

## WHO STARTED THE KOREAN WAR? THREE MOSAICS

No serious, honest scholar can ever have any question about it. North Korean Communist forces attacked the Republic of Korea without warning, with provocation and without justification.

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WHO STARTED the Korean War? This question cannot be answered. Instead, the reader is asked to consider three mosaics, each explaining how the war might have "started." All three are conspiracy theories, including the established American-South Korean position: that the Soviets and North Koreans stealthily prepared a heinous, unprovoked invasion. The first mosaic is this "official story," and especially the documentary evidence behind it. Mosaic Three is the North Korean account, which precisely reverses the first position: the South launched a surprise, unprovoked invasion all along the parallel. The most absorbing, perhaps, is Mosaic Two: the South provoked the war. Then there is a set of intelligence mosaics, of report and counterreport, which meander in and out and raise the question, who knew what, when?

### INCIDENT AT ONGJIN: "I NEVER QUITE KNEW WHAT WENT ON"

Most accounts of the outbreak of fighting in June 1950 leave the impression that an attack began all along the parallel at dawn, against an enemy taken completely unaware. Both South and North Korean official histories assert this; they merely differ on which side attacked. But the war began in the same, remote locus of much of the 1949 fighting, the Ongjin Peninsula, and some hours later spread along the parallel westward, to Kaesŏng, Ch'unch'ŏn, and the East coast. As an official American history put it, "On the Ongjin Peninsula, cut off from the rest of South Korea, soldiers of the 17th Regiment stood watch on the quiet summer night of 24-25 June 1950. For more than a week, there had been no serious incident along the 38th parallel. . . . Then at 0400, with devastating suddenness . . . [artillery and mortar fire] crashed into the ROK lines." Attacking elements were said to be from the 3d Brigade of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Border Constabulary, joined at 5:30

A.M. by the formidable 6th Division. One company of the 17th Regiment was annihilated, the other two retreated by sea.<sup>1</sup>

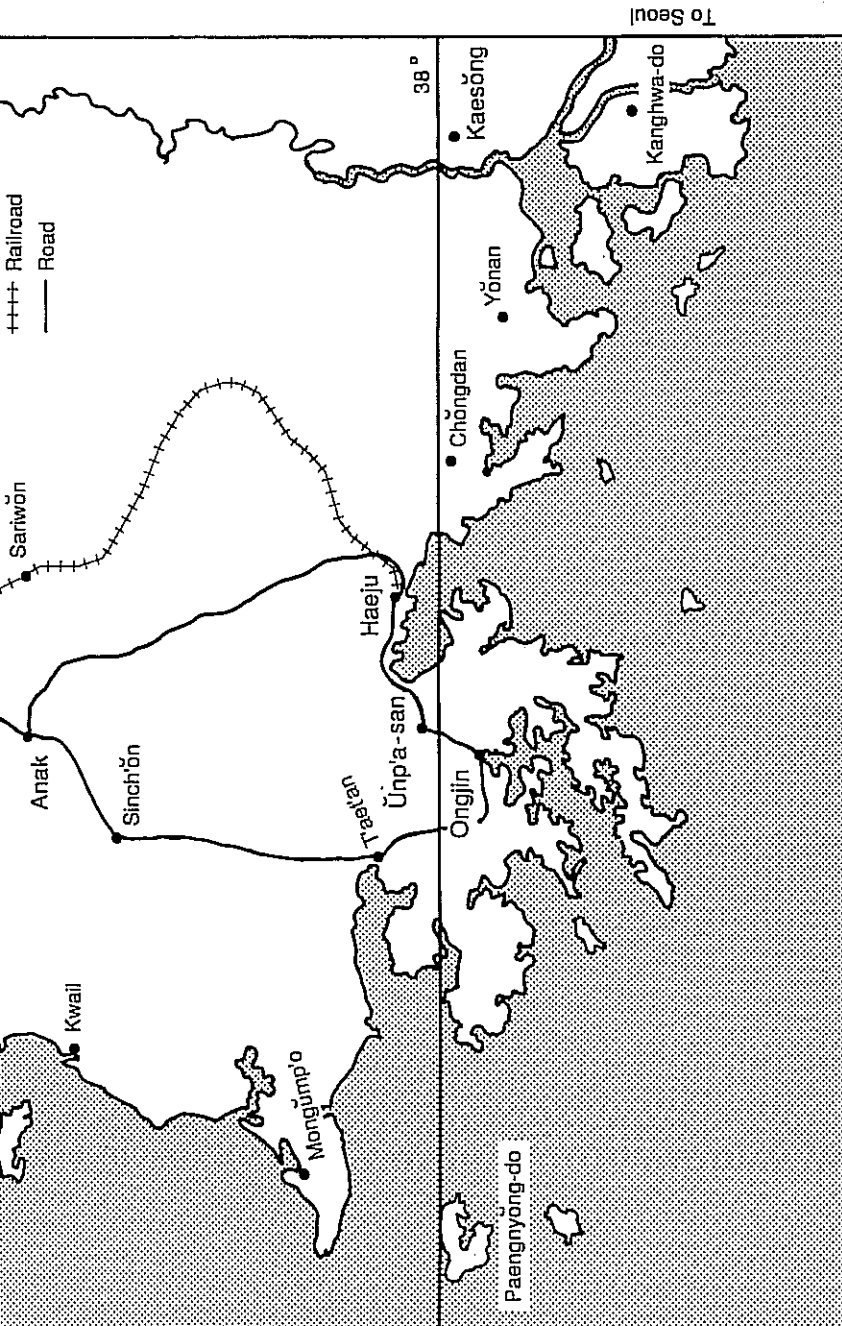
Roy Appleman's official account differed only a bit from this rendering. He wrote that "the earliest attack" hit Ongjin around 4 A.M., in a combined assault involving the 14th Regiment of the 6th Division, plus the 3d Brigade. Artillery and mortar began at 4 A.M., and soldiers crossed the parallel at 4:30, but "without armored support." Appleman got this information from an interview with long-time American intelligence operative James Hausman, who was not at Ongjin. Southern general Chŏng Il-gwŏn, head of the guerrilla suppression campaign, wrote soon after the war began that the "main attack" was at Ongjin, using the 6th Division; the mysterious Lim Ŭn has Ch'oe Hyŏn, Kim Il Sung's ally, leading the Ongjin charge.<sup>2</sup>

On the locus of the first attack, the North agreed. In his radio address shortly after noon on June 25, Kim Il Sung said that forces of the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) 17th Regiment had attacked on Ongjin to the west of Haeju; according to Koreans who heard the broadcast, he added this aside: "Kim Sŏk-wŏn, I'm coming to get you, you won't escape me now!"<sup>3</sup>

The North's official radio said on June 26 that South Korean forces began shelling the Ŭnp'a-san area (scene of several 1949 battles, especially the big one on August 4), on June 23 at 10 P.M., and continued until June 24 at 4 A.M., using howitzers and mortars. A unit commanded by Kang To-gŏn was defending Turak-san on Ongjin in the early hours of June 25, it was said, when it was attacked by the "Maengho" or "fierce tiger" unit of the 17th Regiment, which it proceeded to destroy. By 2:30 P.M. on June 25, the unit had advanced below the parallel as far as Sudong; meanwhile partisans sprang forward to disrupt police stations and units in Ongjin.<sup>4</sup>

South Korean sources asserted, however, that elements of the 17th Regiment had counterattacked and were in possession of Haeju city, the only important point north of the thirty-eighth parallel claimed to have been taken by ROKA elements until after the Inch'ŏn landing. Ch'ae Pyŏng-dŏk announced this at 11:00 A.M. June 26, a timing that would account for numerous newspaper articles saying that elements of the ROKA had occupied Haeju, and which have since been used to suggest that the South might have attacked first.<sup>5</sup>

The Americans and the Soviets also quickly zeroed in on what happened in Ongjin. Although most observers missed it at the time, just after the war started the United States Information Agency drew especial attention to the 1949 Ongjin fighting in public information materials—especially "a large-scale invasion" at Ongjin on August 4, 1949—showing a curious sensitivity to something hardly anyone else had brought up in the



Map 7. Ongjin-Kaesong Region, 38th Parallel

first days of the war, and getting it out with an unaccustomed rapidity. It blamed all of the fighting in the summer of 1949 on the North Koreans, when internal materials showed that much of the fighting had been started by the South.<sup>6</sup>

This exercise in disinformation was widely assumed to be gospel truth; all the mendacity was thought to be emanating from the mouth of the Soviet UN representative, Adam Malik. When he rejoined the United Nations he charged that on June 24 Saturday leaves had been cancelled for the crack unit of the ROKA, the "twin tiger" outfit known officially as the 17th Regiment, and the next morning it attacked near Haeju. He said that his information had come from the North Koreans, and quoted a South Korean POW named Han Su-hwan.

According to the North Korean materials upon which Malik apparently based his account, Han said he was a political officer in the 17th Regiment. After the UN observers left Ongjin on June 23, Han alleged, officers were alerted and "stayed up" the night of June 24–25, and then "by daybreak of the 25th a secret order reached us from Headquarters to launch an attack" across the thirty-eighth parallel. The first and third battalions of the 17th Regiment attacked west of Haeju, penetrating one to two kilometers, he claimed.

This attack, Malik claimed, was first discussed concretely on June 20, the central figures being Shin Sŭng-mo, Ch'ae Pyŏng-dŏk, and Kim Sŏk-wŏn, "who divided among themselves the regions within which they would direct military action." He added darkly, "a particularly ominous and evil role is being played . . . by General MacArthur, who feels that he is the deputy of God in Asia."<sup>7</sup>

This is about the sum total of the public information on the origin of the Ongjin fighting, although it was embellished and written up in many ways thereafter. Neither I. F. Stone nor Karunakar Gupta go beyond it, although they do say a bit about the earlier fighting in the area. Mainstream critics, including academic specialists, have leaped to attack such "revisionists" with alacrity, but usually with a complacent unwillingness sincerely to assess the issue. Some have displayed a remarkable incapacity to evaluate reliable historical sources—citing the South Korean official history of the war, for example, which, like the northern histories, is a compendium of half-truths, distortions, and critical omissions.<sup>8</sup> It would be like asking scribes of the Confederacy what happened at Fort Sumter. But, is there any significance to this tale, and what do formerly classified materials show?

All sides agree that the war started at Ongjin. What no one saw fit to point out is that the Ongjin Peninsula is hardly the place to start an invasion if you are heading southward: it's a cul-de-sac, and the 17th Regiment could simply have been blocked near Haeju if Kim Il Sung

feared a southern counterattack after his invasion. It is a good place to jump off if you are heading northward, since it commands transportation leading right to P'yŏngyang, and in June 1950 was remote from the Seoul-based American attempts to rein in southern army commanders.

One hypothesis we have entertained earlier is that both sides may have been set on city-grabbing in the summer of 1950. Threats and actions directed at seizing Haeju were made by Kim Sŏk-wŏn and others from May 1949 onward; some evidence suggests that the North in 1950 might have hoped merely to seize Seoul and bring about a unified government.<sup>9</sup> Haeju was several times the site of North-South leftist gatherings seeking unification. More important, it housed the SKWP headquarters and was the point from which the southern communist effort was directed and from which numerous agents were dispatched in the three years after the party was forced underground in the South.<sup>10</sup> It was also thought to be the headquarters for the southern guerrillas. Coming on the heels of the counterinsurgency campaigns, the breaking of the Seoul underground, and the seizure of Kim Sam-yong and Yi Chu-ha, capturing it would be a rallying point against communism and a distinct blow to Pak Hŏn-yŏng and his forces.

Haeju commanded a direct route to P'yŏngyang by both road and rail, making the movement of troops far easier and quicker in the rough terrain. ROKA possession of it would also backstop their precarious hold on the Ongjin Peninsula. (In the August 1949 Ongjin fighting, as we saw, ROK generals in desperation wanted to abandon the peninsula and move against Ch'ŏrwŏn.) Haeju was part of rice-rich Hwanghae Province, the main repository of southern-style society in the North: landlords, tenancy, quasi-feudal relationships. It was the prime region for underground penetration by pro-ROK guerrillas and spies before and during the war; it was about the only place where any anticommunist resistance was evident in 1950–1953.<sup>11</sup> Haeju was surrounded by little islands and peninsulas that could (and did) harbor southern agents. In other words people who have hastened to point out that Haeju was worthless do not know what they are talking about.

The 17th Regiment was not just another unit in the ROK Army. It was a key frontline force along a line from which two full companies of soldiers had defected to the North in May 1949, a mutiny that devastated ROK morale. The loyalty of the 17th thus had to be absolutely assured. It was directly commanded by one of two brothers who headed the Northwest or *Sŏbuk* faction in the Army, Paek In-yŏp, who had brought many *Sŏbuk* youth members into it; the other brother, Paek Sŏn-yŏp, commanded the ROKA 1st Division (formerly commanded by Kim Sŏk-wŏn). Both were born near P'yŏngyang, a few years after Kim Il Sung. Paek Sŏn-hwa, who may or may not be related, was ROKA intelligence

chief in 1949–1950. Regional loyalties structured most units of the army and this one was full of northerners with virulent hatred of communism. And as we saw in chapter 12, Paek In-yŏp mounted an attack on Ŭnp'asan in December 1949, to boost morale.

