG 59, NA. At the 73rd NSC meeting on November 24, 1950, Acheson argues that the U.S. should hold a line and maintain status quo then go to the U.N. to get the Chinese Communists to withdraw so that the U.S. could get out without "losing face." See Memorandum for the President, November 24, 1950, NSC Meetings # 73, PSF, box 220, Truman Papers, HSTL.

(26) For State discussions on a demilitarized zone, see Memorandum by J. P. Davies, November 17, 1950; Memorandum, Jessup to Acheson, November 20, 1950; Memorandum on a Meeting at Acheson's Office by L. D. Battle, November 20, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1178, 1195, 1202. Rosemary Foot argues that Acheson favored a demilitarized zone, but did not push for it

During this period, the administration continued to assure Peking that the U.N. advance was non-aggressive in nature. The Indian and Swedish embassies in Peking were the most frequently-used channels of communication. Officials also hoped to make contact with the Chinese delegation directly when the latter arrived in the U.N. to discuss the Taiwan question.<sup>(27)</sup> After indirect diplomatic communications met cool responses, Truman, Acheson, and Far Eastern Assistant Secretary Dean Rusk all went public to assure that the United States did not intend to invade Manchuria. To reduce the risk of spreading hostilities outside Korea, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Livingston Merchant even recommended that Truman send a personal message to Mao Tse-tung and approach Stalin directly to assure the safety of the Manchurian border.<sup>(28)</sup> Both civilian and military planners also believed it necessary to reassure Peking through a U.N. resolution. This intention was embodied in the draft six-power resolution proposed to the Security Council on November 10. Although the wording of the resolution was not an unconditional guarantee against any violation of the Manchurian border, it did reflect the accommodating attitude of the administration.<sup>(29)</sup>

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續 because the military did not like it. In fact Acheson, though agreed a demilitarized zone might stabilize the situation for the time being and had earlier proposed establishing a zone under U.N. supervision, had come to believe the idea ultimately would benefit the Chinese Communists. For discussions on the debate over the idea of a demilitarized zone see Truman, *Years of Trail and Hope*, pp. 379-380; Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 92-93; Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3(1):306; Stueck, "March to the Yalu," pp. 226-227; MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 64-68; Farrar, "Britain's Proposal for a Buffer Zone;" and Farrar, "A Pause for Peace Negotiation." Farrar and MacDonald agreed that since a buffer zone in mid-November required a retreat for both sides and Peking's willingness to negotiate, both not likely, it was not a lost opportunity for an early settlement.

(27) Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, November 10, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation by Rusk, November 13, 1950; Memorandum by C. P. Noyes, November 18, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1123, 1141, 1187. Unfortunately, the Chinese delegation made a detour to Eastern Europe to propagandize U.S. imperialism, and did not arrive in New York until the day MacArthur launched his end-the-war offensive. The delay precluded the possibility of a settlement through direct discussion with the Chinese delegates in the United Nations.

(28) For a summary of the public statements by Acheson and Rusk on November 15 and Truman on November 16, see Editorial Note in *FR1950*, 7:1158, 1161. For Merchant's recommendation see his memorandum to Rusk, November 16, 1950, *ibid.*, 7:1164. Although Merchant's recommendation was not adopted, it reflected the extent the State officials were willing to go in order to avert the expansion of hostilities.

(29) Memorandum by Stuart, November 3, 1950; Tel. 2344 to London, November 6, 1950 and Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk of the same date; Tel. 482 to New York, November 7, 1950;

Therefore, the administration's initial response to the Chinese intervention was to search for a political settlement through every possible avenue. It had reliable sources which indicated that Peking also was willing to secure the withdrawal of U.N. forces through diplomacy. Apprehension that negotiation from weakness would result in humiliation, however, prevented even strong advocates of prudence, such as John P. Davies and O. Edmund Clubb, from recommending immediate negotiation. Both the State and Defense Departments eventually agreed that political proposals should come "after" the success of MacArthur's pending offensive.<sup>(30)</sup>

The conviction that the USSR had not yet made a decision to launch a general war over the Korean-Chinese situation undoubtedly mitigated the fear that continuing U.N. operations might trigger a global war. Lacking a contingency plan for the failure of MacArthur's "end-the-war" offensive indicated that the administration as well as the general himself had not the slightest doubt about the outcome of the operation. Unwilling to accept defeat or to question the chance of military success, none of Truman's advisers recommended another alternative.<sup>(31)</sup> Therefore, a desire to bargain

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續 Memorandum, the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, November 9, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1029, 1050, 1068, 1093, 1120. For the draft resolution proposed on November 10, see Editorial Notes, *ibid.*, 7:1126-1127. See also Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 94-95.

(30) For recommendations to respond to Chinese intervention, see Memorandum, the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, November 9, 1950; Draft Memorandum by J. P. Davies, November 7 and 17, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation on a State-Defense Meeting by Jessup, November 21, 1951, above all in *FR1950*, 7:1120, 1078, 1178, 1204; and Memorandum, NSRB to the NSC, November 22, 1950, NSC Meetings \* 72, PSF, box 210, Truman Papers, HSTL. Detailed discussions of the courses of action in response to Peking's intervention is voluminous, see all the memoranda and position papers of the month of November 1950 in *FR1095*.vol.7. See also Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 96-98; Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 73-81; Stueck, "March to the Yalu," pp. 224-233; MacDonald, *Korea*, chapter 4.

(31) Memorandum, CIA Director to the NSC, November 9, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation on a State-Defense Meeting by Jessup, November 21, 1951; above in *FR1950*, 7:1122, 1207. For the lack of a contingency in case the offensive did not go well, see Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 81-82; Richard T. Ruetten, "General Douglas MacArthur's 'Reconnaissance in force': The Rationalization of a Defeat in Korea." *Pacific Historical Review* 36:1 (1967):84-85. Acheson blamed MacArthur for dominating policy during this period and admitted that he and others in the administration did not serve Truman well for not trying to stop MacArthur's offensive. See Acheson, *Present at Creation*, p. 465. Stueck argues that if the working relations between State and Marshall were not cordial which made Acheson reluctant to resist military desire for a victory, the Secretary of State might have chosen to lead rather than to follow, i.e. he might have insisted on a negotiated settlement rather than pushing for a total victory resulting in a disaster. See Stueck, *Road to Confrontation*.

from a position of strength plus overconfidence in U.S. military superiority, rather than an irreversible hostility, led the administration to disregard its own prudent inclination and push for a military victory.

The administration did not abandon its caution altogether even after it decided to carry out the "end-the-war" offensive. The JCS instructed MacArthur to fall back and hold a line along the Valley of Yalu after advancing to the border, and that his forces make every effort to spare all hydro-electric installations in North Korea during the advance. These acts of self-restraint, Washington leaders hoped, would provide an exit for Peking to withdraw without loss of face and might reduce Russian concern for the safety of Vladivostok. MacArthur doubted that such restrictions on military operations would deter further Chinese or Russian actions. He therefore advocated a complete military victory to be followed by withdrawal of all U.S. forces to Japan.<sup>(32)</sup>

### III

MacArthur neither had the chance to achieve a military victory nor was he able to hold a line along the Yalu Valley. The Chinese started their counteroffensive two days after the initial U.N. attack and soon demonstrated their formidable strength. The general reported that the U.N. forces were not sufficient to meet the Chinese onslaught, and that he was going to pass from the offensive to the defensive. Even this task proved difficult. The entire Eighth Army started retreating on November 28. Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, was abandoned and was occupied by the Communists on December 4; by mid-December the Eighth Army was in position below the 38th parallel. Most of the way it had retreated by its own choice rather than to escape enemy pressure. "The Chinese had merely followed on foot," one historian describes, "far behind motorized columns

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續 pp. 250; "March to the Yalu," pp. 231-232. Bevin Alexander contends that, by relying solely on MacArthur's assessment of the scale of Chinese intervention prior to the "end-the-war" offensive, the administration had abdicated its responsibility of adopting a cautious policy. See Alexander, *Korea: the First War We Lost* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986), pp. 295, 517n9. Most historians agree with Callum MacDonald that MacArthur did not drag a reluctant administration at his heels in the advance to the Yalu. See MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 57.

(32) WAR 97287, CS/USA to CINCUNC, November 24, 1950; C-69808, CINCUNC to the JCS, November 25, 1950; both in *FR1950*, 7:1223, 1231.

of U.N. forces. " (33)

Responding to the debacle, the administration quickly reverted to its earlier policy of prudence which aimed at localizing the conflict and rapidly disengaging U.S./U.N. forces from Korea. At the NSC meeting of November 28, State and Defense agreed that, to avoid a carefully laid Russian trap, the United States should not become involved in a general war with China and should utilize all available political, economical, and psychological means to confine the war. Two days later, Truman reiterated in a news conference the assurance that the U.S./U.N. had no aggressive intentions toward Chinese territories. Washington's paramount concern was the security of Europe, followed by the defense of Japan. In the minds of high officials, to preserve U.S./U.N. forces so that they could be employed in Japan or even Europe and to maintain allied unity greatly outweighed concerns about the future of Korea. The United States should revise its goals in Korea, these officials asserted, and make it clear that the UNC had not committed itself to achieve unification of Korea at all costs. By December 1950, therefore, Washington had considered restoration of the *status quo ante*, i.e. a cease-fire along the 38th parallel and restoration of the division of Korea, acceptable as long as U.S. forces would not suffer great casualties obtaining it. If unable to restore the *status quo ante*, planners suggested a total military evacuation from Korea.<sup>(34)</sup>

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(33) C-69953, CINCFE to the JCS, November 28, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1237-1238; Alexander, *Korea*, pp. 314, 319. Initially Acheson suggested that if Peking rejected a cease-fire, the U.S. might want to consider evacuation from Korea to Japan to prepare for war with Russia in Europe. Rusk and the military, on the other hand, were not sure that giving up totally in the Far East would help the U.S. cause in Europe. They proposed restoring *status quo ante* while preserving U.S. forces for the defense of Japan. Accordingly, U.N. forces retreated voluntarily down to the 38th parallel rather than be pursued by the CPV. Later when the situation forced the military to suggest that a total evacuation might become necessary, Acheson hesitated. Not comfortable with the idea that the U.S. should suffer a defeat and be forced out of Korea, Acheson, as well as Rusk, thought the military could have done more than it had done to retain a stand in Korea. Truman did not like the idea of unilateral evacuation from Korea, either. See Memorandum, Emmerson to Johnson, November 28, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation by Jessup on State-Defense Conference, December 3, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation by L.D. Battle, December 2 and 27, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1239, 1323, 1301, 1600.

(34) Acheson considered support of the allies more important than the success of U.N. operations in Korea and Defense stressed the necessity to move troops out of Korea so as to meet the needs of other theaters. With different emphases, they nevertheless reached the



Besides revising the goal of unifying Korea and contemplating possible evacuation, the planners actively explored courses of political actions to terminate hostilities on acceptable terms. Though many historians claim that Washington had been rejecting diplomacy since the onset of the war, the Truman administration actually favored a negotiated settlement all along.<sup>(35)</sup> The key was the “ terms ” of such a settlement which were yet to be ascertained when Peking entered the conflict. After U.N. forces suffered an immense setback in late November, Washington was compelled to face the worst of the possibilities: that to end the fighting in Korea it might be necessary to recognize the PRC, and to grant Mao’s regime a seat in the U.N. along with the control over Taiwan.<sup>(36)</sup> Reluctant though it was to bow before the Communists, the administration was much more flexible about these terms than acknowledged by most historians.

Acheson had been stressing all along, and again after UNC debacle that there was no allied support of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. Ernest Gross,

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續 consensus that if political actions to obtain a cease-fire failed, the U.S. should disengage from Korea to prepare for fighting the Russians possibly in Europe. Memorandum by Jessup on NSC Meeting of November 28, 1950; Editorial Note, November 30, 1950; Memorandum by L. D. Battle, December 2, 1950; Memorandum by Jessup on State-Defense Meeting, December 3, 1950; Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, December 7, 1950; Tel. 602 to USUN, December 20, 1950; Memorandum by Rusk, December 21, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:1242, 1261, 1301, 1323, 1444, 1583, 1588. Michael Schaller, echoing Acheson’s accusation, stresses that MacArthur was the only one who pressed for either expansion or evacuation. See Acheson, *The Korean War*, chapter 3 and Schaller, *MacArthur*, chapter 13. Acheson’s statement, though, reflected more of his bias against MacArthur than fact. At the peak of the crisis, Marshall repeatedly inquired the JCS whether it was best for the UNC to withdrawal from Korea. See Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 84-86, 91.

(35) The position was recommended by the Policy Planning Staff in late July and the essence was adopted in NSC 81. See Draft Memorandum by the PPS, July 22, 1950; Draft Memorandum by State, August 23, 1950; and NSC 81, September 1, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:452, 637, 687. MacArthur was requested on September 21 to comment on conditions for a cease-fire if the North Koreans requested it. See W 92083 from DA (CSGPO) (G-3) to CINCFE, September 21, 1950, Korea # 2, July-November 1950, FECOM General Files, box 9, RG 6, DML.

(36) The Chinese Communists had early made the above conditions the price for a negotiated settlement in Korea and had insisted upon them throughout the winter of 1950-1951. See Memorandum, Emmerson to Rusk, November 20, 1950; Delga 461 from USUN, December 24, 1950; in *FR1950*, 7:1197-1198. The Nationalists had sensed the wavering U.S. position and attempted to push the U.S. to take a firm stand in public by denying intentions to make any concessions to the Communists. To the disappointment of the Nationalists, the U.S. did not oblige. See Notes on Conversation 117/50, Koo and John Foster Dulles, December 19, 1950, Koo Papers, box 180, Butler Library, Columbia University (hereafter cited as BL).

the U.S. Deputy Representative to the U.N, mentioned to Acheson that the Taiwan question and U.N. seating were bound to come up when making contact with the Chinese Communists. Acheson stressed the U.S. should do whatever it needed to secure its troops and "our course of action should not forfeit our flexibility in this respect." Also, the allies were more amenable to Peking's demands that the U.S. withdraw its support to the Chiang regime, remove the Seventh Fleet from the Taiwan Strait, and admit Mao's regime to the United Nations in exchange for a political settlement in Korea. And since the Secretary repeatedly had emphasized the importance of allied support in the struggle against Communism and never considered Taiwan worth the risk of a general war, he was in fact willing to go along with the allies on these issues.<sup>(37)</sup>

In December, while Washington faced the possibility of a total defeat in Korea, Acheson's conciliatory inclination was explored by Jessup and Rusk, and they agreed that if the worst came to the worst, the bottom line would be to accept Peking's demands in order to stop the fighting in Korea. The policymakers decided that the U.S. would negotiate with the PRC either within the U.N. framework or to hold the talks "behind the scene." Washington then publicly reiterated that it would not veto a Security Council resolution to admit the People's Republic of China, and would not boycott the U.N. if the latter was admitted.<sup>(38)</sup> As for the Taiwan question, even though the U.S. had been telling Britain that it would not give up Taiwan for the Korean settlement, it had also conveyed through Sir Benegal Rau, India's representative to the U.N., that the U.S. was not taking an adamant position. Rusk proposed that if Peking insisted upon discussing the Taiwan question in the peace settlement, the U.S. could tie in

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(37) Memorandum of Conversation by L. D. Battle and W. J. Sheppard, Acheson with Rusk, Austin, Jessup, and Gross, December 2, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation by Jessup on State-Defense Conference, December 3, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1304, 1325.

(38) Tel. 532, Yeh to Koo, November 25, 1950, folder B.44.2a, Koo Papers, box 147, BL; Tel. Hai-chiang, Koo to Chiang Kai-shek, folder L.8.1, *ibid.*, box 167; Memorandum by W. W. Stuart, December 12, 1950, \* 13P Korea, RG 59, CA Records, box 18, NA; Tel. 263 to Certain Diplomatic Missions, December 12, 1950; Tel. 584 to USUN, December 13, 1950; Memorandum, Jessup to Rusk, December 19, 1950; Memorandum by Rusk, December 21, 1950; above four in *FR1950*, 7:1532, 1540, 1576, 1588. The U.S. had expressed clearly before that it would not veto the admission of the PRC to the U.N. To publicly reiterate this policy at this juncture, therefore, was clearly a message to Peking.

questions of Tibet and Indochina. Wallace W. Stuart of the Office of Chinese Affairs also suggested that Taiwan could be turned over to Peking if there were means to guarantee against latter's intervention in Indochina.<sup>(39)</sup>

The core of the problem was how to avoid the appearance of appeasement or of rewarding aggression while accommodating Peking's demands in order to stop fighting in Korea. The administration had not the slightest intention to make outright concessions to the Communists. It emphasized that its willingness to negotiate with Peking should not be interpreted as a change of the U.S. position on recognition. Peking's admission to the U.N., though negotiable, was not to be made a precondition for the cease-fire negotiation. Furthermore, discussions on the Taiwan question and U.N. representation were not to be overtly linked with the Korean settlement. The administration wanted an immediate cease-fire along the 38th parallel with no political conditions attached. After a cease-fire, it would be possible to initiate discussions, either formally or informally, about other problems in the Far East. Though claiming that no subject should be excluded from the agenda of such talks, the U.S. shied away from commitment to discuss any specific problem or to guarantee particular solutions.<sup>(40)</sup>

Realizing the ambiguity of this proposal, Hume Wrong, the Canadian Ambassador to Washington, pointed out to Assistant Secretary Dean Rusk that if the U.S. could be more specific in describing the subjects which could be included in post cease-fire discussions, the less likely would the Chinese reject this offer. However, the U.S. was unwilling to clarify this calculated ambivalence and the above proposal was conveyed to the Chinese Communists in late December through the Swedish Ambassador in Peking. Peking's response, as could be predicted, was in the negative.<sup>(41)</sup> Even when

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(39) Memorandum by L. D. Battle, December 5, 1950; Delga 400 to USUN, December 9, 1950; both in *FR1950*, 7:1439, 1492; Memorandum by W. W. Stuart, December 6, 1950, \* 13P Korea, RG 59, CA Records, box 18, NA.