The 2,500 men of the 17th were the best trained in the ROK Army, and although the regiment was officially part of the elite Capital Division, it was often listed by itself as if it were a separate, smaller division. It had been blooded against the southern guerrillas, operating out of the Nam-wŏn suppression headquarters until early 1950. There its commander was Kim Paek-il, another northerner who, like Kim Sŏk-wŏn, had been head of a special Japanese Kwantung Army detachment to hunt down Korean and Chinese guerrillas. (The defecting officers of the 18th Regiment in 1949 drew special attention to the baleful influence of Kim Sŏk-wŏn and Kim Paek-il.) Had Rhee not been blocked by Americans in making Kim Sŏk-wŏn chief of staff in May 1950, he would have commanded Paek In-yŏp as head of the Capital Division.

Probably the official command lines did not matter much. Paek In-yŏp was also a veteran of the Kwantung Army, and Yi Ch'ŏngch'an, the head of the Capital Division when the war began, had been a major in the Japanese Army. Since this was the elite guard of the president, Rhee's cronies like Kim Sŏk-wŏn would influence it whether they actually commanded it or not. Kim Paek-il, for example, was said to be functioning with the command of this division after the war began.<sup>12</sup> These officers came to maturity in a Kwantung Army that specialized in the provocation of "incidents" as prelude to war, the best known being the Mukden affair in 1932.

Also with the 17th was the infamous "Tiger Kim." Kim Chong-wŏn got the name "Tiger" for his service to the Japanese Army; after 1945 he liked journalists to call him "the Tiger of Mt. Paekdu." He volunteered for the Imperial Army in 1940 and rose to sergeant, "a rank which epitomized the brutality of the Japanese Army at its worst," in John Muccio's words; he served in New Guinea and the Philippines. He was with the Korean National Police (KNP) at the Eastgate Station in 1946, then for eight months in 1947 he was Chang Taek-sang's personal bodyguard. He then entered the Army, where he rose quickly through the ranks in the guerrilla suppression campaigns. Americans remembered him for his brutality in the suppression (Muccio called it "ruthless and effective"), and for his refusal to take American orders. An American in 1948 termed him "a rather huge, brute of a man"—after witnessing Kim and his men "mercilessly" beat captured Yŏsu prisoners, including women and children, "with cot rounds, bamboo sticks, fists." He worked closely with Kim Paek-il and Chŏng Il-gwŏn, and by August 1949 he was a regimental commander.

After the war began, a KMAG advisor went “berserk with the idea of killing Kim,” according to Muccio. The officer himself, named Emmerich, was not berserk: he said he would have to shoot Kim, “if no one else will get rid of him.” Kim was berserk. He had killed some of his own officers and men for alleged disobedience, avoided the front lines of fighting like the plague, and had beheaded fifty POWs and guerrillas (said to be just “one group” among others that had received this treatment).

Emmerich was transferred; Kim was temporarily relieved of his command under American pressure. But Rhee soon promoted him to deputy provost marshal, and later sent him to assist in running the occupation of P’yŏngyang in the fall of 1950. He eventually commanded the martial law regime in Pusan, after distinguishing himself in the squalid terror of the “conscription” campaigns, which consisted of “shanghai-ing the required number of young men off the streets.” He also prided himself on being a “one-man censor of the press,” which he indeed was in one instance where he personally administered a beating to two reporters for the *Yŏnhap sinmun*. Although he was clearly, on this evidence, a war criminal in Korea if not necessarily in the Philippines, Tiger Kim was part of Rhee’s bestiary of close and trusted confidants.<sup>13</sup>

With leadership such as this in the 17th Regiment the internecine Korean struggles of the 1930s would be recapitulated, but on dramatically reversed terms. Out of the same generation (something weighty in the Korean cultural context), in their nation’s maximum point of trial these warriors had chosen opposite sides: the opportunists took on the color and status of the Japanese militarists, while the guerrillas were little more than rag-tag, poorly equipped bands, hunted down by Japanese/Korean forces with every advantage.

In 1950 this was not so. When in the spring the 17th redeployed from the interior to the parallel at Ongjin, led by colonial Quislings, the northern generals would have marked its approach with the riveted mix of alarm and relish of a cobra lying in wait for an oncoming mongoose. To counter the 17th, the North backed up its border soldiers with elements of the 6th Division, full of experienced China soldiers, placing them near Haeju. It was led by Pang Ho-san, the revolutionary who trained at Whampoa and had a long record of anti-Japanese fighting in China.

From May 1949 onward the North Korean press had paid close attention to Kim Sŏk-wŏn and Kim Paek-il, the former being chief of the thirty-eighth parallel in 1949 and the latter the overall commander of the counterinsurgency in the South. The North would know they retained substantial influence in an elite unit they had previously commanded. On May 18, 1950, the China-aligned head of the Ministry of the Interior, Pak Il-u, held an extraordinary news conference, responding to Shin Sŭng-

mo’s May 10 briefing where he claimed that an invasion was imminent. He began by saying that it was a “northern expedition,” not an invasion of the South, that was at issue. He cited “dangerous and provocative” public statements by ROK leaders about marching north, including one by Kim Sŏk-wŏn, dated May 4, 1949, that when he attacked he would have “breakfast in Haeju, lunch in P’yŏngyang and dinner in Wŏnsan.” Although he disparaged ROK capabilities, saying its leaders “would not know how to sell rice from inside a ricebag,” he also said, “The authorities of the DPRK are paying deep attention to the dangerous war provocations of the southern puppets. Furthermore . . . according to accurate materials that have become known to us, the Rhee puppet government had concentrated five of its eight divisions along the thirty-eighth parallel.” His first example of this was the Ongjin Peninsula where, he said, two infantry regiments had been added to the existing forces; he then listed other reinforcements along the parallel, saying that troops were being brought up from the interior guerrilla fighting. Why was this being done, he asked, just when the guerrillas would become active, benefitting from the spring foliage? The answer: Rhee was “impatient to provoke a civil war,” but the United States and the UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK) were trying to hide this. He ended by urging “peaceful unification,” and called on all the Korean people to “heighten their vigilance . . . always be prepared to control [Rhee’s] dangerous war provocations.”<sup>14</sup>

KMAG G-2 materials cite various border incidents in Ongjin just before the war. Although minor in comparison to the fighting of 1949, there were quite a few, with significant loss of life, and the majority occurred in the Ongjin-Haeju-Kaesŏng region. Of fourteen incidents in the week of May 18–25, seven were near Ongjin and Haeju; a total of thirty-two northerners and six southerners died in these border incidents. The next week there were twenty-five incidents, with a smaller number dead; five of these were near Ongjin, six near Kaesŏng. Of thirteen incidents, June 1–8, five were at the parallel just north of Ongjin; two were on the parallel just east of Haeju; one occurred near Kaesŏng. The June 8–15 report showed fourteen border incidents, of which three were near Haeju and four near Kaesŏng; most were contacts with Ongjin-area southern guerrillas, not KPA soldiers. Another source for the same period, however, counted eight border incidents (not broken down geographically) in which the ROKA and the Korean People’s Army (KPA) both lost twelve soldiers, a casualty total said to be higher than in recent weeks. No reports from either source could be located for the period June 16–25, but this evidence hardly suggests that the parallel was particularly quiet in the eastern reaches in the weeks before the war.<sup>15</sup>

An unusual source gives evidence that fighting was ongoing in this remote region through the last week of June. Captured North Korean doc-

uments include top secret "public opinion" reports from Haeju, where on June 21, 1950 a twenty-two-year-old student is quoted as saying, "there is a war almost every day along the 38th parallel."<sup>16</sup>

As in the fall of 1949, British sources in the spring of 1950 reported that KMAG advisors were "seeking the removal of over-aggressive officers in command positions along the parallel"; this was at the time of the attempt to bring Kim Sök-wön back into the ROKA, so it cannot have referred to him. In the interim until they were removed, the report said, "a border incident . . . could precipitate civil war." But the British thought this would not happen as long as American officers controlled the situation.<sup>17</sup> Thus the significance of the absence of Roberts, Wright, and other high KMAG officers in late June.

The UNCOK military observer, Ronald J. Rankin, told an interviewer that although everything was peaceful along the parallel when he and F.S.B. Peach made their survey, he recalled that something was different about the last place they visited, his memory was vague but there was something he could not put his finger on about this place: Ongjin.<sup>18</sup> The other observer, Peach, told an interviewer,

I never quite knew what went on. There's a bit of mystery still about Haeju, I think it may have been Paek [In-yöp] and his merry men, the 17th Regiment attacking it [Haeju]. It could have been some of them fighting their way to get back into South [Korea]. We didn't hear anything about it until the war had been going for a while and I never quite knew what went on.<sup>19</sup>

The observers returned from Ongjin to Seoul on the morning of Friday, June 23.

The first intelligence reports on the fighting that I have had access to are curiously inconclusive on who started the fighting in Ongjin. Interestingly, there are no extant reports from Willoughby's Korea Liaison Office for the last weekend in June. Air Force intelligence reported that "at 0400 engagement started between North and South Korean forces at Ongjin . . . by 0600 fighting had worked itself across to the East coast." The initial report to MacArthur merely said, "fighting with great intensity started at 0400, 25 June on the Ongjin Peninsula."<sup>20</sup>

A bizarre document,<sup>21</sup> consisting of captured Russian radio intercepts of South Korean Army communications, contained an intercept from Ongjin that had ROK sources saying, "at June 25 at 0300 hours, fighting began in the region of Ongjin. At the present time [June 25, 10:30 A.M.] the enemy is attacking fiercely." (Later intercepts refer to North Korean attacks, not an indeterminate beginning.) Furthermore, another intercept from the "General Staff" (presumably of the ROK Army) at 1845 hours, but not giving the day in question, referred to "a joint conference"

at 0800 hours "for the planning of a night operation 25 June." This cannot but refer to the period before the fighting began; it would be a conference that must have been scheduled for 8:00 A.M. Saturday, June 24—some hours after Peach and Rankin left Ongjin, some hours after Rhee decided not to make the exchange for Cho Man-sik. It would have been intercepted at 6:45 P.M. on Friday evening, June 23, some thirty hours before anyone claimed that fighting began at Ongjin.

Like the Americans in the South, the Russians had units listening in on the other side's radio transmissions. These intercepts clearly indicated that the target was the ROKA communications system. For example, on June 25 at 0830 hours, Shin Sŭng-mo was quoted as saying "the enemy is conducting strong artillery fire and a general attack. The numbers are much greater than we anticipated . . . in almost all the regions the enemy has seized our contested points." At Ongjin at 0800 hours someone radioed, "the situation is very difficult. The enemy is continually attacking and bringing in new troops."

The intercepts also included an item saying that "ships nos. 509, 507, 501, and 506 have been dispatched, and engaged the enemy in battle. Enemy forces are eight times as great as ours, up to 10:50 hours, our ships suffered great losses." The time of this intercept is June 25, 0800 hours, meaning that the ships were dispatched the previous day—some time before 10:50 P.M., June 24. Haeju was approachable by sea as well as by land. This information squares with an assertion by former ROK Admiral Lee Yong-un, who said that he was, on June 23, "in command of a small naval unit on a mission against Haeju districts." Agence France-Press is also said to have reported the shelling of the Haeju area by the ROKA, beginning at 10:00 P.M. on June 23. I have not located that report.

Lee himself had been court-martialed in the spring of 1950 on suspicion of involvement in communist smuggling operations, but he was cleared and returned to duty in June. Available evidence says that he was assigned to the Chinhae naval base on the southern coast, not the Haeju area. It may also be that, if Lee was involved in anything, it was small-scale naval shelling of the Haeju area, a fairly commonplace occurrence.<sup>22</sup>

The intercepts also included one from the commander of the First Front to the ROK minister of Defense, June 25 at 0600 hours, saying "the enemy started strong attacks on our front . . . in points 1, 2 and 3 we started a battle with a detached unit." This is inconclusive; it clearly demarks what is well known, that the North opened up with all barrels by 6 A.M., but by not identifying the points (1, 2, 3), it is not clear if the last statement refers to a counterattack or an attack. Nothing in this limited Soviet file suggested a general South Korean attack all along the par-

allel, as charged later by the North, and that alone implies its authenticity since a few weeks later the Soviets joined P'yōngyang's chorus.

British sources, based on POW accounts that the North provided, said that, if these "are to be believed, the southern forces had some hours warning of the northern attack. Several southern units are reported from this source to have been alerted on the evening of the 24th of June and some are said to have been ordered to advance during the night."<sup>23</sup>

Another piece of evidence comes from a North Korean brigade perched across from the 17th Regiment on June 21. It was an operational order for reconnaissance, and said in what seems to be a poor translation, "in the future each reconnaissance unit should repel the enemy or capture them," and then later, "with the beginning of the attack, determine the route of enemy withdrawal and enemy concentrations."<sup>24</sup> This "attack" could be a counterattack in the context; or the document could merely refer to the kind of daily fighting that went on in the area. In any case, it offers no proof of a stealthy North Korean plan for an invasion, and implies that the unit was expecting an attack from the South.

In an interview with Thames Television in P'yōngyang in 1987, Chun Sung Chol said that on June 24–25 he was a staff officer in a border garrison on the Ongjin Peninsula. Here is how he described the alleged South Korean attack:

To be honest, at the time I thought it was another of the enemy's armed invasions. I did not yet know that it was an all-out war. While I was thinking it was another armed invasion, there came an order from our superiors to counter-attack [*sic*]. Then I realized that the enemy had started the war throughout our land. . . . I thought it was just a major armed provocation attempt.