(40) Tel. 584 to USUN, December 13, 1950; Tel. 916 to New Delhi, December 15, 1950; Memorandum, Jessup to Rusk, December 19, 1950; Memorandum by Rusk, December 21, 1950; Tel. 602 to USUN, December 22, 1950; in *FR1950*, 7:1540, 1551, 1576, 1583, 1588.

(41) Memorandum of Conversation, Rusk with the Swedish Ambassador, December 22, 1950; Memorandum of Conversation, Rusk with Wrong, December 26, 1950; in *FR1950*, 7:1590, 1599.

the proposal was made formally through a U.N. resolution of January 13, 1951, Peking still found it unacceptable. In response to this U.N. proposal, the Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai contended that a cease-fire before negotiation would merely "give the United States troops a breathing space." Peking proposed instead that all concerned nations agree to withdraw all foreign troops from Korea and that the "subject-matter of the negotiations must include the withdrawal of United States armed forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits and Far Eastern related problems." (42) Washington found such conditions unacceptable because, as Rusk pointed to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in early December 1950, the U.S. had been willing to talk, but should not be asked to make concessions before being allowed to talk.(43)

Therefore, disagreement over procedure, rather than lack of aspirations for negotiation, prevented an early settlement of the Korean conflict. Though willing to negotiate or even make certain concessions to resolve the Korean conflict, the U.S. was not ready to accept a downright loss of face (or prestige) by yielding to Communist demands before it could obtain a cease-fire. What concerned Washington most was not so much the substance of the settlement, but how the result would be perceived. As one historian describes it, concern with "saving face," traditionally considered as a Chinese characteristic, had become no less important to the top

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(42) Peking had rejected the U.N. thirteen-power cease-fire resolution of December 14 because it failed to include any reference to China's demands that all foreign troops be removed from Korea, withdrawal of the Seventh Fleet from Taiwan, and recognition of its claim to the U.N. seat. See Daily Secret Summary, December 14, 1950, E396.8, RG 59, NA; Delga 461 from Ambassador Austin, December 24, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1594-1598. The revised formula of January 13 promised a discussion of Far Eastern problems including Taiwan and the Chinese representation in the United Nations. For the resolution, see Editorial Note, *FR1951*, 7(1):64. Contrary to Acheson's claim that the U.S. was forced to vote for the resolution because it wanted to preserve the unity of the U.N. and that U.S. support of the resolution was decided upon "the fervent hope and belief that the Chinese would reject it," the U.S. actually proposed the diea, and it did intend to accommodate Peking. Historians such as Rosemary Foot are convinced that the administration was determined that no political conditions should be attached to any cease-fire agreement, and interpreted U.S. attitudes toward U.N. cease-fire resolutions accordingly. See Acheson, *Present at Creation*, p. 513; his statement in response to the Chinese rejection on January 17, 1951, in *FR1951*, 7(1):91; and Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 110-111.

(43) See Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 408.

administration officials in the United States.<sup>(44)</sup> Peking, on the other hand, did not believe the U.S. would make any concessions without military pressure, and consequently insisted that its demands be met before initiating the cease-fire talks. Washington's concern for its prestige and Peking's suspicion of U.S. sincerity, therefore, delayed negotiations. State Department officials nonetheless remained interested in this line of mutual concessions until the failure of two Communist spring offensives made U.S. concessions less essential.<sup>(45)</sup>

#### IV

Recent historians criticize not only Washington's reluctance to negotiate with the Communists, but also its tendency to expand the war in the dark months of December 1950 and January 1951. Leaders in Washington, including President Truman, one of them contends, "apparently were on the verge of ordering a dramatic expansion of hostilities in East Asia" in January 1951. Although General MacArthur's colleagues in the Pentagon all argued otherwise, this historian asserted, they had taken the general's proposal for expanding the war "a good deal more seriously than their testimony during the MacArthur hearings ... indicated."<sup>(46)</sup> This perception of American hostility toward Peking is shared by many other scholars. One of them argues that, if the British influence on U.S. policy had been less circumscribed, the conflict with Communist China might have been averted even prior to the latter's entry into the war. Another maintains that were it not for the restraints imposed by Britain and other western allies, the U.S. might have launched a limited war against China after the failure of MacArthur's "end-the-war" offensive.<sup>(47)</sup>

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(44) Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War*, p. 138.

(45) W. W. Stuart argued that if the Chinese Communists could be persuaded to settle the Korean conflict on basis of *status quo ante* and agree to sign non-aggression pacts with its neighboring countries, the U.S. should be willing to withdraw all support from the Nationalists, to recognize the PRC, to support its seat in the U.N., and to lift all the economic and financial embargoes against Peking. See Memorandum, Stuart to Clubb, March 19, 1951, 320.2 Communist China Relations with Other Countries 1951, RG 59, CA Records, box 28, NA.

(46) John Edward Wiltz, "The MacArthur Hearings of 1951: the Secret Testimony," *Military Affairs* 39 (December 1975):170. 173n53.

(47) Stueck, "The Limits of Influence: British Policy and American Expansion of the War in

Thoughts of retaliating against the Chinese mainland were not new when U.N. forces started retreating at the end of November. When the war began, George F. Kennan, a pragmatist who had opposed even crossing the 38th parallel, believed that the U.S. would have adequate grounds for air and sea attacks on targets in China if Peking intervened in the Korean conflict. Through the Indian government, Peking was warned not to take military action against Taiwan, Korea, or any peripheral area of China, or the U.S. would request the United Nations to "consider military retaliation probably against China proper." (48)

The National Security Council had decided at an early stage of the war that if Peking entered the conflict, the U.N. command would have the authority to take "*appropriate air and naval actions* [emphasis added] outside of Korea against Communist China." Not only the language was vague, the circumstances under which retaliation should take place were equally uncertain. According to NSC 73/4 dated August 24, the actions were to be taken "in the event of the overt use of organized Chinese Communist forces *in Korea* [emphasis added]." But according to NSC 81/1, approved on September 11, such retaliation was to take place "in the event of the open or covert employment of major Chinese Communist units *south of the 38th parallel* [emphasis added]." One month later, when the decision was transmitted as a directive to MacArthur, the general was instructed to obtain authorization from Washington prior to taking any military action against objectives in Chinese territory.<sup>(49)</sup>

Prior to Peking's intervention, military retaliation against China proper, if the latter entered the conflict despite U.S. cajoling and warning, remained a distasteful "possibility" that had attracted little substantial consideration. Afterwards, both military and civilian planners contemplated certain air and naval actions. Possible options included chemical warfare,

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續 Korea," *Pacific Historical Review* 55 (February 1986):65-94; Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 113-123, and "Anglo-American Relations in the Korean Crisis: the British Effort to Avert an Expanded War, December 1950-January 1951," *Diplomatic History* 10:1 (Winter 1986):43-57.

(48) "Possible Further Danger Points in Light of Korean Situation" by Kennan, June 30, 1950, folder 1-D-12, box 24, Kennan Papers, ML; Tel. 257 to New Delhi, August 16, 1950, *FR 1950*, 6:441-443.

(49) For considerations of military retaliation in the National Security Council, see NSC 73/4, August 24, 1950; NSC 81, September 1, 1950; NSC 81/1, September 9, 1950, which was approved by Truman on September 11, 1950; all in *FR1950*, 7:650n, 664, 685, 717, 712n.

indirect employment of Nationalist forces on Taiwan, and strategic bombing, even using atomic bombs, in Manchuria. But instead of planning specific steps for their implementation, administration officials devoted more efforts developing arguments "against" retaliation. Their main concerns were that military actions against Manchuria would weaken U.N. military and political positions, expand the area of conflict, and possibly provoke Soviet intervention. To use Nationalist forces would involve the U.S. in full scale hostilities with Peking to which the western allies, especially Britain, strongly objected. It also would restrict U.S. flexibility to "disengage" from the Nationalist regime when it wanted to.<sup>(50)</sup>

As for the atomic bomb, State had considered conditions for its use at the onset of the war. After Peking intervened, its use was recommended by certain elements of the Defense Department, particularly the Army's Plans and Operations Division. The disadvantages of using nuclear weapon were recognized early, though. Army Brigadier General Herbert B. Loper, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy, agreed with Director of the Policy Planning Staff Paul Nitze that the use of atomic bombs might not be militarily decisive in Korea; and using the bombs outside Korea would almost certainly bring the USSR into the war. Besides, as Far Eastern Bureau's Planning Adviser John K. Emmerson argued, it might weaken the U.S. moral position and would be deplored by the western allies.<sup>(51)</sup> Peking's intervention might have challenged U.S. omnipotence, yet pragmatism prevailed. To avoid a Russian trap of expanding the war into the mainland remained the guiding principle in dealing with Peking's intervention.

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(50) Memoranda, Clubb to Rusk, November 7 and 17, *FR1950*, 7:1089, 1170; Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, November 17, 1950, 305.001 U.S. Policy toward Communist China 1950, RG 59, CA Records, box 17, NA.

(51) The Policy Planning Staff started studying conditions for using the bomb in mid-July 1950. See Barton J. Bernstein, "New Light on the Korean War," *International History Review* (April 1981):261. Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, November 7 and 17, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1089, 1170; Memorandum of Conversation by Jessup on a State-Defense Meeting on Korea, November 21, 1950, *ibid*, 7:1207. Rosemary Foot contends that the use of atomic weapons was actively considered in November-December 1950 by the Department of the Army and General MacArthur, and was supported by general sentiment of Congress and the public. See Foot, *Wrong War*, 115-117; also see Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3:372-373. However, caution against its use among State and some military officials was also strong. See Memorandum by Nitze, November 4, 1950; Memorandum, Emmerson to Rusk on Use of the Atomic Bomb in China, November 8, 1950; both in *FR1950*, 7:1041, 1098.

Frustration over MacArthur's setback generated some anger among the military as well as civilian planners. Such anger was nevertheless not sufficient for them to forego their caution and recommend immediate military retaliation against China proper.<sup>(52)</sup> As discussions in the previous section indicate, U.S. efforts in December 1950 concentrated on searching for a cease-fire on acceptable terms. Both military and civilian leaders agreed, at the November 28 NSC meeting, that military retaliation, such as bombing Manchurian air fields, attacking China's territory, or using Nationalist forces, should be avoided. While preparing position papers in early December for the Truman-Attlee summit, both the State and Defense Departments agreed to rule out the option of military harassment. Acheson and his colleagues in the State Department, however, were apprehensive about the inclination of the military to take drastic steps and were watchful to "see that they [the military] did not bomb Manchuria".<sup>(53)</sup>

Yet, the military was more cautious at taking steps that might involve the U.S. in a general war than has been previously recognized. The Joint Chiefs did want to discard the possibility of adopting military retaliation together with economic and political harassment if U.N. troops were forced out of Korea in the beginning. But State insisted that, unless Peking expanded its offensive outside Korea, UNC forces should limit their military

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(52) The consensus of State and Defense was that some stance should be taken against Peking, such as denying the latter's seat in the U.N., branding it as aggressor by a U.N. resolution, or some covert economic and political actions to make life difficult for the Chinese Communists. However, demands from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of certain military retaliation against China were largely ignored. Even Ambassador Koo, when told by an informant that the JCS had recommended the use of Nationalist forces and the bombing of Manchuria, doubted the validity of such information. See NSC Special Meeting on Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea, Memorandum for the President regarding the Meeting, November 28, 1950, Korea folder, box 72, Elsey Papers, HSTL; Memorandum by Jessup on State-Defense Meeting, December 1, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1276-1281; Memorandum of Conversation by McWilliams on State-Defense Meeting December 3, 1950, *ibid.*, 7:1355; Tel. 662, Koo to Yeh, November 28, 1950, folder B.44.2a, box 147, Koo papers, BL; Tel. Shu-yen 72, Koo to Chiang Kai-shek, November 29, 1950, folder L.8.1, *ibid.*, box 167; "The Reminiscences of Wellington Koo," Chinese Oral History Project (hereafter cited as *Koo Memoirs*), 7:A234, BL.

(53) Memorandum by Jessup on NSC Meeting of November 28, 1950, same date; Memorandum by L. D. Battle, December 4, 1950; US Min-6 of the Truman-Attlee Talks, December 8, 1950; *FR1950*, 7:1242, 1345, 1468n3. See also Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3:372.



operations within the Peninsula—a position later acquiesced to by the JCS.<sup>(54)</sup> Defense Secretary General Marshall admitted to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in early December that the U.S. had no detailed military plans for action against the Chinese Communists, and that some moderate and covert military retaliation “might be considered” if U.N. troops were forced to withdraw from Korea. Even under such circumstances, Marshall stressed, he was not in favor of bombing Manchuria because of the risks involved.<sup>(55)</sup> Even General MacArthur, previously identified as the prime advocate of retaliation against China, regarded an armistice based on the 38th parallel the most advantageous settlement provided Peking could be persuaded to accept it.<sup>(56)</sup>

Zeal for retaliation climaxed between the end of December 1950 and mid-January 1951 when the total evacuation of U.S./U.N. forces from Korea seemed closer to reality than ever. Though his initial request for utilizing Nationalist forces on Taiwan was rejected by the JCS, General MacArthur continued to request a decision either to reinforce U.N. troops to hold a line across the peninsula or to evacuate from Korea.<sup>(57)</sup> The JCS

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(54) Memorandum, JCS to Secretary of Defense, December 4, 1950; State Position Paper on U.S. Position on Two Principal Alternative Courses in Korea, December 7, 1950; US Min-5 of the Truman-Attlee Talks, December 7 and 8, 1950; *FR1950*, 7:1348, 1439, 1455.

(55) General consensus, however, was that the U.S. had at that point determined to harass Peking, or even to expand the war with China. Speculations that President Truman's reply to a question in the November 30 press conference reflected the administration's intention to use the atomic bomb in Korea had caused an uproar among the allies, especially Britain. British Prime Minister Clement Attlee rushed to Washington in early December in order to talk the U.S. out of this insanity. Studies of this summit often stress the uncompromising attitudes of the U.S. while failing to point out that the British Foreign Minister was told that the U.S. would limit its operations in Korea unless Peking expanded its operations outside the Peninsula. For summaries of the Truman-Attlee talks, see Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3:370-378, and Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp. 110-114. For minutes of the talks, see *FR1950*, 7:1361-1374, 1392-1408, 1449-1461, 1468-1479.

(56) MacArthur expressed such an opinion to General Lawton Collins when the latter visited Tokyo on December 7, 1950. See record of the meeting as summarized in *FR1950*, 7:1469n3. General consensus was that MacArthur “insisted” on either extending the war or evacuation. Acheson in particular stressed this point in his memoirs and many were influenced by his assertion. For example, see Alexander, *Korea*, p. 369; Schaller, *MacArthur*, chapter 13.

(57) MacArthur outlined his overall views on the Korean situation on December 7 to Army Chief of Staff General Lawton Collins when the latter visited Tokyo in early December,

notified the general that reinforcements would not be forthcoming in the near future. They later gave the general directives that contained contradictory alternatives: to hold successive lines in Korea as long as possible, but to do so without jeopardizing his troops. The general was left to decide the best timing for evacuation that would serve both purposes.<sup>(58)</sup>

MacArthur was frustrated by his superiors' evasion of a clear-cut decision on the goal of his operation. He thus recommended four measures he considered would severely cripple and largely neutralize China's capability to conduct war. These measures included a blockade of China's coast, naval and air bombardments to destroy China's industrial capacity to wage war, and employment of Nationalist forces in Korea as well as against vulnerable areas on the mainland. To counter previous arguments against such retaliatory measures, the general argued that these measures would not further aggravate the situation as far as China was concerned; that any Soviet decision to precipitate a general war would depend solely upon the Moscow's own estimate of relative strengths and capabilities, with little regard for other factors.<sup>(59)</sup>

MacArthur found little support for his proposals except from Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forest P. Sherman.<sup>(60)</sup> Though the general was

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續 1950. Summary of the content of this conversation was printed in *FR1950*, 7:1469n. MacArthur requested the use of Nationalist forces on November 29 because of military necessity and the U.S. had no readily equipped units for reinforcement. The alternative had been ruled out in the NSC meeting of the previous day. The JCS, explained to MacArthur the international consequences of such a step, nevertheless informed the general that his proposal was under consideration. See Memorandum by Jessup on NSC Meeting of November 28, 1950, same date; C-50021, CINCFE to JCS, November 29, 1950; JCS 97594 to CINCFE, November 29, 1950; *FR1950*, 7:1243, 1253n, 1253.