Was Haeju ever occupied by South Korean forces? MacArthur reported on June 26 at 0355 that "South Korean forces on Ongjin Peninsula assumed offensive attacking in direction of Haeju"; he did not say when they did this. Top secret intelligence maps in Willoughby's headquarters show elements of the 17th Regiment in occupation of Haeju as of 0700 hours on June 26. This information came well before Chae Pyōng-dōk's announcement that Haeju had been occupied, which the ROK has always said was based on a journalist's mistaken report from Ongjin (they even offered to produce this journalist for the Thames Television documentary). The next day, Willoughby's intelligence reported, "one infantry battalion and one artillery battery [of the 17th] occupy Haeju"; it said that Ongjin itself was now occupied by North Korean forces, with 1,250 soldiers in the 17th Regiment having been evacuated by sea as of 1700 hours on June 26. Drumwright said that Paek In-yōp

got 60 percent of his troops out of Ongjin on June 26. Willoughby's intelligence maps carried elements of the 17th in occupation of Haeju on June 28 and 29, but on June 30 they disappear with no explanation.<sup>25</sup>

The North Korean press denounced Ch'ae's claims to have occupied Haeju as "a lying fabrication" and a "comedy," but this could perhaps be attributed to typical KPA bravado that it was an ever-victorious army, and because some commander would be in trouble for such a lapse. The South likewise rarely if ever admitted a defeat.<sup>26</sup>

If Paek got 1,750 of 2,500 soldiers out of Ongjin, what happened to the rest? Appleman says "most of two battalions" were evacuated, but "the other battalion was completely lost in the early fighting." The North Koreans claimed to have eliminated 2,000 soldiers in the 17th; it might be an exaggeration, but if it were not, that would make for almost 4,000 soldiers in the 17th, not the listed total of 2,500.<sup>27</sup>

It will be remembered that Pak Il-u charged on May 18 that *two* infantry regiments had been placed in Ongjin; we also know that in late 1949 KMAC had been trying to reduce the size of the Ongjin task force, over Korean objections.<sup>28</sup> What might the other one be? In the William Donovan Papers—so much of critical importance happens to turn up in these papers—is an account by Brig. Gen. C. E. Ryan, given to Donovan in March 1952. It related that elements of the 17th Regiment performed the "outstanding" feat of escaping north across the parallel. "With escape by the sea cut off, the regiment struck north across the Parallel, hacking its way through the Red division in its path. Using captured ammunition and vehicles, the ROK troops kept their integrity as a fighting force and turned south in a maneuver which rejoined them with their hard-pressed comrades near Seoul." The commander of this effort? Ryan identifies Kim Paek-il.<sup>29</sup> These sources, of course, say this was a counterattack.

Robert Oliver, Rhee's close advisor, has a similar account, although he says that Paek In-yōp was in command: in the first hours of the war, he wrote, Paek "led his men in a bold counter-attack northward. They broke out of the [Ongjin] peninsula, captured the town of Haeju, and then fought their way out of the surrounding north Korean troops." We saw that Peach, also, thought Paek "and his merry men" might have attacked Haeju. Harold Noble had a similar account of the occupation of Haeju; he found the 17th Regiment "full of piss and vinegar" on June 30, just as they were entraining southward, apparently from Seoul or its southern suburbs. Troops routed a couple of days earlier with major casualties would not be so ebullient.<sup>30</sup>

Kim Paek-il and Kim Sōk-wōn did not have formal command positions, and their whereabouts on the last weekend in June is unknown to me.<sup>31</sup> However, by July 15 Kim Sōk-wōn had been rewarded with command of Rhee's favored Capital Division; Kim Paek-il commanded the

entire 1st Corps of the ROKA in the fall of 1950, going around with his American advisor, Lt. Col. Edward Rowney.<sup>32</sup> Kim died in a plane crash in 1951.

The indeterminate beginning of the fighting was also implied in Muccio's famous cable on the start of the fighting, which said that, based on "Korean Army reports which [are] *partly confirmed* by KMAC field advisor reports," the North attacked in Ongjin. He later said, with perhaps some understatement, that continuous prodding and probing along the parallel by both sides "made it so difficult to determine what was going on . . . the morning of the 25th."<sup>33</sup> All this suggests, at a minimum, that the evidence of what happened on the morning of June 25 was a rather slim reed upon which to base American intervention and a United Nations commitment.

#### KAESŎNG ERUPTS

After its beginning on the Ongjin Peninsula at midnight to 4:00 A.M. (depending on the evidence), the fighting spread to nearby Kaesŏng two to four hours later. A pleasant urban leisure spot for Korea's landed aristocracy for centuries, and locus of its incipient but ultimately failed merchant class, it remained in 1950 a small museum of the cultured world of *yangban* repose. It was also a nodal pivot of conflict, with a small mountain (*Song'ak*) cleft by the thirty-eighth parallel on the northeast edge of town, and which even in 1987 still showed the residue of artillery bombardment.

The intrepid Marguerite Higgins visited Kaesŏng at the end of May, the day before the elections. North Korean radio blared forth provocative threats that election day would be a signal for an attack southward all along the parallel. "The next few days in Kaesŏng may be critical," she wrote, but 12th Regiment commander Song Ho-ch'an told her, "if the Communists attack us, we will whip them as usual. But we think they are bluffing." The next day Roberts also discounted an invasion, but said, "at this point we rather invite it. It will give us target practice."<sup>34</sup>

Kaesŏng was the only point on the parallel where an American officer was present on the morning of June 25. Joseph Darrigo, KMAC advisor to the 12th Regiment, was just below Song'aksan, sleeping in a KMAC compound. At 5:00 A.M. artillery fire jounced him out of bed; "the volume of fire indicated an enemy attack"—in other words, he did not know whose artillery he heard when he awakened. Shortly thereafter he hopped in a jeep and headed south, dodging bullets from a group of KPA soldiers disembarking from a train in the middle of town. He found ROKA 1st Division headquarters, where he soon met none other than Paek Sŏn-yŏp, its commander, with whom he remained the rest of that

Sunday. An American missionary heard Darrigo's jeep roar by, but it and the artillery were such common happenings that he rolled over and went back to sleep. When he awoke two hours later, KPA soldiers were staring into his room. He spent the next three years in a North Korean prison camp.<sup>35</sup>

The railroad from Kaesŏng ran to the west about six miles, then turned North and crossed the thirty-eighth parallel two miles later. The North Koreans had pulled up the tracks on their side of the parallel around the time of the Song'aksan fighting in 1949, to make an invasion more difficult. Apparently they relaid the tracks shortly before June 25. It would not take long for soldiers to entrain and go eight miles (perhaps an hour?). So again, at Kaesŏng, there is no proof that the North could not be responding to a southern provocation. Yet for the careful reader this railroad business will be telling: it is impossible to replace tracks from 3:00 A.M. to 5:00 A.M., in response to a provocation at Ongjin. It is our first piece of evidence (of which there will be much more shortly) that the North had made preparations for an assault against the South, even if we have not yet been willing to say that they launched the assault without provocation.

The careful reader will be equally attentive to this telling fact: the Army asked MacArthur on June 26, "were South Koreans able to execute previously planned mine field defensive operations? If so how were North Korean tanks able to penetrate the area?" Clay Blair described land mines placed in the road as "the most effective portable antitank weapon," better than bazookas. The United States had supplied the ROK with large numbers of such mines. But they were not placed on June 25.<sup>36</sup> In 1949, the North had pulled up the railway and placed mines all along the roads leading north from Kaesŏng. In 1950 they replaced the rails and removed the mines. But the South never placed its mines, and concentrated much of its army and its supplies forward near the parallel—not a defensive formation. So what does this structure of action suggest? That the North was not ready to fight in 1949 when the South was, and that the North was ready to fight in 1950 when the South also was.

It appears that the KPA lifted their mines just as the war began, not some weeks earlier as might be expected. A handwritten report dated June 29 says that four groups from the Second Company, an engineer's group, were dispatched to the Sixth Battalion (no division given), and removed mines from 10:00 P.M. on June 24 to 4 A.M. on June 25, "after receiving the attack order from the battalion commander and in order to assure passage through the road." But just above this entry, the author writes that all this occurred "after the battle started" [*chŏn't'u kaesi hu*], which is consistent with preparations for a response to an expected night



attack, or for a KPA invasion. The report also said the unit continued clearing mines from above the thirty-eighth parallel on June 26.<sup>37</sup>

It is also uniformly assumed in the literature on the Korean War that tanks are offensive weapons, and therefore ipso facto evidence of North Korean intent. But there is no agreement among military strategists on whether the tank is an offensive or defensive weapon.<sup>38</sup> And, of course, the literature dwells on the ROK having been left defenseless against tanks, in that it had few bazookas, while never probing the failure to place antitank mines.

There is a hint in the documentation that the 12th Regiment commander, Song Ho-ch'an, might have aided the North's attack on Kaesŏng. Muccio later said that he surrendered to the North "under suspicious circumstances." Another American source claimed that the North's initial assault and its quick seizure of Sŏul was "aided by a native fifth column organized in advance by quislings." Neither source gives any details about this interesting but highly sensitive issue.<sup>39</sup> But it would fit with an interpretation that the May elections brought forward a middle-road group of leaders willing to unite with the North, leaving Rhee and his close allies isolated. Kaesŏng would be a good place for southern troops to fall away, since it commands a direct route to Seoul. In any case, the battle ended quickly with this historic town in northern hands. Elements of the ROKA First Division were able to organize a defense at Munsan, several miles south of Kaesŏng, and they held the KPA there for three days.

#### THE EASTWARD SPREAD OF THE FIGHTING

At the border town of Ch'unch'ŏn, further eastward from Kaesŏng, the South Koreans unquestionably had advance knowledge of fighting to begin on June 25, which southern and American sources say, of course, was warning of the North Korean attack.

Thomas D. McPhail was a KMAG intelligence officer, probably part of Willoughby's Korea Liaison Office, who got "a wealth of information" from South Korean agents that he dispatched into northern territory. On Thursday June 22 such information caused him to go down to Seoul from his position near Ch'unch'ŏn with the 6th ROKA Division, to warn G-2 officials that the North had moved citizens away from the parallel and had secreted camouflaged tanks and artillery in "the restricted area," the area just north of the parallel. Although the American G-2 "wasn't impressed," McPhail's information caused the 6th Division to cancel all passes "and fully man defensive positions for the week-end." Because of this "preparedness," "the initial attack was repulsed."<sup>40</sup> So much for the North Koreans mounting an unexpected surprise attack against an Army

on leave for the weekend. It is highly implausible that this advance information, and the 6th Division alert, would not have been communicated to other elements in the ROKA.

Appleman has the attack at Ch'unch'ŏn beginning at 5:30 A.M., that is, two or three hours after fighting began at Ongjin, and after radio units had wired accounts back to Seoul and, presumably to other divisions. He gives a somewhat different account than McPhail's, agreeing that no passes had been issued and that "the positions were fully manned when the attack came." Appleman reports that McPhail went from Wŏnju to Ch'unch'ŏn on Sunday morning, whereas McPhail told Ridgway he was in Seoul when the fighting began; in any case he was not at the parallel.<sup>41</sup>

The 7th Regiment of the ROKA 6th Division faced the KPA 2d Division when this fighting commenced; no Americans were present. The North employed no tanks until Monday evening (June 26), suggesting that border security units did the early fighting. In very heavy fighting the 6th Division acquitted itself so well that Ch'unch'ŏn did not fall for three days (Drumwright says six days), and then only withdrew because Seoul had fallen and it was flanked by the enemy.<sup>42</sup>

On the East coast the ROKA 8th Division also gave a good account of itself. Here, too, no Americans were at the parallel; Koreans awakened KMAG advisor George D. Kessler in Samch'ŏk and told him the North had attacked. Official histories are unclear on when the fighting began, Appleman saying "about 5 A.M." Initially there were reports that the North had landed guerrillas as far south as P'ohang, which would be clear evidence of several days' premeditation; but these came from South Korean police and proved false, and may have been put out as disinformation by southern authorities.

Landings occurred around 5 A.M. near Samch'ŏk and "later" near Kangnŭng, that is, sometime on June 25; Kessler saw sampans and junks lying offshore, and several hundred men—but they "acted like guerrillas rather than regular units."<sup>43</sup> This was, however, a common occurrence, happening every week or so in March 1950. This was a strong leftist and guerrilla area, and most of the guerrillas were southerners; ROK authorities as a matter of policy identified all guerrillas as North Koreans. Fighting was not heavy on the East coast in the first days of the war, with Kangnŭng in southern hands until June 28; in any case the South controlled the information coming in from this isolated region, which even in the late 1960s had no direct rail or road routes from Seoul.<sup>44</sup>

Around 5:30 A.M., according to Appleman, KPA forces at the parallel south of Ch'ŏrwŏn assaulted the 1st Regiment of the ROKA 7th Division, dealing it heavy casualties; it gave way and the 3d and 4th KPA divisions, with an armored brigade, crashed through and began a daunting march toward Seoul.<sup>45</sup> South of these KPA units was the Seventh Division, head-



quartered at the critical invasion-route town of Ŭijŏngbu; it had not committed its forces to battle even by Monday morning, probably because it was waiting to be reinforced by the 2d Division, which had entrained from Taejŏn; when the Second arrived on Monday, it collapsed and the troops panicked. It was through the gaping hole of the Ŭijŏngbu corridor that North Korean troops poured on the afternoon and evening of June 26, thus jeopardizing the capital. Drumwright later wrote that "the failure of the 2nd Division to fight" was the main reason for the quick loss of Seoul;<sup>46</sup> the collapse of 7th/2d Division defenses may also be an aspect of the "fifth column" activities that Americans refer to darkly, but with no details. Or, it may have been a function of ROK strategy.