- (58) For a summary of discussions of MacArthur's request for reinforcement, see Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, 3:388-393, and Kaufman, *The Korean War*, pp. 118-120. For the JCS directive to MacArthur, see JCS 99935 to CINCFE, December 29, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1625-1626. Actually the JCS wanted to tell MacArthur that the time had come for withdrawal. But Acheson and his advisors, as well as President Truman, thought evacuation would greatly damage U.S. prestige, and wished MacArthur to hold on as long as possible. See Memoranda of Conversation by L. D. Battle, December 27 and 28, 1950; *ibid.*, 7:1600, 1615.
- (59) C-52391, CINCFE to the JCS, December 30, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:1630-1633. MacArthur was not alone in arguing that limited military harassment against China would not provoke Soviet intervention. See Foot, *Wrong War*, pp. 125-126.
- (60) Admiral Sherman recommended reappraisal of the policy of "non-involvement in a general war with Communist China," and advocated deneutralizing the Taiwan Straits and using Nationalist forces against the Chinese Communists. See Memoranda, CNO to the JCS,

told that his recommendation would be given serious consideration, the January 9 reply from the JCS in fact amounted to a rejection of most of these options. It was unlikely that the U.N. would strengthen its efforts in Korea, the general was told. A blockade of the Chinese coast would have to await either stabilization of the situation in Korea or an evacuation, and would require consent of the western allies. Naval and air attacks would be adopted only if the Chinese Communists attacked U.S. forces outside Korea. Finally, Nationalist forces would not be used in Korea "in view of the improbability of their decisive effort on the Korean outcome and their probable greater usefulness elsewhere." The Chiefs went on to reiterate their instruction that the general should defend successive positions in Korea subject to primary consideration for the safety of his troops.<sup>(61)</sup> Continued ambivalence triggered a strong reaction from MacArthur who immediately requested clarification of U.S. policy goals in Korea. The previous JCS message, the general argued, would have left the decision of whether the U.S. intended to evacuate Korea "to the initiative of enemy." <sup>(62)</sup>

For the next few days, MacArthur's reply prompted serious reappraisal of the retaliatory measures among various agencies. Meanwhile, the success of the CPV's New Year offensive and the "great debate" over foreign policy placed great pressure on the administration to make the Chinese Communists "pay for aggression." Nevertheless, most of the policy reviews still reflected the usual pragmatism and caution.<sup>(63)</sup> For example, a CIA memorandum argued that retaliation against Communist China would not necessarily achieve the desired result of weakening Peking's ability to wage war, but would certainly risk expanding the war and helping that regime consolidate public support as well as increasing its dependency on Moscow. A NSC Staff report also emphasized that blockade or bombing were unlikely to have an immediate bearing on campaigns in progress. It

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續 January 3 and 9, 1951, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, part 2, 1946-1953, the Far East (microfilm published by the University Publication of America, hereafter cited as *JCS Records*), China (II): 0676, 0686.

(61) JCS 80680 to CINCFE, January 9, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(1):41-43.

(62) C-53167, CINCFE to the JCS, January 10, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(1):55-56.

(63) For discussions of the "great debate" over foreign policy that started in December 1950 and lasted into the spring of 1951, see Kaufman, *The Korean War*, pp. 121-130; and MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 79-81.

pointed out instead the feasibility of giving covert support to Nationalist operations on the mainland.<sup>(64)</sup>

The State Department made the familiar argument that retaliation would not be approved by the western allies, and that unilateral U.S. actions would compromise the nation's leadership in and outside the United Nations. It contended that military action, while not necessarily crippling Communist China's potential for aggression, might bring retaliation against Hong Kong, Japan, and Indochina. In other words, retaliatory actions would amount to no more than harassment and might be difficult to terminate. "Military action against China at this time," the State paper continued, "would satisfy a natural desire to inflict retribution on China. It would also satisfy *irresponsible* elements in Congress and the press who desire to see us embroiled in war with Communist China, or who cry for revenge *without thinking of the cost* in terms of damage to the national interest [emphases added]." State officials thus argued that it took courage to resist these voices for the twin causes of building up national defense and unifying the allies. The JCS, on the other hand, retained the ideas of conditional retaliation, as spelled out in the instruction to MacArthur on January 9. They proposed, however, to remove restrictions on the Nationalists and give them logistical support for operations against the mainland.<sup>(65)</sup>

Different assessments on a blockade, the removal of restrictions on reconnaissance and Nationalist operations, and the bombing of Manchuria

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(64) Memorandum, CIA to the Senior Staff of NSC, January 11, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(1):1503; Policy Paper on the Effectiveness of Actions to Counter Chinese Communist Aggression, no date, NSC Meetings \* 80 (January 17, 1951), PSF, box 211, Truman Papers, HSTL.

(65) State Draft Position Paper on Military Action Against Communist China, January 11, 1951, 793.00/1-1151, RG 59, NA; Memorandum, Rusk to Acheson, January 17, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(2):1514-1517; NSC 101, Memorandum, the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, January 12, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(1):71-72. The content of NSC 101 was transmitted to MacArthur, followed by a personal message from Truman. The JCS recommendations loosely embraced the retaliatory measures suggested by the general, and Truman's message did little to clear the ambivalence of the previous directives. The general interpreted Truman's message as an instruction to remain in Korea indefinitely, and later claimed that the Joint Chiefs had supported the retaliatory measures proposed by him. See JCS 80902 to CINCFE, January 12, 1951; JCS 81050 to CINCFE, January 13, 1951; C-53400, CINCFE to the JCS, January 14, 1951; above in *FR1951*, 7(1):68, 77-79; and Memorandum, Collins and Vandenberg to JCS, January 19, 1951, *JCS Records*, China (II):0703.

were included in a NSC Staff report, circulated as NSC 101/1, and received special discussion in the NSC meeting of January 17. The Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, the Joint Chiefs, the Office of Defense Mobilization, and the National Security Resources Board ( NSRB ), all contributed to the paper. Most of the agencies did not object to preparing plans for retaliatory actions, but hesitated to recommend their implementation. Only the JCS and NSRB recommended deneutralizing the Taiwan Strait, and only NSRB recommended bombing. At this juncture, the evacuation crisis had subsided, leaving some breathing space for more careful deliberations. Instead of making decisions, Acheson proposed that the JCS conduct further studies on the military effectiveness of using the Nationalists against the Chinese Communists, and State was to inquire into the effect upon China and other Asian countries of continued U.S. support of Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>(66)</sup>

Acheson's delaying tactic furnished more time for detailed analyses of the disadvantages, and the administration thereby retreated further from undertaking any military retaliation. In a State-JCS meeting in early February, for example, the participants reaffirmed the principle that only when the Chinese Communists attacked U.S. forces outside Korea should retaliation be considered. The Joint Chiefs conceded that their recommendations to deneutralize the Taiwan Strait and to use Nationalist forces were made when U.S./U.N. troops faced a possible evacuation. From a military viewpoint, the Chiefs contended, circumstances no longer warranted using Nationalist forces on the mainland of Asia, and other retaliatory measures recommended during the acute stage of the crisis should be dropped as well. The premise that the U.S. should do nothing to spread the war outside of

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(66) NSC 101/1, January 15, 1951; Memorandum by M. W. Bishop on NSC Meeting of January 17, January 19, 1951; and NSC Action No. 420, January 17, 1951; all in *FR1951*, 7(1):79, 93, 79n. In the January 17 NSC meeting, Acheson pointed out that NSC 101/1 was quite inadequate, and State was preparing its own draft. He also requested further study of the likely effectiveness of employing Nationalist forces. General Bradley modified JCS recommendation on deneutralization by stating that Chiang should be allowed to do whatever he pleased, and the U.S. should neither prevent nor assist his military operations. See Foot, *Wrong War*, p. 119. General Collins, after visiting Tokyo from January 15 to 19, reported that the morale of the troops was pretty good and that, according to General Ridgway, there would be no need for an evacuation for three months. See Memorandum by L. D. Battle, January 19, 1951, *FR1950*, 7(1):102-105.

Korea, the Chiefs argued, was to remain the ultimate guideline for U.S. actions.<sup>(67)</sup> Implementation of military retaliation was deferred indefinitely, though it remained as a contingency.<sup>(68)</sup>

## V

Reluctant to undertake military retaliation to "punish" the Chinese Communists, the policymakers were more eager to apply economic and political pressures which, while penalizing the "aggressor," would avoid the risk of permanent entanglement. They actively contemplated promoting the fragmentation of China, enforcing a trade embargo, and branding the PRC as aggressor through a U.N. resolution. The first alternative never had a chance to be implemented during the climax of the Korean crisis;<sup>(69)</sup> the last two were put into effect, but their effect on Peking's conduct might be negligible.

Unlike the British who clung to the idea of Chinese Titoism, American policymakers acknowledged at the end of 1950 that such a possibility was not likely in the near future. The best hope would be to destroy the usefulness of Peking as an ally for Moscow. Stimulating the growing discontent and resistance in China, along with creating fissions within the Peking regime, therefore, became part of U.S. policy objectives toward the Far East in the spring of 1951. One draft NSC policy paper even recommended rapidly expanding the effort of CIA "in the theory and technique" to the scale of the "Manhattan project" for the subversion of

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(67) Memoranda, Rusk to Matthews, February 8 and 27, 1951, with a policy paper by T. L. Perkins on blockade and bombing policies to China attached to the second memorandum, in 306 TS Policy Statement (General) 1951, RG 59, CA Records, box 27, NA; Memorandum, Merchant to Fisher on Blockade, April 30, 1951, 306.13 TS NSC Reports 1951, *ibid.*, box 28; Memorandum for the Record of a State-JCS Meeting, February 6, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(2):1566-1568.