Two divisions could not march down this strategic corridor without extensive preparations for attack. Unlike the fighting at Ongjin, Kaesŏng, and Ch'unch'on, this is excellent evidence of North Korean premeditation for an assault. It still is not evidence that the North started the fighting on June 25 at 4 A.M.; it is standard procedure when a commander is either expecting battle or exercising large numbers of troops in simulated battle to have a couple of divisions in top condition, ready for battle at a moment's notice. Remember that KMAC intelligence officers were confident that they would have twenty-four hours notice of an impending North Korean attack, which they thought would be enough time to alert and ready the necessary defenses. It is likely that at least two or three KPA divisions were kept in this kind of readiness from May 1949 onward. It would appear that the march down the Ŭijŏngbu corridor was caused more by southern collapse or retreat than northern preparedness; perhaps the North knew that the 2d Division would not resist them, or perhaps it did not want to resist them.

It is also known that the KPA was not fully mobilized on June 25, and that it faced numerically superior units. MacArthur's command reported through the UN at the end of July that at the Eastern and Western portions of the parallel the North attacked with reinforced border constabulary brigades, at Kaesŏng and Ch'unch'on with a division each (but as we have seen not at the start), and ran through the Ŭijŏngbu corridor with 8,000 to 10,000 troops and fifty tanks—a total force of about 38,000. Arrayed against them were five ROKA divisions located near Seoul or north of it, at least 50,000 troops.<sup>47</sup>

The evidence on the unfolding of the war from West to East in the early morning hours of June 25 thus does not support Mosaic One, the judgment that the North Koreans suddenly opened a general invasion all along the parallel against a sleepy, unprepared South. Joseph Darrigo was the only American military man at the parallel when fighting began; he awoke to the sounds of someone's artillery. All the other information on the early fighting came from ROK Army sources which, as the evi-

dence from the summer of 1949 demonstrated, absolutely cannot be credited. But even on that evidence, the fighting rippled from West to East over several hours, and the 6th Division, at least, had a day or so of advance warning. The North was not particularly successful at Munsan or Ch'unch'ŏn or the East coast; it crashed through at Kaesŏng and Ŭijŏngbu when southern units put up suspiciously token resistance, or did not choose to fight.

The numbers of troops committed by the North also bear on a larger question of military strategy. In a closely-argued book, John Mearsheimer has shown that for the success of a blitzkrieg strategy the attacker must assume a three-to-one force advantage to effect the "strategic penetration" that is the essence of the method.<sup>48</sup> The course of the fighting after June 25 does resemble a classic blitzkrieg; but if so, it was carried forth against an enemy that was equal in size if we take static order of battle data, larger in size on the evidence we have just adduced.

#### SUNDAY IN SOUTH AND NORTH

In Seoul Drumwright got news of the invasion Sunday at 8:15 A.M., Muccio at 9:30; both got active sending cables back to Washington, with descriptions of the fighting based mostly on ROK Army accounts. Just before noon Muccio met Rhee and found him unperturbed enough to say, "perhaps the present crisis presented the best opportunity for settling the Korean problem once and for all"; he also likened the attack to "a second Sarajevo," an analogy that was rather better than Truman's to Munich. But it was also, of course, an analogy to the rapid engagement of already mobilized, prepositioned forces of war, a small incident touching off general conflagration with a clanking automaticity.<sup>49</sup>

Drumwright reported that KMAC got going quickly on Sunday morning, but that it "deeply missed the steady guiding hand" of Generals Roberts and Wright. Harold Noble, whose account of the early days of the fighting is assumed to be definitive, was still in Tokyo as late as June 26, having gone there on June 23, for reasons he does not make clear. Muccio also met with UNCOK at 3:00 P.M., a meeting requested by its chairman, Liu Yu-wan, the Nationalist diplomat.<sup>50</sup>

On the morning of June 25 Harold Lady, Korea Lobby stalwart and Rhee confidant, suddenly flew to Tokyo. Arthur Bunce, it will be remembered, thought that Lady had more influence on Rhee than anyone in his cabinet. He had been involved in particularly sensitive negotiations on trade between Japan and South Korea in the spring of 1950, going back and forth to Tokyo, personally negotiating an \$80 million agreement. On the morning when the war broke out, John Allison later related, "Mr. Lady made private arrangements and flew to Japan." There

is no record of why he did this, or who he met in Japan. But when he subsequently tried to return to Korea, Muccio declared him persona non grata and blocked his entry; eventually SCAP also refused to allow him to stay in Japan and he returned to the United States. A note scribbled on documents in the Lady case reads, "I'm sorry Muccio destroyed the evidence." Goodfellow later said to Rhee, "I have heard many queer stories about [Lady's] conduct at the time of the invasion. I would like to know the truth." There is no record of Rhee's reply.<sup>51</sup>

John Gunther was in Tokyo on the morning of June 25, talking to an Occupation officer who was suddenly called to the phone: "He came back and whispered, 'A big story has just broken. The South Koreans have attacked North Korea!'" Gunther later dismissed this inapposite tidbit, "so wildly inaccurate" about a North Korean attack that "achieved complete tactical and even strategic surprise. It was more disgraceful than Pearl Harbor."<sup>52</sup>

In P'yŏngyang, Koreans were being told that the South started the fighting, with few details but with some interesting language. On June 26 the military newspaper *Chosŏn inmin-gun* (Korean People's Army)<sup>53</sup> had two big announcements on its front page, from the Cabinet and the Interior Ministry. The Cabinet's brief statement said the South made a "surprise attack" (*purŭi chin'gong*) into territory north of the parallel, in the "early dawn" (*irŭn saebyŏk*) of June 25. (In the past, the KPA had used *irŭn saebyŏk* to mean as early as 1:00 A.M.) It said the Cabinet held a discussion of these "tense emergencies" on June 25.

The Interior Ministry used the same language, but said the surprise attacks "ranged along the thirty-eighth-parallel battle area," listing attacks "from the West [i.e., Ongjin] toward Haeju," and in the areas of Kŭmch'ŏn and Ch'ŏrwŏn. The southerners had advanced one to two kilometers. The northern authorities had ordered the Border Constabulary to "repulse" the invaders, thus opening a "fierce defense battle." The invaders were said to have been thrown back from the Angyang area.

The Interior Ministry then warned the South that if it did not stop "its adventuresome war activities," the North would take "decisive counter-measures to control the enemy." A later Interior Ministry report in the same issue said KPA units had been rushed to the aid of the Constabulary, and had "gone over to a counterattack," repulsing the enemy and pushing into the South "five to ten kilometers . . . in many areas."

The issue also reported a meeting of military brass at 10:00 P.M. on June 25, to discuss an appeal from Kim Il (not Kim Il Sung) to the effect that Rhee had opposed every effort at peaceful unification, and now had opened an attack. It said little else. Another article on the inside pages urged propagandists to take the message of unification to everyone, say-

ing that Rhee's attack sought to destroy the growing success of the drive for peaceful unification. None of these appeals said anything about the Soviet Union, Stalin, socialism, or communism. One called for letting victory ring in the streets of Seoul by the fifth anniversary of liberation, perhaps suggesting that the North expected a much tougher battle than it got.

The lead editorial in this issue recited a litany of Rhee's abuses, most of them in opposition to unification, all the way back to the trusteeship imbroglio. It paid particular attention to his opposition to the June 19 proclamation, going against "the unanimous desire of the Korean people" to reunite the divided halves. It accused Rhee, under the direction of the American imperialists, of "going so far as to collude with the atrocious enemy of the Korean people, Japanese imperialism." It said the South began shelling the North on June 23, killing one and wounding twenty on the northern side. Thus, "we cannot bear the criminal activity of the country-selling traitors anymore," the day of reckoning is at hand, "the time for unifying the Homeland has come!" All Koreans should rise up for independence and unification, showing their love of the homeland, the people, and "the respected and beloved Great Leader (*surŏng*) Kim Il Sung." "Toward the battle quickly to liberate the south Korean people!"

Apart from the strong emphasis on the unification issue, this editorial (and the other articles) are noteworthy for saying nothing about: (1) the southern guerrillas, (2) the suppression of the communist underground in the south, (3) Dulles's visit to the parallel. It is excellent evidence against two interpretations, first that Pak Hŏn-yŏng stimulated the attack, and second that the North seriously believed that Dulles was in Korea to provoke war (as they have said ever since). Otherwise, the themes were very similar to editorials on June 21 after Rhee's rejection of the June 19 statement; it does seem to have been an editorial written in haste for June 26, not one scripted in advance. Most of the other articles in the issue were clearly standard ones written before June 25; one lambasted yet again Acheson's March 16 "total diplomacy" speech, terming it another name for "atomic blackmail."

On June 26 Kim Il Sung spoke to the Korean people, and now accused the South of making "a general attack" (*chŏnmyŏnjŏk chin'gong*) across the parallel. Rhee had long sought to "provoke" a fratricidal civil war, he said, having "incessantly provoked clashes" at the front line; in preparing a "northern expedition" he had "even gone so far as to collude with our sworn enemy, Japanese militarism." The KPA had now gone over to the counteroffensive, he said, advancing ten to fifteen kilometers into the South, liberating Ongjin, Kaesŏng, and Yŏnan.

Kim called on all the Korean people to rise up, if they did not want

again to be a dependency of imperialism; guerrillas must widen the movement, workers must strike, peasants must push the land reform, people must restore the people's committees. His statement gave no details on the alleged southern attack. Internal materials were little better in specifying the exact nature of Rhee's provocation.<sup>54</sup> Mosaic Three is thus barely worth talking about: there is no evidence of a general southern invasion all along the parallel, even in northern materials put out at the time.

"DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF  
NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION"

Almost a year after the outbreak of the war, the United States released captured North Korean documents that were said to prove that the North carefully planned and prepared an "unprovoked attack" timed for June 25. Since then most scholarly and official accounts have accepted the validity of these documents, which validate Mosaic One. A secret JCS history said they had been "authenticated as official attack orders," and Appleman also assumed their validity. The North claimed from the beginning that they were forgeries.<sup>55</sup>

The documents in question are "Reconnaissance Order No. 1," said to have been issued in Russian to the Chief of Staff of the KPA Fourth Division on June 18, and "Operations Order No. 1," June 22 in Korean from the commander of the division, Yi Kwōn-mu. The first document was found in Seoul on October 4, 1950, the second in July, presumably on the battlefield.

Like so much else about the Korean War, this aperture on "whodunit" only dims as it is magnified. For reasons that are not revealed in archival materials, and that do not immediately pop to mind, the decision to declassify the documents (in translated English versions) was made at a high level just as MacArthur was being sacked in April 1951, over the objections of military security people who "have been against the release of this information."<sup>56</sup> We might speculate that the Truman administration wished to hang MacArthur for just one crime, insubordination, and not for others—such as the suspicion by I. F. Stone, then being circulated, that MacArthur had something to do with the start of the war.

The originals have never been found. I was told by two archivists that various agencies of the American government had sought them for many years, to no avail. When the North Koreans again claimed that they were forgeries in 1965, American authorities at P'anmunjōm urgently contacted the chief of Military History, who could not turn them up. Therefore he turned to General Willoughby in search of the originals (both

documents were vetted through Willoughby's Allied Translator and Interpreter Service):

Extensive search in Depat of Army [sic] records collection and in appropriate retired record depositories has failed to locate these orders. English translations are available but the Military Armistice Commission desires the untranslated versions of these orders. Research revealed that in September 1950, Operation Order No. 1 was in the custody of the ATIS, G-2, GHQ, Far East Command. This is the last known record of location.

Willoughby replied, "the handling of enemy documents was almost routine" (whatever that might mean), and referred the inquiry to two Americans who were Japanese linguists.<sup>57</sup>

The two most important documents of the Korean War, declassified only on high level approval, are missing. The communists claim they are forgeries. Arch anticommunist Willoughby commanded the organization that processed the documents. An urgent request is made to him. Yet all he says is that they were handled routinely (almost), and directs the inquiry on materials in Russian and Korean to low-level employees who read Japanese (where it foundered).

"Reconnaissance Order No. 1"<sup>58</sup> originated with the intelligence staff of the KPA on June 18, and was issued to various military units—although when it was received is not clear. Different instructions went to different units. One to the 3d Border Brigade (the border constabulary, separate from the KPA) stationed near Haeju stated, "A strengthened [ROKA] 17th Regiment is in a defensive position on the Ongjin Peninsula, and in the direction of Enan [Yōnan] one battalion of the 12th Regiment . . . is also on the defensive. The forward edge of the defense line is along the slopes of the heights at the thirty-eighth parallel." "During preparation for the attack and in time of artillery preparation," the document continued, the 3d Border Brigade should "define more accurately" various things—including surveilling the nearby sea to see if a fleet comes to support or evacuate the enemy.

Accompanying this document was "an intelligence plan of the North Korean army for an attack operation" at an unspecified date, issued in Russian on June 20. Although the North Koreans claimed it had to be a forgery because the Americans translated it as "North Korean army," in fact the Russian version says Korean People's Army (*Koreiskaia narodnaia armia*). This long, complicated document cited as "objectives" (among others), to uncover what the enemy's "counteraction" would be against "our attack on the South," to "determine precise data on the defense system of the enemy," and the like, with the "period of execution" designated as "16 to 25 June 1950." Another section of the document speaks

of a quick march on the South, seizure of Seoul within three days, and some general statements (not plans) about "mopping up operations" in the rest of the peninsula, which the document implied would take about a week after Seoul fell. Although much of the material seems plausible, especially the relative detail on the seizure of Seoul and the absence of detail on what comes next, some of the place names are given in Japanese rendering (but then Americans also used Japanese maps and renderings of place names), and the plan to seize Seoul in three days seems a bit pat (in fact the KPA occupied the capital unexpectedly quickly).

No original of this document is available. A photostat of the Russian-language text shows no departmental markings, signatures, or personal seals; everything is written in the same script. Thus it must be a transcription from the original; in any case it is unverifiable on its face. It is strange that the language is Russian. Few Korean officers could speak or read Russian (most of the generals had served in China and spoke Chinese), and in the multitude of captured Korean army documents I have seen, all were in Korean. (There is far more English interspersed with Korean in ROK documents than there is Russian in North Korean documents, and many southern documents were wholly in English.)

This document becomes less compelling when one knows what the South Koreans have done with it. Both South and North Korean official historiography on the war is composed of half-truths, critical omissions, rank embellishment, and outright lies. The reigning conception in both halves of Korea is to maintain the proper line, not to honor historical accuracy and truth. Anyone who deviates from the line is suspect; saying the other side did not start the war gains a jail sentence. The South is simply more sophisticated in pursuing this conception than the North, so they take in more people—including some American scholars.

If one observes what the South does over time, it first asserts the validity of "Reconnaissance Order No. 1" without question, since this fits its interests, and then goes on to weave one tale after another. A good example is an article in the Seoul press in 1979 on a defector from the North, Lt. Col. Chu Yong-bok. Only a handful of defectors of his middling rank or higher ever came out of the DPRK; nonetheless Chu just happened to be at the right place at the right time: he "personally translated a top secret 'Invasion Operational Order' from Russian into Korean." The article goes on to quote his account of the ten days before the war, weaving together existing documentation with gross falsehood. Some of this just happens to show up in captured materials declassified in Washington two years earlier, which Chu could hardly have seen since he was in Brazil. His account makes the claim that on June 23 "the entire armed forces of north Korea received a war directive from Kim Il-sung, instructing, 'Every member of the People's Army shall complete prepa-

ration for combat by today.' " Not only is such an order implausible on its face, but no official American source has ever made such a claim and no POW interviews say that such an order was given.<sup>59</sup>

The mysterious high-level defector Lim Ŭn also claims uncannily to have been critically placed, witnessing KPA shells flying during its attack in the early morning of June 25. A high official in North Korea, Hyŏn Chun-gŭk, tried to convince me in an interview that he had personally witnessed South Korean forces attacking on June 25.<sup>60</sup>

Yi Kwŏn-mu's operations order was said to have been captured in Taejŏn on July 16, 1950. An English translation and a photostat of the Korean version are available.<sup>61</sup> It was issued by the Operations Department of the 4th Infantry Division, at Okke-ri; it carries the classification "extremely secret" (*kŭngp'i*), a common designation in North Korean captured materials of much lesser presumed sensitivity. Although it is dated June 22, it was only received at 0500 hours on June 24. The "smoking gun" passage reads, "The 1st Infantry Regiment of the enemy's 7th Infantry Division is standing on the defensive against our attack"; attack is *konggyŏk*, which could easily mean the kind of assault that had been going on along the thirty-eighth parallel for more than a year. There is nothing to suggest, as Appleman does, that Yi Kwŏn-mu issued an order for an "attack down the Uijongbu corridor," to be joined by the first and third KPA divisions.

Was it an invasion disguised as a minor attack or as summer maneuvers, even from the soldiers themselves and in operational orders to officers? It also stretches credulity to assume that a carefully planned full-scale invasion would result from a document received less than twenty-four hours before the invasion was to begin. Appleman admits that 4th Division officers "told their men that they were on maneuvers,"<sup>62</sup> and furthermore convinced them of it. (POWs almost always believed that the ROK started the war.)

The Korean version of the order is in faint pencil and Yi's name is printed in the same style as the rest of the document. There is no signature or personal seal. Thus it appears to be a Korean transcription from an unavailable original, and as such is unverifiable. The verdict on this document, too, must be: not proved.

The most damning materials vetted by Willoughby's ATIS are not the two reconnaissance orders cited above. I have not seen the Korean originals of the ATIS translations, but the context and wording suggest more plausibility than the two reconnaissance orders. Some loose handwritten sheets in Korean, captured October 14, 1950, list orders and directives from the KPA 2d Division.<sup>63</sup> A combat order in this collection with no date, but obviously no later than June 22, signed by Hyŏn P'a, chief of staff, said the southern border town of Ch'unch'ŏn should be secured

within one day. "Combat preparations in the area of concentration will be completed by 1800 hours," June 22, 1950. "The division will commence its march in accordance with the special order." Artillery firing preparations were to be completed by 2400 hours, June 22. Another order, dated June 21 and signed again by Hyŏn P'a, says the 2d Division "will penetrate the Myŏng'gyu-dong defense line, then will occupy Ch'unch'ŏn"; reconnaissance units were to establish observation posts from June 21 onward. This is convincing, except that according to American accounts it would appear that main force KPA units, with tanks, were not committed against Ch'unch'ŏn until the evening of June 26, and this is the one place acknowledged to have had advance warning, as we have seen.

Many POW accounts show that KPA units moved southward toward the parallel from June 20 to 24 (although they do not say that the North attacked first). For example, Yi Mun-uk, with an engineer battalion of the KPA 5th Division, said he left Nanam for Yangyang on June 20, and left Yangyang marching south on June 24; Hŏ Yŏng-guk of the same unit independently gave corroborating information.<sup>64</sup>

A dead soldier's diary recorded the following inconclusive but suggestive sequence: "25 June: arrived at thirty-eighth parallel at about 0100 hours. . . . At about 0515 hours simultaneously with the firing of a flare our army opened artillery fire. . . . At 1400 hours I saw fighting going on south of the thirty-eighth parallel."<sup>65</sup> A top secret reconnaissance order of June 22 called upon observation teams to determine the strength, positions, and firepower of ROKA units across the thirty-eighth parallel.<sup>66</sup> But presumably the same would have been asked of units in May 1949, during the Ongjin Peninsula fighting.

A June 29 "battle report" from three companies in the KPA 3d Battalion said the companies received an order to commence marching at 0330 on June 24: "Reaching the place of departure, [the unit] waited for the order to attack. Began attack at 0503 hours. When crossing *mansei* bridge, met enemy's mines and artillery fire." Some loose handwritten battle accounts signed by a KPA officer named Ok Chae-min included the following, in ATIS's translation:

On order of the regimental commander of 2nd Battalion started from the concentration point at 0800 hours on the 23rd [of June], and occupied the starting line till 0330 hours on the 24th. The battalion occupied Yongpyong River region in front of Chomili hill . . . and waited for the signal for attack. Artillery firing began at 0440 hours on the 24th. Our troops . . . moved in the direction of Manseri. Then at the signal the infantry occupied the attacking line and all launched a charge.<sup>67</sup>

These are both excellent "smoking gun" documents, with one problem: the guns were smoking a day before the Korean War started (0330, June 24) and must describe some minor border engagements, if they are authentic.

A captured document from the 121st unit of the KPA, "Instruction for Advance in Defensive Action," says this:

The atrocious traitor Rhee Syngman's puppet government . . . to carry out internecine [warfare] forced the concentration of the so-called "National Defense Army" and "Police" along the thirty-eighth parallel with the intention of invading the northern half, and they continued to attack that area with fire-power . . . [thus we] decided to beat [them] down by military force.

This proves that the North Koreans cynically termed their June aggression an "advance in defensive action," except for one problem: the document is dated January 10, 1950, and refers in the past tense to 1949.<sup>68</sup>

Another document has Ch'oe A-rim, commander of an artillery unit in the 825th KPA detachment, telling his superiors on June 12, 1950 that his unit was not combat-ready; he said they would need at least twenty days to repair weapons, find new sights for mortars, and the like.<sup>69</sup>

#### OTHER DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The captured North Korean materials that I have used throughout this book include many military orders issued just before the war began. Because they were used by and vetted through American intelligence agencies, the North Koreans will never accept their validity. It is also true that South Korean intelligence had access to this collection just after it was released, if not before, and that archivists later barred unnamed South Korean individuals or agencies from using the collection because of the removal or disappearance of materials.<sup>70</sup> Some apparently crucial documents listed on the long manifest to the collection are missing, therefore; but the possibility also exists of additions to the collection.

For these reasons the scholar must use the collection with care. But short of spending my lifetime trying to validate every item, I can say that most of the materials are unquestionably authentic. They exist in original form in hundreds of archival boxes, and show no traces of any obvious cases of alteration or of much use. Nor do they have the crucial drawbacks of the aforementioned documents: they are not translated, nor are they photostated; one can finger the dusty originals.

It would appear that the highest-level documentation has been held back from declassification, because a State Department study cited central party records, which are not in the collection, in coming to a conclu-

sion of critical importance: "Top secret work plans of the Standing Committee of the Labor Party headquarters dated January–June 1950 make absolutely no reference to the forthcoming invasion, although covering in some detail all other aspects of government policy." Furthermore, several highly placed North Korean officers, including the chiefs of staff of two KPA divisions, "stated that they had only the barest presentiment of the coming of hostilities, and that they were given no concrete indication of their onset until approximately one week before the invasion took place." (Note that this is only presentiment of "hostilities," not of a KPA invasion.) Nor did this official study say a word about captured attack orders, suggesting instead that "it is possible but not proven by current evidence that the Chinese were more massively involved in the preparations for war" than were the Russians.<sup>71</sup>

In general the materials make it obvious that the North Koreans were preparing for conflict in the summer of 1950, and that something important was to occur around June 25—in the best case, major military maneuvers using live ammunition in the immediate area of the thirty-eighth parallel, at worst an invasion. How extended the conflict would be, and who would initiate it, remain open questions. The documentation is not inconsistent with the interpretation that the KPA was kept in a high state of mobilization and readiness awaiting a first provocation by the South, on the experience of the border fighting in the summer of 1949. The collection offers little support to the official American position that the North Koreans stealthily prepared a full-scale and unprovoked invasion. There is no evidence that points to such an interpretation before June 18 or 19, one week before the war. And even on the weekend of June 25, some units were unmobilized and going through routine training.

Sometimes the most suggestive information is the most mundane: for example, a bunch of notebooks compiled by mechanics and technicians as they serviced the fighter planes of the KPA 3d Squadron in the period from April to June 1950. The entries for April show various inspections and servicing, whereas those of June 19, 20, and 22 show the exclusive entry, "airplane preparation" (*pihaengi chunbi*).<sup>72</sup> A similar set of materials, captured and translated by Willoughby's outfit, contains the following: "By June 20 each [air] group will have 10 fighter planes, completely maintained and satisfactorily prepared for flights at any time. All planes . . . will be fully armed between 12 and 20 June." This is for the purpose of making "the execution of the summer combat training a success," with 80 percent of the relevant personnel to be trained by the end of June. The same document has routine training plans through the end of June, and a summer maneuver schedule through September.<sup>73</sup>

If this seems damning (and the talk of summer training just a cover), air force people will not necessarily find it so. Planes are fully armed and

prepared as if for battle in combat games. I have been told by former American pilots that in pursuance of realistic combat training, occasionally they were ordered on bombing runs against North Korea as if it were the real thing, with only a radio at the last minute countermanding the first order and returning them to base.

Large numbers of interview transcripts with North Korean POWs that are now available defy easy summary, but this much can be said: many of them document southward movement toward the parallel from the middle of June to June 22 or 23; most of the POWs believed this was for summer battle maneuvers and war games, although some suspected a war was about to begin; some of the POWs crossed the parallel on June 25 and some did not; the vast majority of the POWs captured in the summer of 1950 thought the South had started the war. That is, even their own experience of moving quickly toward the parallel, being issued live ammunition, being told to prepare as if real battle were in the offing, did not prove to them that the North started the war. A layman finds this hard to understand because laymen are not part of military units that are frequently exercised in the most realistic conditions possible, that is, when the troops are not themselves sure that the maneuvers are not for real.

The POW interviews also are internally contradictory, to the point of incessant negation of the negation. An example would be an unidentified member (no rank given) of the KPA 5th Division named Yi Yong-wŏn, who said he arrived in Yangyang just above the parallel on June 22, and who said that on that date his whole unit (which also is unidentified) "knew they were going to be at war with the South Koreans." Then here is Yi Wŏn-gu, also of the 5th Division, also unidentified as to rank or unit, who arrived in Yangyang and was given seventy rounds of ammunition and four grenades. His unit was told "they were going out on bivouac." At 4:00 A.M. on June 25, his unit "marched to the 38th Parallel and encountered South Korean troops."<sup>74</sup>

All too many similar examples could be cited; in any case the POW testimony, taken by South Koreans and Americans determined to pin aggression on the North, is less compelling than the subsequent judgment by State Department intelligence, discussed above, that most of the KPA general staff also seemed in the dark about the invasion war plan.

A highly classified document dated June 13, 1950, "Political and Cultural Work in Wartime"<sup>75</sup> seems at first to signal a coming assault, since it seeks to prepare troops for "the time of marching" (*haengggun*), with the basic task being "complete readiness"; officers should carefully keep military secrets, watch for spies, and the like. It gives instructions for "political thought" work and for smashing reactionary plots in the "occupied areas." But read as a whole, the document suggests merely that officers

and soldiers give all this "deep study," with no indication of the timing or nature of the impending conflict. So, it documents KPA planning for an assault on the South, which is no surprise, but it does not prove that they attacked first, or indeed had plans to in June.