(68) NSC 48/5, adopted on May 17, 1951, stated that in order to be prepared for Peking's aggression outside Korea, plans of a blockade, military actions against China, and the use of Nationalist forces should be developed. The Staff Report of the document nevertheless pointed out the political and military considerations that made military retaliation unfeasible at the time, and favored instead measures to weaken or fragment China. See NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FR1951*, 6(1):33-63.

(69) Reading the November to December 1950 entries of Ambassador Wellington Koo's diary and memoirs, one can discern Washington's strong desire to locate an alternative to both the CCP and Nationalist regimes, or to dismember China to weaken its strength. See *Koo Memoirs*, 7:A326-340; and Koo Diary, Koo papers, box 218, BL.

regimes hostile to the United States.<sup>(70)</sup>

The U.S. had been monitoring guerrilla resistance in China with occasional aid to these groups, but the amount of aid was never substantial, nor the support decisive. In the wake of the Korean debacle, the planners eagerly pondered the prospect of stirring up internal disturbances in China to distract Peking's attention thereby relieving pressure on the UNC. Karl Rankin, the U.S. *Chargé* in Taipei, and Livingston Merchant of the Office of Chinese Affairs, all urged exploring the potential of opposition forces within China. The State Department thus requested some of its diplomats to assess the guerrilla potential. The Pentagon was also attracted by the subject and conducted a series of studies on the effectiveness of the guerrillas.<sup>(71)</sup>

Some elements within the military, especially the army and the Chief of Naval Operations, favored the eventual expulsion of the Mao regime. State was also willing to probe this possibility. At the State-JCS meeting of January 30, the participants reached an agreement that the U.S. should support the replacement of "any government in China which is under control of and in alliance with Moscow." <sup>(72)</sup> Information provided by a

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(70) Memorandum, Merchant to Rusk, November 27, 1950; U.S. Position on Two principal Alternative Courses in Korea, December 7, 1950; in *FR1950*, 6:581-583, 7:1439-1442; Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, December 14, 1950, \* 13P TS Korea, RG 59, CA Records, box 18, NA; Memorandum, Emmerson to Rusk, January 8, 1951, 306 TS Policy Statements (General) 1951, *ibid.*, box 27; Memorandum, CS/USA to JCS, and Memorandum, the Secretaries to JCS, January 12, 1951, *JCS Records*, China (II): 0688, 0690; Draft of NSC 48/5, February 8, 1951, 306 TS Policy Statements (General) 1951, RG 59, CA Records, box 27, NA; Draft Position Paper by Emmerson on the Political Effect within China and Far Eastern Countries of U.S. Support of Nationalist Forces, March 27, 1951, 306.13 TS Policy-NSC Reports 1951, *ibid.*, box 28.

(71) Letter, Rankin to Dear Friend, December 14, 1950, Republic of China 1950, Rankin Papers, box 14, Mudd Library, Princeton University (hereafter cited as ML); Letter, Rankin to Merchant, December 20, 1950, and Merchant's reply on January 23, 1951, 793.00/12-2050, RG 59, NA. For an example of possible U.S. support of China mainland resistance, see Memorandum by W. W. Stuart, January 18, 1951, 793.00/1-1851, RG 59, NA; State Policy Paper, February 9, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(2):1574-1578; Memorandum, Strong to Clubb, January 24, 1951, 794.00/1-2451. Strong's rather biased analysis was transmitted to Merchant by Clubb through a memorandum of April 12 1951, which indicates that State was still considering this alternative. Memorandum, Clubb to Merchant, April 12, 1951, 793.00/4-1251, RG 59, NA. Some studies on guerrilla strength done by the military can be found in *JCS Records*, China (II): 0747, 0849, 0884, 1081.

(72) JCS 2118/4 JSPC Report to the JCS, December 27, 1950; Memorandum, CNO to the JCS, January 3, 1951; both in *JCS Records*, China (II):0649, 0676. The objective was stated by

non-Communist Chinese who claimed to have a connection to Chou En-lai obviously boosted State's hope in this direction. According to this source, the CCP might split, leading to a *coup* that would overthrow the pro-Soviet faction or at least weaken its grip. The State Department actively pursued this possibility with the premise that if Peking moved away from Moscow after the *coup*, U.S. recognition, a seat in the U.N., and control of Taiwan should be granted to the new regime. Afterward, the U.S. wished to reach a settlement in Korea through covert negotiation with the new regime.<sup>(73)</sup>

Reports on the weaknesses, disunity, and lack of leadership of the opposition forces as well as the difficulty of bypassing Chiang Kai-shek deterred further decision on supporting large scale guerrilla warfare in

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續 the JCS in NSC 101, January 12, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(1):71. State revised the objective in a policy paper on U.S. Action to Counter Chinese Communist Aggression, a paper revised NSC 101/1, January 17, 1951, in *ibid.*, 7(2):1516. See also Memorandum on a State-JCS Meeting, January 30, 1951, *ibid.*, 7(2):1538.

(73) During this period, State conducted, through the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) and a mediator (referred to as the second party in the records), intensive secret dialogues with certain non-Communist Chinese element (referred to as the third party in the records) who claimed to have a connection up to Chou En-lai. Ideas expressed by the third party often coincided with the ideal of the State Department hence met with receptive ears. For example, the third party stressed the potential of the coalition of non-Communists and nationalistic Communists as opposed to the Stalinists within the CCP. The third party asserted that, to change the nature of the Chinese regime, both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung had to be removed. He advised the U.S. not to retaliate against China because, since the CCP told the Chinese people the U.S. would do so, it would only boost the prestige of the CCP and consolidate its control. He also emphasized Chinese desire to accommodate with the U.S. and to withdraw from Korea completely. The PPS considered these dialogues the best opportunity to settle the Korea conflict by covert negotiation without the participation and publicity of negotiation through the United Nations. The fact that Averell Harriman was informed about the progress of the conversations and instructed full exploitation of the "most important opportunity conceivable" indicated the eminence attached to them by the State Department. Viewed in the light of the policy objectives adopted in NSC 101/1, this series of conversation actually carried some weight rather than being mere diplomatic tactics designed to appeal to the dissidents of the Peking regime. State had sent Charles B. Marshall and A. Sabin Chase to Hong Kong in early May in the hope of establishing direct contact with the Chinese in order to negotiate a settlement in Korea. Enthusiasm to pursue this connection probably waned because the efforts did not produce any concrete result. No further document in this connection has been declassified yet. For the records of these conversations and discussion within State of how to exploit the opportunity, see Memoranda of Conversation by the First Party (mostly C.B. Marshall of PPS), January 6 to May 4, 1951, in *FR1951*, 7(2):1476-1503, 1519-1521, 1533-1535, 1542-1545, 1546-1548, 1550-1552, 1557-1562, 1583-1584, 1588-1589, 1652-1653.



China. The obstacles involved in unifying these opposition forces also made the task a long-term project. In May, the National Security Council formally endorsed as a policy objective breaking the Peking-Moscow alignment by either fragmenting China or replacing its leadership. The course of utilizing guerrilla forces was pursued enthusiastically afterwards, though the planners would soon discover the limits of such operations.<sup>(74)</sup>

The only "tough measures" taken in response to PRC's intervention in Korea, therefore, were limited economic warfare and the U.N. resolution adopted on February 1, 1951 that condemned Communist China as an aggressor. But neither was adopted as a gesture of irreversible hostility toward the PRC. The United States had begun to embargo certain strategic goods against the Chinese Communists since early 1949. The planners had hoped that this measure would have prevented the latter from enhancing their military strength while keeping a channel of communication open through continued trade in non-strategic commodities. The first half of 1950 indicated a steady progression toward more stringent controls over U.S. trade with the PRC. After Peking intervened in Korea, the administration decided that all proposed exports from the U.S. to the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, or in transit through China, would require screening to prevent the Chinese Communists from acquiring commodities that might increase their war-making capacity. The strengthening of trade controls culminated in the December 16 decision to freeze all PRC assets within the U.S. and to prohibit American ships and aircraft from calling at Chinese ports. Washington nevertheless would not advocate a more complete economic embargo "even for bargaining purposes."<sup>(75)</sup>

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(74) Memorandum, CIA to the NSC, January 11, 1951; JCS Study on Anti-Communist Chinese, March 14, 1951; Memorandum of Conversation by C. B. Marshall, May 4, 1951; in *FR1951*, 7(2):1503, 1598; Memorandum by W. W. Stuart on What to Do About Chiang Kai-shek, January 18, 1951, 793.00/1-1851, RG 59, NA; Memorandum, Strong to Clubb on Support of China Mainland Resistance and Use of Nationalist Forces on Formosa, January 24, 1951, 793.00/1-2451, *ibid.*; NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, *FR1951*, 6(1):33-63. The administration actively pursued the possibility of fragmenting China or replacing the CCP regime at least through the summer of 1951.