Another document dated June 16 and titled "Combat Bulletin no. 1," classified "absolutely secret," shows extensive preparation of soldiers for battle training which will be carried out "under the nose of the thirty-eighth parallel." Keeping military secrets will be "of the utmost importance," and troops were forbidden to engage in making forecasts [*yech'uk kosa*] of what was likely to happen. But all this was for "bivouac training" and "strengthening our fighting power," that is, routine military training and maneuvers; one can imagine it happening frequently north of the DMZ today.<sup>76</sup>

Other military documents seem to provide conclusive proof that not all frontline KPA units were part of the invasion on June 25. Several documents on political training of KPA soldiers in early June refer to various regiments—inspections, political training, physical exercise—to be completed by June 30, to assure the success of "summer battle training" (which the context suggests will begin in early July).<sup>77</sup>

A collection of orders issued to the 855th detachment of the KPA in mid-June also embodies routine military training procedure. Only one item looks interesting from hindsight: a secret order of June 20, saying the training lectures scheduled for June 26–27 would not be held as originally planned. But another routine order received on June 24 asked for four drivers to be sent to another unit by June 28.<sup>78</sup>

Reports in May from General Willoughby's Korea Liaison Office<sup>79</sup> picked up information that residents had been evacuated from the parallel once again in 1950: but not in June, rather in late February, "in anticipation of the 'spring launching' of the South Korean Army into these districts." The North Koreans wanted an "empty zone" as a "first line of defense against South Korea."

The KLO circulated on May 15 an account of a mid-March, six-day meeting of KPA battalion commanders that surveyed the results of the 1949 border fighting. Claiming that the KPA had inflicted 25,000 casualties (killed and wounded) on the ROKA in 1949, the survey expected 1950 to be more of the same: "each unit commander must constantly study and prepare for an accidental war." Except, that is, for a reported address to the conference by Kim Il Sung, paraphrased as follows:

The [ROKA], which is supported by the Americans, has poor morale and is defending South Korea rather than intending to attack North Korea. Even [should the ROKA attack the North] . . . we shall easily repulse that puppet group.

In 1949, we defended North Korea only; however in 1950 we will begin the heroic struggle to merge the separated Korea and will achieve a glorious, complete independence.

A smoking gun, no? But then comes the last paragraph:

The only way to obtain a glorious victory is to cause disturbances on the 38th parallel line and have the South Korean Army devote all of its attention to that area while our guerrilla units attack the puppets from the rear. This is the only way to unify our separated country.

On May 25 the KLO G-2 commented that six regular KPA divisions had been garrisoned "roughly in a cross-country belt between the 38th and 39th parallel." But the G-2 thought an invasion would require at least a two-to-one advantage; he therefore thought the North Koreans were trying to build thirteen divisions, which meant waiting for all their China soldiers to return. An invasion was unlikely until the returned manpower was in hand.

Ultimately, this documentation illustrates just how hard it is to estimate the intentions of an army based on incomplete evidence, even four decades after the fact. Some scholars will find in the documents I have cited, or others, "smoking guns" beyond challenge. My reading is that there are some local documents indicating cap-guns going off; few documents are clearly different from what one would find along the parallel during the heavy engagements in 1949. Perspective is important here: scholars cannot get any central documents, to my knowledge, but internal analysts got no damaging evidence from them; and those that were released and claimed to be general orders cannot be trusted. It is quite amazing that this should be the case, given that the United States occupied the North; in that perspective, it is remarkable that the evidence is not better.

My good friend Frank Baldwin and many others have argued both empirically, and logically, to the point that "The coordinated movement of troops, preceded by artillery bombardment, could have been accomplished only after lengthy, careful planning. That such a movement of forces could have been an instantaneous [*sic*] response to a South Korean attack is patently implausible."<sup>80</sup> There is no question that lengthy, careful planning would be required—something that probably began in early 1949, just after Soviet troops left, in any case planning and training that any military commander would have done throughout the summer of 1949 or be relieved for dereliction, in the face of South Korean border assaults and threats to invade. Furthermore, much of the time since 1953 several divisions of the KPA have been poised in offensive formation with high military readiness just north of the DMZ, something the Pen-



tagon never tires of pointing out when military appropriations are debated in Congress. Presumably the South, also, would need to plan its movement of forces toward the parallel in the spring of 1950 and the artillery and mortar that it routinely fired preparatory to its attacks, and that it appears to have poured into the Ŭnp'a-san area from the evening of June 23. That KPA troops were prepositioned, that civilians were moved out, that tank units were gathered, that China-linked divisions were near the parallel is all true: but the same was true in the autumn of 1949.

The evidence is also compatible with an interpretation linking the summer of 1949 to June 1950, that the North waited until it had the majority of its crack soldiers back from China, and then positioned them to take advantage of the first major Southern provocation. Furthermore, we have that tantalizing Soviet radio intercept, giving more than a day's advance warning of an ROKA assault planned for the night of June 25, which would give the North the necessary time secretly to fuse its artillery, gas up its planes and tanks (only fifty tanks were committed by late Sunday, remember), and prepare to settle Rhee's hash once and for all.

Still, the objective reader will now be troubled by Mosaic One, the official American story, and think it quite likely, if not proved. Then let us look at Mosaic Two, which in my view cannot but suggest that either side *could* have started it, which is precisely the tip-off of the civil character of the war and really all that I am interested in saying; ultimately a structural argument is better than this mandatory nitty-gritty empirical slog, and I am far from interested in blaming this old and terrible calamity on one side or the other.

#### MOSAIC TWO

Let us assume, for purposes of argument, that Kim Paek-il or Paek In-yŏp, or both, did not merely counterattack across the parallel toward Haeju, but attacked in the night of June 24–25, say about 1:00 or 2:00 A.M., seeking to seize Haeju. What would have been the purpose of such an action, which seems suicidal in retrospect? What possible logic could have motivated the South in attacking? Were South Korean officers capable of this?

First, of course, we have the incontrovertible evidence that Kim Sŏk-wŏn and other commanders did launch attacks across the parallel in the summer and fall of 1949, reportedly seeking to occupy Haeju, and wanted to do more. A document captured by the North Koreans and authenticated by its author, Gregory Henderson, quoted Kim Paek-il in late August 1949. "Col. Kim laid some emphasis on the great sentiment existing in the Army for invasion of the North. . . . Col. Kim stated that

he felt 'that the troops needed about six months more training before being really prepared.'"<sup>81</sup> Several authors dismiss the possibility of a southern attack based on Rhee's demeanor in June 1950, but it is not critical to assume that Rhee was necessarily witting to the action; in the Korean context in May-June 1950, with the regime collapsing, such action could have been designed as the prelude to a putsch within the forces of order in the ROK by "nationalists," that is, aggressive officers who did not like American controls, and those like Yi Pŏm-sŏk aligned with Chiang Kai-shek, as a follow-on to the battle for the Rhee state beginning in April. Furthermore Rhee's executive was deeply penetrated by Americans and leaked like a sieve (even to the Apostolic Delegate via Francesca Rhee), and Koreans knew this better than anyone.

What would be the strategy behind an assault on Haeju? Perhaps it would have started what was hoped to be an engagement bigger than those in the summer of 1949, but not an all-out war; a city is seized, the North Koreans respond but in a containable way, and the top-level Americans then in Tokyo are presented with some fairly heavy fighting. Washington is confronted with yet more evidence of aggressive communist action in East Asia. Kim Paek-il, Paek In-yŏp, and Kim Sŏk-wŏn were young and headstrong, and full of confidence—however foolish that may seem in retrospect—after the suppression of the southern guerrillas; Kim Sŏk-wŏn may have proved inept as a commander thereafter, but this was the man whom the Americans sought to control from August through October 1949. And those Americans were absent in June 1950.

Or, perhaps southern intelligence knew that the North would respond by plunging into the South, trying to seize Seoul; perhaps the gathering tanks near the parallel suggested a blitzkrieg being readied for later in the summer, and a plunge across the parallel would trigger it early, followed by a rapid pullback for ROK forces—the preferred strategy for dealing with a blitzkrieg. In either case, the shrewder and more deniable the provocation the clearer the "aggression"; remote Ongjin was a perfect place to make the cut. The army can pull back quickly, suck the North deep into the South, and get the American commitment that the two Kims and Rhee knew was their only saving hope.

In this regard, furthermore, remember the visit of Capt. Ross Jung to Wellington Koo in June 1949, informing him that a secret understanding existed that American troops in Japan would join the battle if the North attacked and pushed into the South. Remember also John Burton's claim that in the weeks before the war the South was seeking to needle the North into attacking, and that a high-level cover-up then censored cables coming in from Korea. Remember Preston Goodfellow's rendering of his advice to Rhee about placing the onus on the North, and Wellington Koo's retrospective exclamation: "that is strategy!"

In the wider context, the Kim Sök-wön faction was linked to Yi Pöm-sök, who was in turn the leader of the pro-Chiang faction in Korea; this was the man whom Nationalist emissaries preferred to talk to instead of Rhee, and he and others like him showed a fawning devotion to the generalissimo. The latter knew that an American coup was in the works against him, and that a communist invasion was likely at any time. Henry Luce remarked to Wellington Koo in May that he had been inactive on the China issue, he had the lever but he was looking for the fulcrum: Chiang may have found the fulcrum on the Korean peninsula, the provocation of a war that saved his regime for two more decades, and bid fair to bring Nationalist troops back to the mainland. The Korean War was, in fact, "the fluke that saved Formosa";<sup>82</sup> perhaps it was no fluke.

We have seen that Rusk talked to Hu Shih on the evening of June 23, at a meeting arranged by China Lobbyist Frederick McKee; Rusk thought a coup against Chiang would happen that week, or weekend; "but then the Korean War intervened." T.V. Soong's brother was part of a conspiracy to dump soybeans in Chicago timed for events that were to transpire on the last weekend in June. Hollington Tong had met with Goodfellow in Taipei, was knowledgeable about the coup attempt against Chiang, and flew to Tokyo to meet with Johnson and others after Griffith told Koo that a war would put Johnson in the driver's seat of American policy. The KMT had a key diplomat leading UNCOK, with exact knowledge of the military observation schedule of Peach and Rankin. In one of his last cables from Seoul before the war, Muccio was trying to put his finger on precisely what the Chinese were doing with the Rhee regime. The mysterious Americans who visited Wellington Koo—Shepard, Looney, and Megson—linked to McKee and Willauer, wanted to "pull the trick" on the day that Johnson returned from Tokyo, Saturday morning, June 24. When it was high noon in Washington, it was the dead of night on the Ongjin Peninsula. The candidate for an American intelligence operative who was in touch with Rhee, Chiang, and MacArthur is Preston Goodfellow, who had sped to Korea in September 1949 when Army intelligence indicated a war might begin, and who had reentered the Army by mid-June. This is, at any rate, one mosaic of what *might* have happened; it has the virtue of giving us the lineage of how it *could* have happened—which no previous accounts have ever done.

Sir John Pratt, an Englishman with four decades of experience in the China consular service and the Far Eastern Office, wrote the following in 1951: "The Peking Government planned to liberate Formosa on July 15 and, in the middle of June, news reached the State Department that the Syngman Rhee government in South Korea was disintegrating. The politicians on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel were preparing a plan

to throw Syngman Rhee out of office and set up a unified government for all Korea."

Pratt said that on June 23 Acheson reacted to news from Tokyo that the Taiwan policy had been reversed by denying that this was so, which got back to Tokyo on June 24. (This would refer to Dulles's dispatch from Tokyo, signaling his agreement with MacArthur on defending Taiwan.) Thus the only way out, for Chiang, was for Rhee to attack the North, which ultimately made Acheson yield and defend Nationalist China.<sup>83</sup> Pratt was an unlikely vehicle to convince anyone, however. Most Englishmen found him eccentric; the brother of Boris Karloff, and exhibiting a similar visage, he was a bit spooky and forbidding.

Americans, even fairly knowledgeable ones, are prey to what might be called the fallacy of insufficient cynicism. Muckraking investigative journalists, now and then exceptions to this rule, lack the patience of the scholar, are completely dependent on their sources, and do not usually understand the minds of politicians in high places. Thus I. F. Stone hinted that Dulles might have been involved in a conspiracy with MacArthur and Chiang to provoke war in Korea, and a gaggle of critics descend on this ridiculous conspiracy theory. It is, indeed unlikely that Dulles was anything more than Acheon's messenger in June 1950. But he and Acheson were structurally reconstituting a political economy that was a deadly threat to Korean revolutionaries. And conspiracies do exist, even if Foster Dulles was an implausible participant (his countenance was almost as unlikely as Sir John Pratt's).

Anyone who has read this text closely to this point, and does not believe that Willoughby, Chiang, Wu T'ieh-cheng, Yi Pöm-sök, Rhee, Kim Sök-won, Tiger Kim, and their ilk were capable of a conspiracy to provoke a war, cannot be convinced by any evidence. Furthermore, the inadequate cynicism of Hartzian Americans leads to the curious consequence that well-established facts are swept from a memory that does not wish to believe them.

Fletcher Prouty, who for many years briefed the White House on intelligence operations, wrote that the clandestine operator "prepares the stage by launching a very minor and very secret, provocative attack of a kind that is bound to bring reprisal." Often third parties or mercenaries are chosen for this task; the first strike "takes place in deep secrecy . . . no one knows this hidden key fact." This, he says, "is the fundamental game of the secret team." The covert action, Prouty says, is "enmeshed with and enhanced by concealed drives of the special interest groups." (We might add that the early 1950s were more vulnerable to "special interests" than any other period, with military intelligence, the CIA, Tokyo G-2, Chiang Kai-shek, and many others scrapping for turf within the American state.)

Innocent and patriotic men come upon the scene "after the first provocations have been made," according to Prouty; the CIA will brief the National Security Council (NSC) (without telling them about the first deep cut, or perhaps they don't know about it either); the next step is to declare that the enemy's response constitutes "aggression," and then bring the nation in behind the administration's actions. Prouty says this was first tried, amateurishly, in Greece in the late 1940s, and then again in Vietnam—perhaps he refers to the Tonkin Gulf incident. He noted Allen Dulles's definition of intelligence as "the catalytic element that triggers response."<sup>84</sup>

The North Koreans, with their combination of unworldly solipsism and short fuses, are perfect targets for this sort of provocation. Former intelligence officers have remarked that when they have nothing better to do, they try to dupe and pin something on North Korean diplomats.

Senatorial and other inquiries into the activities of American intelligence agencies have demonstrated that in several cases, agents provocateurs sought to get the other side (especially Castro in Cuba) to commit some action which would then be used to justify an assault or invasion. Two knowledgeable authors write that the CIA intended "to mount a fake attack on Guantanamo that would make Castro look like an aggressor and justify direct American intervention"; within the CIA "the theme was always the same: Get something started to overtly call in the military and follow up with complete seizure and installation of a favorable government." The president was not to be witting, of course, but the principals also mulled over "how much [Allen] Dulles [Director of the CIA] was to be cut in on the full extent of the provocation incident."<sup>85</sup>

Similar activity marked the 1980s rollback effort along the borders of Nicaragua; with the Contra war, the mining of Nicaraguan harbors and the like. One of the people involved in organizing the Contras was Gen. Richard Stilwell, who in 1950 was the CIA chief for East Asia, and a close associate of Whiting Willauer and Hans Tofte. When a Thames Television team approached him about an interview in 1986, he also recommended that they interview James Hausman and Paek Sŏn-yŏp—which they did.<sup>86</sup>

All this is of more than passing interest in a tense situation in which Rhee and Chiang were deeply threatened from within and without, and wanted containment first and rollback later, whereas Acheson, committed in his own mind to defending both territories, wanted to remove Chiang, and wanted the communists to strike first along the containment periphery. In the summer of 1950, Henry Wallace wrote an angry letter to Dean Acheson, citing evidence that Rhee might have started the war. Acheson responded in vehement disagreement, but with one of the most interesting Freudian slips in American history. "No serious, honest

scholar can ever have any question about it. North Korean Communist forces attacked the Republic of Korea without warning, with provocation [*sic*] and without justification."<sup>87</sup>

Ultimately, however, the new evidence still does not prove that South Korean elements attacked first in the early morning hours of June 25, 1950. If they did, two additional points must be made: first, this does not gainsay clear evidence of North Korean preparation to take advantage of such a provocation with an invasion of the South; it merely makes the North Korean action more justifiable in the Korean context. Second, if indeed there were attacks across the parallel by the South, given that two companies of ROKA soldiers deserted from the parallel a year earlier, one could not exclude the possibility that the provocation might have been engineered by fifth-column elements, thus to justify a North Korean invasion.

Now I can hear the chorus: too clever by half, you're around the bend now. So, listen to Dulles at an NSC meeting after the war ended, when he worried that the North might start it up again. "He thought it quite possible that the Communists would launch their attack by infiltrating ROK units and staging an attack on the Communist lines in order to make it appear as though hostilities had been started on ROK initiative."<sup>88</sup> One wishes not to be less incredulous than Foster Dulles, who peered across the parallel into the North on June 19, and who spent the rest of his life with unsettling whispers from that sudden Sunday, as if Banquo's ghost were shaking his gory locks. At several high-level meetings Dulles worried aloud that the United States would not know how a new war might start in Korea, and that Rhee might well start it. At the 168th meeting of the NSC in October 1953, Dulles said "all our efforts" must be to forestall a resumption of war by Rhee; in 1957 at the 332nd meeting he still worried that Rhee might "start a war"; two weeks later, "If war were to start in Korea . . . it was going to be very hard indeed to determine which side had begun the war." This time President Eisenhower had something to say in response: in such a circumstance the United States would do "what the French had said to the Russians at the outbreak of war in 1914, that is: 'France will do whatever is in its own best interests.'"<sup>89</sup> Ike had an impeccably Achesonian point.

#### THE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE: A "CURIOUS SET OF MOSAICS"

If we assume that there was no southern provocation on the night of June 24–25, just the start of the northern invasion, another question then arises. Did anyone see it coming? If so, why did they not attempt to stop it, blow the whistle against this atrocious act of aggression? As we have

seen, American intelligence was split into several different tendencies, each with its own interests, each at odds with other agencies. In Tokyo, Willoughby claimed to have predicted the attack, while MacArthur told everyone within earshot how much it surprised him. In Washington Truman was outraged that no one had warned him, and everyone expressed amazement about the attack (one that several major newspapers, not to mention the ROK defense minister, had warned against in May)—except, it appeared at first, the CIA, which was said to have predicted an imminent invasion on June 19. South Korean intelligence is another matter; to my knowledge there is no reliable information on what they knew and when they knew it.

Louis Johnson had arrived back in the United States on the morning of June 24, uncharacteristically keeping his own counsel for the next few days; the only evidence I have found of his initial reaction to the news was to tell Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* that “no one had expected the Korean thing . . . our intelligence showed for weeks on weeks every Sunday morning North Koreans made forays southward across the parallel, raised a little ruckus and then withdrew back on their side of the line.” Instead, in Tokyo Johnson had learned of MacArthur’s “grave fears of a Communist attack on Formosa,” his intelligence showing “150,000 Chinese commies” massed across from the island.<sup>90</sup>

When some senators later asked Johnson what Tokyo’s intelligence looked like just before the war, he responded that “nothing was said about any immediacy of trouble in Korea,” and repeated the story that the KPA came across the line every Sunday morning. In remarks deleted at the time and released in 1975, Johnson said that Willoughby had told them the Kremlin’s next move would be in Iran, and had said nothing about trouble in Korea.<sup>91</sup>

This is a strange thing. No one expected anything to happen in Iran in mid-1950, and Willoughby never expressed the slightest interest in that country, nor had he any intelligence apparatus there. Furthermore, in a letter to Willoughby of June 29, 1950, Johnson lead off with the line that “I’m reminded now of your most accurate summation of the Korean intelligence . . .” (the ellipsis is in the French style, suggesting there is more to be said). His sidekick Paul Griffith left Wellington Koo with the impression, on June 28, “that the North Korean attack had not been unexpected.”<sup>92</sup> Little more can be said here about this contradiction, however, given that Johnson’s papers are so picked clean of usable information as to make one wonder if this was the same man who was once secretary of defense. Omar Bradley wrote that he, Acheson and Truman all wondered if Johnson might not be insane.<sup>93</sup> It seems that everyone who does not quite fit the scenario for what is supposed to have hap-

pened on June 25 is insane, senile, a communist, or Boris Karloff’s brother.

What about Willoughby, another “lunatic” to liberals? Johnson’s June 29 letter does not turn up in his papers. But he did say for the rest of his life that he had warned Washington about a North Korean attack in June. In a *mea non culpa* scripted in 1951, Willoughby wrote, “All aspects of the preparations for military operations under way behind the ‘little iron curtain’ in North Korea were under scrutiny by intelligence agencies under G-2 . . . few, if any, of the activities of the North Korean Government escaped the attention of intelligence gathering and reporting agencies.”<sup>94</sup>

On March 10, 1950, Willoughby sent to Washington a weekly report warning that the North would invade the South in June 1950. On May 25, his G-2 reported that six regular KPA divisions were garrisoned between the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth parallels. (Border Constabulary elements, however, were reported to be “of low strength on a peace footing.”)<sup>95</sup>

In other accounts, including his later book on MacArthur, Willoughby continued the line that he had predicted the attack. It is clear, however, that he did not (at least not for Washington’s consumption). The March 10 report, as Acheson later pointed out, had within it a notation that G-2 did not credit the invasion report. On March 25, Tokyo G-2 said it did not expect an attack in the summer of 1950.<sup>96</sup> The May 25 report had within it the judgment that successful offensive operations require a two-to-one advantage, and since by his estimate six KPA divisions faced five ROK divisions, they were not likely to attack. Willoughby made hash of the important distinction between capabilities and intentions, saying the North had the capability for an attack, then that it did not, then that intentionality and the decision on timing would come from the Kremlin, and Kremlin intentions were for Washington to figure out. No one reading his reports, as they are now available, would have predicted an attack on June 25, 1950.

Willoughby’s vehemence on this issue is probably related to the experience of Pearl Harbor, when he and MacArthur left lots of planes huddled together on airfields in the Philippines, sitting ducks for Japanese aircraft to devastate them many hours after the attack at Pearl. Although Admiral Kimmel became the scapegoat for the “intelligence failure” at Pearl Harbor, many thought MacArthur’s lapse was worse.<sup>97</sup> In this light it is interesting that MacArthur should have been so quick to express his “complete surprise” at the Korean attack, the second time in a decade he was caught with his pants down.

Willoughby’s various accounts do, however, suggest something that never seemed to faze him: that *Tokyo and Seoul* expected an attack for

weeks before it occurred, but chose to do nothing to head it off. Willoughby wrote, as for the "alleged 'surprise'" on June 25, "the entire South Korean Army had been alerted for weeks and was physically in position along the thirty-eighth parallel." Whereas the CIA had but four operatives in North Korea, he had sixteen, who presumably fed him information about the coming attack. He thought he was pilloried for this alleged "intelligence failure" only because he lacked political backing in Washington.<sup>98</sup> This bothered him much more than the contradictions involved in both the ROKA and the American forces in Japan being on alert for three weeks, his allegedly telling Johnson and Bradley that everything was fine in Korea, then claiming in retrospect that he saw it all coming.

G-2 intelligence summaries for May and June show evidence of the southward movement toward the parallel of China returnees, thought to be distinct units from the regular KPA. In mid-May, G-2 reported that some civilians had been moved from the thirty-eighth parallel area, but it thought this might have been done in February 1950; later it concluded that it was done in April and May, yet it was thought to be for defensive, not offensive purposes. G-2 also thought it might be a type of corvée for agricultural work during the spring rice-transplanting season (which was probably closest to the truth). Six months before the war, MacArthur's G-2 recorded similar arrivals of reinforcements along the parallel, "potentially offensive" in nature; but their assumption was that the troops were built up "to forestall any attacks by the [South] Korean Army."<sup>99</sup> American observers put themselves in the shoes of the North Koreans, knowing about southern aggressiveness, and found the military buildup understandable; after all, as we have seen, the North was just reaching the force levels that the South had accomplished by August 1949.

Many G-2 reports have much more information on Korea than on China, making a mockery of MacArthur's claim that his intelligence had no interest in the peninsula. But there is no evidence in the existing G-2 materials to suggest even *concern* about an impending invasion, let alone a specific prediction. There is absolutely nothing new in the June issues, nothing that was not reported as far back as the fall of 1949. The only prediction in the files is a Chinese Nationalist report supposedly issued on June 21, saying that the North was going to attack the South, but giving no timing. The Nationalist estimate was not reported until June 29, so it is anyone's guess whether it was actually made on June 21.<sup>100</sup>

Much more interesting is the evidence that the United States made electronic and perhaps visual or photographic reconnaissance flights along the Korean coast. Although reports from this source are still classified, the flights had resumed on June 10, after an unexplained moratorium in the spring of 1950. They were described as "electronic recon-

naissance operations" and "aerial reconnaissance"; the aircraft were instructed to stay at least twenty nautical miles from the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea.<sup>101</sup> Although cloud cover just before the war would have inhibited such intelligence-gathering, it is implausible to imagine that the North Koreans could make hasty preparations in mid-June for an invasion by 50,000 troops without being detected by such methods.

It is known also that the United States had signals and electronic intelligence mechanisms on the ground in South Korea; one document mentions 352 personnel in Field Station 8609 AAU, "operational prior to the Korean War." The National Security Agency refuses to declassify signals intelligence from 1950, however, so there is no possibility of judging exactly what was known before June 25. But a well-informed former intelligence official has something interesting to say about signals intelligence. The North Korean communications deception plan, William Corson says, was "a conscious effort not to increase the volume of their radio traffic . . . [they] had disguised tactical orders and instructions in innocuous [*sic*] administrative messages. In essence, this produced a kind of 'radio silence.'" Well, in essence this produced not "radio silence," but *no evidence* of radio silence, just routine messages. Yet during the war it became clear that twenty-four to forty-eight hours of radio silence was the standard KPA procedure before an attack. This provides no evidence whatsoever about a North Korean invasion, only retrospective judgment on *why* no battle orders were picked up, why evidence of impending attack does not appear in the G-2 records that presumably filtered electronic intelligence upward.<sup>102</sup>

A close look at Tokyo's intelligence failure, in other words, turns up as many questions as it answers. What about MacArthur himself? William R. Mathews met MacArthur as Dulles left his office at 7:00 P.M. on June 25; MacArthur described the attack as "a complete surprise"; Roberts had just told him three days earlier that an attack was unlikely. He also called it "an act of international banditry; inexcusable, unprovoked aggression"; if we don't meet this one, he said, "there will be another and another."