(75) For a summary of U.S. trade policy toward China since early 1949, as defined in NSC 41, and the subsequent tightening of trade control up to early 1951, see Memorandum by A. G. Hope of the Office of Chinese Affairs, April 27, 1951, China Book, RG 59, Records of the

Another step taken was to brand the PRC as an aggressor through a U.N. resolution. As early as September 1950, Truman had approved the principle that should the PRC enter the conflict, the matter should be taken to the United Nations. Pondering contingencies to meet the failure of MacArthur's "end-the-war" offensive, planners of the administration (including staunch opponents of retaliation such as Acheson) unanimously recommended obtaining an aggressor resolution.<sup>(76)</sup> The administration vacillated on military retaliation since it was costly and potentially disastrous. Political and economic harassment, therefore, appeared to be a reasonable alternative that might preserve American prestige and compel Peking to accept a cease-fire without the danger of permanent entanglement.

The original resolution introduced by the U.S. on January 20 pointed out that Peking had "rejected all United Nation proposals" for a cease-fire. Therefore, Washington requested that the U.N. set up a subcommittee of the Collective Measures Committee (later referred to as the Additional Measures Committee, AMC), "as a matter of urgency to consider additional measures to be employed to meet this aggression and to report thereon to the General Assembly." It also recommended setting up a Good Office Committee to seek further means for a cease-fire. Such a proposal revealed Washington's frustration due to Peking's refusal to accept the January 13 cease-fire resolution which the U.S. already considered a great concession. The language of the resolution nevertheless suggested that the administration retained the hope that political pressure would force the PRC to the negotiation table. Subsequent softening of the language,

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續 Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (hereafter cited as FE Records), box 418, NA; Msg. 030420Z from State to SCAP, February 4, 1951, Korea \* 3, FECOM, General Files, box 9, RG 6, DML. For a scholarly discussion on U.S. trade control, see Yoko Yasuhara, "Japan, Communist China, and Export Controls," *Diplomatic History* 10:1 (Winter 1986):75-90.

(76) Memorandum by the Department of State, August 31, 1951; NSC 81/1, September 9, 1950, and Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the NSC, September 11, 1950; *FR1950*, 7:673, 717-718, 712n; Memorandum, Emmerson to Johnson, November 28, 1950; Memorandum, JCS to Secretary of Defense, December 4, 1950; *ibid.*, 7:1239, 1348; Possible U.S. Action to Counter Chinese Communist Aggression by NSC Staff, January 11, 1951, Reports-Senior Staff, PSF, box 197, Truman Papers, HSTL; State Draft Position Paper on Military Action Against Communist China, January 11, 1951, 793.00/1-1151, RG 59, NA; NSC 101, January 12, 1951; NSC 101/1, January 15, 1951; Memorandum, Rusk to Acheson, January 17, 1951; *FR1951*, 7(1):71, 79, and 7(2):1514.

after discussion with the allies, further reflected this lack of determination to “punish the aggressor.” The revised resolution stated that Peking had “not accepted United Nations proposals to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Korea;” and that the AMC should defer its report recommending penalties for Peking “if the Good Offices Committee ... reports satisfactory” in its efforts to bring about a cease-fire.<sup>(77)</sup>

The administration not only consented to tone down the wording of the resolution, but also agreed to resist public and Congressional demands to employ more substantial penalties against the PRC. The State Department denied to the media that the U.S. was pressing for immediate and strong actions regarding sanctions against Peking. Senator Tom Connally hence commented that if Washington could not get the U.N. to agree on sanctions, it might as well forget about the resolution altogether. John D. Hickerson of the Bureau of the United Nations Affairs replied that time was needed to bring the allies along and to avoid escalating the conflict into an all-out war with China. The State Department and Britain also agreed that the AMC report, if ever made, was not to go beyond recommending a selective embargo plus measures immediately related to the situation in Korea.<sup>(78)</sup>

After the Communists launched their largest offensive on April 22, 1951, public demand to “punish” the aggressor mounted and Britain finally agreed to hold an AMC meeting. With the war turning to the advantage of the U.N. and strong public sentiment aroused by the MacArthur hearings, the AMC at last recommended a strategic embargo against the PRC and North Korea. The General Assembly approved the recommendation on May 18, 1951, more than four months after passage of the aggressor resolution. The deferral of punitive measures against Peking and continued assurance by the U.S. that it sought to settle the Korean conflict peacefully indicated

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(77) The original and final resolutions can be found in *FR1951*, 7(1):115, 150. For the debate of this resolution, see documents dated January 1951, in *ibid.*, 7(1):1-150.

(78) Records of the Secretary's Meetings, February 2, 1951, E393, RG 59, NA; Memorandum of Conversation by Hickerson, February 7, 1951, 500.008 Economic Sanctions, RG 59, CA Records, box 30, NA; Memorandum, Popper to Hickerson, March 15, 1951, *ibid.*; Memorandum from the British Embassy, April 11, 1951, 312 U.S. Organization (General) 1951, *ibid.*, box 28; Memorandum of Conversation, State and the British Embassy, April 27, 1951, *ibid.* For documentation relating to the work and conclusions of the AMC, see *FR1951*, 7(2):1874ff.

more a spirit of compromise than hostility toward Communist China.<sup>(79)</sup>

Recent historians often stress the enormous opposition the United States encountered in the United Nations while lobbying for an aggressor resolution. Some argue that only when the U.S. threatened to withhold aid to European reconstruction and NATO defense was it able to obtain allied support of the resolution. Others emphasize the immense domestic pressure on the administration to "punish the aggressor."<sup>(80)</sup> The last line of interpretation neglects the fact that the sentiment of policymakers was similar to that of the public and Congress. The administration did not succumb to domestic pressure and propose the resolution to appease its political opponents. Having justified its own actions in Korea on high principles, it deemed such moral condemnation of "the aggressor" necessary.

Neither does historians' emphasis on the divergence of the U.S. and its allies reflect the fact that the administration attached far more importance to allied unity than to the necessity of penalizing the Peking regime. Further, the administration shared with its allies the desire to settle the Korean conflict at a minimal cost as early as possible. When considering further courses to be recommended by the AMC, Washington pointed out that for the sake of allied sentiment it would recommend neither total embargo nor derecognition of the PRC. A total embargo might damage the economy of allies which was more dependent on China trade. Derecognition, on the other hand, was against the wish to maintain sufficient non-Soviet representation in China.<sup>(81)</sup>

Washington had hoped that such penalties, though restrained, would hamper Peking's military campaigns, increase the drain on Moscow in supplying the CPV, and pressure Peking into seeking accommodation. But on the other hand, State Department claimed to be "under no illusions that such a program [would] itself bring Chi[nese] Commies to their knees

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(79) Resolution 500 (V), adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, May 18, 1951, *FR1951*, 7(2):1988; Memorandum, Austin to Hickerson on Next Step in Korea, May 23, 1951, *ibid*, 7(1):447-452; Kaufman, *The Korean War*, pp. 183-185.

(80) For recent interpretations of the aggressor resolution, see Kaufman, *The Korean War*, pp. 130-138; Foot, "Anglo-American Relations in the Korean Crisis," pp. 53-56; and MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 84-87.

(81) See footnote 78.

or noticeably effect Chi[nese] mil[itary] operations in Korea in near future.”<sup>(82)</sup> Indeed, since none of the measures had decisive impact on the war-making capacity of the Chinese Communists, their effects might be negligible. Their main purpose, it seemed, was more for the psychological comfort of the U.S. leaders who, due to the inability to defeat the Chinese Communists militarily, believed “something” must be done to “punish the aggressor.”

## VI

Contrary to one historian’s comment that “Washington quite obviously was getting hysterical and irrational”<sup>(83)</sup> after the late November military setback, the policymakers remained calm and calculating. Occasional outbursts of rhetorical toughness and contemplation of military retaliation, especially when U.S./U.N. forces were on the threshold of defeat, led many to believe that the U.S. was on the verge of expanding the war into China. At the acute stage of the Korean crisis though, the planners had spent more time analyzing the drawbacks of retaliation than elaborating the benefits or necessity of such actions. There were no concrete or specific plans for, and even less determination to accept the possible consequences of, military retaliation. The political and economic measures the U.S./U.N. adopted against the PRC also revealed more a desire to retain the possibility for future accommodation than real “penalties.” The outbursts of toughness, therefore, reflected U.S. frustration more than irreversible hostility.

Washington did to a certain extent display reluctance to negotiate a settlement when the tide was adverse for fear of making too many concessions, or when the tide was favorable for fear of “missing an expansive opportunity.”<sup>(84)</sup> But such a description does not give the full picture of the Truman administration’s attitude toward diplomacy. From the outset, the administration did not have the slightest intention to expend large portion of its resources for the protection of “minor” interests in

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(82) Msg. 030420Z from State to SCAP, February 4, 1951, Korea # 3, FECOM, General Files, box 9, RG 6, DML.

(83) Bevin Alexander, *Korea*, p. 372.

(84) C. B. Marshall’s comment to PPS Director Paul Nitze on February 12, 1951, as cited in Foot, *Substitute for Victory*, p. 39.

Korea and wanted to settle the conflict on "acceptable terms" as soon as possible. In contingency plans, such "terms" ranged between demanding a virtual unconditional surrender of North Korea while the UNC enjoyed the military advantage, and capitulating to all of Peking's demands when it was on the verge of total defeat.<sup>(85)</sup> In other words, an initial desire to maximize gains and a later reluctance to make outright concessions for fear of "losing face," not a lack of aspiration, had prevented the administration from taking up negotiations earlier.

If Truman's advisers were neither doctrinaire nor unrealistic and generally favored political settlement over military victory, why did they fail to avert a war with the Chinese Communists which they took the utmost caution to prevent? Why did U.S./U.N. forces suffer an immense defeat at the hands of the "inferior" Chinese Communist troops? Several interrelated factors characteristic of the policymaking process might shed some light on these questions.

First of all, a strong sense of superpower arrogance<sup>(86)</sup> might have caused the planners to underestimate Peking's strength and, most of all, determination. It led them either to totally dismiss Peking's threats to intervene due to the latter's apparent military weakness, or to unrealistically assume China should take U.S. verbal assurances of peaceful intentions at face value. The march to the Yalu and the aggressor resolution, despite the restraints on military operations across the border and the moderate language used in the resolution, still conveyed to Peking more a sense of U.S. hostility than a wish for accommodation. Not to mention the fact that the U.S., while supporting U.N. attempts to settle the Korean conflict, was simultaneously exploring the prospect of dismembering China or splitting the CCP regime. No wonder Peking did not believe the sincerity of U.S. assurances! Such negligence toward the objective reality of

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(85) For the conditions of a settlement, see NSC 81, September 1, 1950, *FR1950*, 7:687, DML-6 FECOM, General Files-9, Korea \* 2, July-November 1950; W 92083 from DA (CSGPO) (G-3) to CINCFE, September 21, 1950, and discussions in section III of this article.

(86) Such arrogance inevitably produced a sense of racism which Callum MacDonald terms it as "Good syndrome," i.e. a tendency to underestimate the Asians. See MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 54. For a discussion of racism and visions of national greatness in the making of U.S. foreign policy, see Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), chapters 2 and 3.

what U.S. actions represented to others ( which some historians criticize as wishful, naive, and self-righteous ) inevitably led to miscalculation and frustration on the part of the Truman administration.<sup>(87)</sup>

Closely linked to the assumption that others should grasp Washington's intentions was the tendency to believe, among conflicting reports, whatever information that would justify its policy, rather than basing decisions on all available intelligence information. Thus, Washington elected to believe Peking dared not enter the war despite a large volume of reports, some from its own diplomats in Moscow and Hong Kong, indicating China had held fast to its pronouncements and had sent troops into North Korea.<sup>(88)</sup> After encountering the CPV in early November, the Pentagon was alerted to the possibility that the enemy's withdrawals were for the purpose of preparing an offensive and did consider revising the objective of unifying Korea. But in the end, the planners chose to believe lower estimates of enemy strength, and decided that no sufficient evidence indicated the CPV was preparing for a major offensive. They recommended proceeding with the end-the-war offensive.<sup>(89)</sup>

Another notable problem was a tendency to avoid clear-cut decisions, something which also plagued U.S. forces in Vietnam. The administration pursued conflicting goals toward Peking which resulted in the latter's distrust of U.S. sincerity. It refused to decide whether the UNC should hold a line or withdraw from Korea which greatly frustrated General MacArthur. Another good example concerns revising the military directives

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(87) See MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 52, 55; McLellan, "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," pp. 21, 39. For a leftist interpretation of Peking's perception, see Friedman, "Problems in Dealing with an Irrational Power."

(88) Some interpret Washington's rejection of reports indicating the CCP intervention because many were from sources close to the Nationalists who wished to involve the U.S. in the war with the Peking regime so as to realize their goal of reconquering the mainland. See, for example, MacDonald, *Korea*, pp. 62-63.

(89) For a summary of Washington's estimates, see Memorandum, C. A. W. to Commander-in-Chief, FEC, on Brief of "Trends of High Level Washington Estimates on Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," February 23, 1951, with two enclosures, Correspondence, General, January-April 1951, FECOM, General Files, box 1, RG 6, DML. For conflicting intelligence regarding Peking's intervention, see Stueck, "March to the yalu," pp. 209-211. For the Defense Department's alert to Peking's intention in November, see Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 81-82. For the different assessments of the CPV strength in November 1950, see footnote 22.

on operations north of the 38th parallel. The administration was careful not to define unification as the goal of the war. But in September 1950 it did direct MacArthur to destroy North Korean armed forces north of the 38th parallel. After the PRC entered the conflict, the Pentagon kept reviewing the above mentioned directive, but stopped short of revising it even when the UNC was on the threshold of defeat. When the tide was reversed in the spring of 1951 and the 38th parallel problem came to the fore again, the directive remained intact. No one wanted to assume the responsibility of ending the war in place—even though such a condition was acceptable before Inchon and after MacArthur's debacle in late November. The directive was finally revised on May 1, 1951 to prohibit a general advance beyond the "Kansas-Wyoming line" (close to the 38th parallel).<sup>(90)</sup> Washington understandably wanted to optimize its gains, and would not give up the unification of Korea as long as enemy resistance remained manageable and the cost minimal. For areas of minor security concern such as Korea, the policymakers indeed would "let the Soviets make the decision for [them]," as Rusk admitted to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Warren Austin when discussing the 38th parallel issue in September.<sup>(91)</sup> But such an opportunistic approach made combat planning difficult and inevitably caused strife between MacArthur and his superiors in Washington.<sup>(92)</sup>

Some (especially the Europe firsters and the western allies) blamed Truman and his advisers for confusing their priorities by fighting the Communists in Korea and globalizing containment. Such criticism misses the genuine intention of the policymakers. The debacle might have resulted more from the low priority the planners assigned to Korea, which restricted U.S. commitment and military operations. In this sense, the Korean War indeed was a very "limited" war in the minds of the planners. Instead of

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(90) See Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 73, 81, 87, 100, 110, 113; and MacDonald, *Korea*, p. 91.

(91) Notes of Rusk's meeting with Warren Austin, September 23, 1950, as cited in Gaddis, *Long Peace*, p. 99.

(92) Acheson complained that MacArthur "stripped from the resolution of October 7 its husk of ambivalence" about military operations in North Korea, and implicitly blamed him for spoiling Washington's precaution and caused Peking's large scale intervention. Such criticism was nevertheless judgement from hindsight and not quite reflect Washington's approval of MacArthur's operations until the debacle in late November. See Acheson, *The Korean War*, pp. 57-58. See also discussions in section IV above.



toughing through a challenge, they often thought of disengagement first, making involvement in Korea a policy without “much” force. This contrasts with the CCP leaders who realized their own military, economic, and technological inferiorities ( indeed, some CCP leaders opposed sending troops to Korea for that reason ).<sup>(93)</sup> However, after deciding to send in troops, they executed the war with determination while expecting the worst. As Peng Teh-huai, the Commander of the CPV, commented: if the PRC was defeated, it would only delay liberation for a few years.<sup>(94)</sup> Washington’s calculations failed to account for the strength of such CCP determination.

Not rigidly cold war minded, Truman and his advisers pragmatically designed their war strategy and opportunistically kept their options in Korea and China open in order to optimize their gains. Egocentrism and wishfulness in the policymaking process nevertheless created a large gap between their intentions and the reality perceived by both their friends and enemies. The severe strategic flaw of misjudging enemy intentions and underestimating its strength, together with political lack of will and reluctance to use much force, caused the United States to suffer a tremendous setback from a materially much more “inferior” enemy. Truman and his advisers failed to realize that the world would not run according to the will of Washington; neither did they perceive the unfeasibility of attempting to determine the course of events in the Far East with the meager resources the U.S. was willing to spare. Due to their mentality at the time, it seems quite unlikely that the military confrontation between the U.S. and the PRC could have been averted. Nor was an early disengagement from Korea probable, even though such was the gravest “hope” of the planners.<sup>(95)</sup> In other words, Truman and his advisers defeated their own purposes.

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(93) For CCP discussion on entering the Korean War, see Chen, “China’s Policy toward the United States, 1949-1955,” p. 189; and Farrar-Hockley, “A Reminiscence of the Chinese People’s Volunteers in the Korean War,” pp. 290-291.

(94) Nieh, *Huei-i-lu*, p. 740.

(95) Wang Jisi, a scholar from the PRC, insightfully analyzes the conceptual framework of the PRC-US confrontation in his article “An Appraisal of U.S. Policy toward China, 1945-1955.” See the article in Harding and Yuan, eds., *Sino-American Relations*, pp. 303-306.