MacArthur swore Mathews to secrecy and then said he had already dispatched two LSTs, "loaded with munitions." "I have done this on my own . . . I am ready to go to any length with my air power." He and Dulles, MacArthur said, "are in nearly complete agreement on everything." MacArthur also met Carl McCardle of the *Philadelphia Bulletin* on June 25, and told him, "Russians are Oriental, and we should deal with them as such . . . they are mongrels."

At 9 P.M. Mathews met Dulles, who said he had fired off a telegram urging the commitment of American ground forces to Korea, which had

been held up for two hours by officers wondering if Dulles "had the right to send a telegram . . . equivalent to a declaration of war." Flying back to the United States with Dulles, Mathews learned that American forces in Japan "had been on alert for three weeks."<sup>103</sup> MacArthur's precipitate actions in sending weaponry and pledging air power on the evening of June 25 would support the assertion of Capt. Ross Jung that there was, after the June 1949 troop withdrawal, a secret understanding that American force would return should the South be attacked. They do not prove it, either. But MacArthur's behavior in the wake of the Sunday morning news is hardly that of a man taken completely unawares, in an existing situation where American policy allegedly had written South Korea off in the event of an attack.

Dulles had a different version of MacArthur's behavior, saying that, in John Allison's rendering, CINCFE went from "jaunty disdain" of the North Korean invasion, viewing it as a "reconnaissance in force," to "abject despair" by Tuesday, June 27. Allison probably referred to Dulles's memo of June 29, 1950, "Notes on Korea," where he said MacArthur was not promptly informed about the attack, and then did not take it seriously until the third day: "it seems to have been assumed that the attack was a purely North Korean adventure, carried out without the Soviet planning, preparation and backing which would assure its success." Truman told Eben Ayers on July 1 that he "should have heard" what Dulles said on his return from Tokyo.

MacArthur knew nothing of [the news of war in Korea] and [Dulles] was unable to get any of the General's staff to call MacArthur. All of them were afraid to. So Dulles did it himself. Dulles, the President indicated, would like to have MacArthur hauled back to the United States but the President pointed out to him that the General is involved politically in this country . . . and that he could not recall MacArthur without causing a tremendous reaction.<sup>104</sup>

One wonders if this was Dulles's real view, or something said to ingratiate himself with Truman.

The usually reliable Alvary Gascoigne, with excellent access to MacArthur, lost his logic in his account of SCAP when the war broke. He related that the attack "came as a complete surprise to everybody both [in Tokyo] and Korea," but also that military intelligence had learned in April "that preparations were being made for such an attack." This meant that the Americans should have made up their minds about what to do "when the storm broke." Clayton James remarked that "the real MacArthur will always remain elusive," since the general "was a master at role-taking": elsewhere he caught "the streak of showmanship that is part and parcel of the man."<sup>105</sup>

All this is unquestionably true, but it makes the task of unpacking MacArthur's actions rather difficult: we now have him on June 25 alternatively unaware, completely surprised, determined to meet the attack, disdainful, terming the invasion a reconnaissance, calling it international banditry, sending munitions with no approval from Washington, desiring to settle with the Soviet "mongrels," ready to go to any length with air power, and, two days later, in abject despair.

In 1951 he merely chose to bamboozle Congress, telling them he "didn't have anything to do" with intelligence collection in Korea, and when pressed, "I fancy that it was the South Korean Government" which had intelligence responsibility. Without blinking he then went on to say, since Korea was adjacent to Japan, "I would have been vitally interested" in intelligence information. Only once did his dissembling skills escape him. When Sen. Wayne Morse asked him if General Lemnitzer had requested that MacArthur make "immediate shipment of military supplies to South Korea" just *before* the outbreak of the war, he responded in good Watergate fashion, "I have no recollection of it."<sup>106</sup>

In Washington, a controversy broke over whether there had, indeed, been any "intelligence failure." The head of the CIA, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee in executive session on June 26, and left the impression with the senators, which was then leaked to several reporters, that the CIA was not only well aware of North Korean capabilities for invasion, but had predicted the timing as well. He referred in particular to a CIA report of June 19 that an attack on the South was immediately impending. This report is said to have cited the evacuation of civilians just north of the parallel; recent, heavy concentrations of troops and tanks; and rapid troop movements. The mystery deepens in that officials with the requisite clearances have not been able to find this report, and Hillenkoetter's June 26 testimony was not recorded.

The *New York Times* said that Senators Knowland and Bridges, who had immediately charged that the administration was caught "flatfooted" by the invasion, suddenly expressed satisfaction with the CIA after Hillenkoetter's testimony. Alisdair Cooke of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote that Hillenkoetter said that the CIA "was prepared for an invasion this week or next and had ships ready to evacuate [American] families" in South Korea.<sup>107</sup>

The *Times* had reported that Hillenkoetter "could offer no explanation why the receiving agencies had failed to interpret the indications he furnished as evidence of a move to be undertaken soon." Thus other Washington bureaucracies quickly leaped to the attack, for if this were true, then the Pentagon and the NSC were the culprits, not the CIA, for failing to act on the June 19 warning. Instead of an intelligence failure,

there would be an implementation failure. Declassified top secret materials from the Defense Department say that, although officials were not sure precisely what Hillenkoetter said in the Senate, the CIA had really only reported a North Korean capability for an attack, not an estimation of intentions, and no timetable. After being accused by senators on June 27 of being "caught off guard," General Lemnitzer and Major General Burns asserted that no intelligence agency "had focused attention on Korea as a point of *imminent* Communist attack" (emphasis in original). Lemnitzer said, "the attack was a surprise to me." He then went on to review "all available CIA reports," none of which cited an impending attack. But these did not appear to include the June 19 warning; or if they did (the memo is not clear on this point), no one can find the report so that an independent assessment of it could be made.<sup>108</sup>

Part and parcel of this bureaucratic covering of the rear end was an attempt to paint Hillenkoetter as sadly incompetent, failing to grasp even the elementary distinction between capability and intentions; once again the official story on June 25 is contradicted only by the incompetent, the insane, and the Frankenstein look-a-likes. Hillenkoetter did not write the June 19 report, however—it was said to have come in from the field—and its disappearance is a bit of a problem.

George Kennan's analysis of the June 1950 situation also deserves quotation at length, conjuring yet more possibilities.

In the staff [in early June] we got the distinct impression, from reading a series of intelligence reports, that the Russians did plan some sort of military initiative, somewhere. We examined the whole situation . . . reports from the satellite countries, that indicated meetings of satellite leaders, and a few cryptic things said by satellite people had been picked up that indicated something was going to happen. And we examined this from every angle . . . we convinced ourselves that they must be planning some sort of military action through satellite forces which would not commit the Red Army. And with that in mind, we held a series of briefings with our intelligence people in the Department, and went all around the periphery and the only place to which we did *not* [*sic*] give detailed attention was Korea, because the moment we mentioned that they said the intelligence from our own military people was that the South Korean Army was so strong that an attack . . . by the North Koreans was out of the question, that the question was rather the opposite one; whether we could restrain Rhee and the South Koreans from taking after North Korea. And on the basis of that, we left that and went on to the other places and came out completely baffled.

Acheson then interjected, "this intelligence did not come from Departmental sources, because we didn't have any sources there—it came from MacArthur's headquarters."<sup>109</sup>

Now, this gives a far different picture than what we have heard thus far. The CIA predicts, on June 14, a capability for invasion at any time. No one disputes that. Five days later, it predicts an impending invasion. Some dispute that judgment, but the report is missing. Kennan says that no one paid attention to Korea—except to worry about the South attacking—and Acheson says we had only MacArthur's intelligence, when there were fifteen committees collecting intelligence on Korea.

Kennan's staff was actually watching Eastern Europe on the last weekend in June, as ominous troop movements were reported in Bulgaria near the Yugoslav border. The *New York Times* on June 23 reported a Belgrade claim that Bulgarian troops, in full battle dress and with armored support, were moving toward Yugoslavia; it said "armed provocations" along the border were more worrisome in the past month. A sanitized CIA report of June 27 noted the movement under blackout of special trains toward the same frontier.<sup>110</sup>

This information might suggest three scenarios: that the USSR sought to divert attention from Korea; that the Korean War saved Yugoslavia from invasion; or that the troops were moved because of fear of another rollback attempt in Albania, which was about one hundred miles away from Bulgaria through Yugoslav territory. Most likely, the movements were merely designed to intimidate Tito. In any case, they would account for Kennan's worries about Soviet military action, using satellite troops.

The knowledgeable William Corson has a fine discussion of the difficulties of predicting a military attack.

Two basic streams of intelligence information, those from electronic and human sources, may be likened to two rivers starting from a truncated mountain with one (the electronic) rushing down the mountain's steep side and ending up in a stagnant pool, the other meandering down its gentle slope and emptying into the sea, where its meaning and character become lost as it merges with other extraneous streams of information.<sup>111</sup>

From this miasma comes "a curious set of mosaics," each predicting opposite outcomes. Anyone who has waded through reams of periodic intelligence reports knows the truth of this formulation. Another sterling analyst of intelligence flows, Ronald Lewin, wrote that the vast capabilities of modern intelligence collection, and the immense variety of enemy options and possibilities thereby revealed, put before the historian "the most stringent demands . . . to recall how things looked *at the time* [*sic*]."<sup>112</sup>



As an example, we can take an intelligence report from Hong Kong in early March 1950 that cited Chinese Communist sources to the effect that North Korea would try to organize a rebellion in the southwest of Korea in June, and after it develops, attack across the parallel. Prescient, no? But the G-2 discounted the prediction, because another source said the USSR had so far "curbed the North Korean determination to take drastic steps, so that the US may be kept from taking a firmer attitude." A good, pregnant comment (unless the USSR had no curbing powers on the North). This same source went on to relate, "With a view to retrieving their fortune [*sic*], the Chinese Nationalists may conduct intrigue activities to cause armed conflict between the US and the USSR . . . thus the situation in Korea may make a great change in 1950 [*sic*]." Knowing what the reader knows now, would one say scenario one is most likely, scenario two, scenario three, or all of the above, perhaps conjoining and commingling at the same time?<sup>113</sup>

So what Corson and Lewin have to say is well taken. But when Corson gets to the intelligence failure in Korea, he is no help. He begins by saying that "more than fifteen separate watch committees" were surveilling Korea, and were to sound the alarm "if hostile military actions were imminent." This unexpectedly extensive network of intelligence surveillance he dates from mid-1949, that is, the time of the troop withdrawal and Rhee's provocative behavior at the parallel. At the top, however, interdepartmental committees could not sort out all the incoming reports, owing in part to "the 'hole card' game which was played with intelligence information under the sole control of a given [intelligence] community member."

He cites the CIA's June 14 report, giving the North the capability to invade, but not addressing their intentions. He does not mention the June 19 report. He does say that Truman was furious with Hillenkoetter for failing to warn him, which might indicate that Hillenkoetter was also covering his rear in his June 26 testimony. But remember also Corson's judgment that Truman, unlike Roosevelt, took his intelligence in summarized form. Corson notes that Hillenkoetter was hardly "the master of America's intelligence house," usually being bypassed outright by Frank Wisner, head of covert operations in the Office of Policy Coordination. Since, as we have seen, electronic snooping seems not to have given an indication of North Korean intentions, Corson points out that this left the question of intentions to "human intelligence," that is, covert operators of which, according to Willoughby, the CIA had four in North Korea. One of them was James Kellis, as we have seen, a soldier-of-fortune type connected to "Wild Bill" Donovan. Another source cites the presence of one Mr. Yun, who is said to have given advance warning of an attack, perhaps through a southern liberal named Sŏl Chŏng-sik, who

appeared to have cast his lot with P'yŏngyang and was later executed for treason.<sup>114</sup>

Now, Corson also says that the June 14 report leaked out to "informed circles," and thus "it was feared that administration critics in Congress might publicly raise the issue. In consequence, a White House decision of sorts was made to brief Congress that all was well in Korea." The reader once again will need help with such logic: the CIA says on June 14 that North Korean capabilities, in Corson's paraphrase, "had reached the point where its forces could invade South Korea at any time." Thus a decision is made "to brief Congress that all was well in Korea." Allegedly this was because Congressional critics might "raise the issue." (Then the attack comes, and Congressional critics do, indeed, "raise the issue.") Would it not be the expectation that Congress would be told that all was *not* well in Korea? That is, unless a surprised and outraged Congress is one's goal.

The logic gets more tenuous when we learn that Dean Rusk was chosen for this task, knee-deep in coup plots against Chiang Kai-shek, and that he did it on June 20, the day after the CIA's June 19 report (which Corson does not mention and which no one can find, but which Rusk, one of the top three decision makers in the administration by this time, would presumably see—although he told me in an interview that he did not see it). After lauding the ROKA for its commitment to "a free and independent Korea," and praising its success in reducing incidents along the parallel, he told the Congressmen in executive session, "We see no present indication that the people across the border have any intention of fighting a major war for that purpose [taking over South Korea]. I should inform the committee—could I have a minute off the record on this, Mr. Chairman?" Corson, who seems to know everything, asserts that in the unretrievable off-the-record testimony, Rusk "further waffled the details of the North Korean build-up mentioned in the CIA [June 14] estimate."<sup>115</sup>

Gen. Ridgway later said of Rusk's June 20 testimony, "I was shocked when I read that because it was so perfectly evident, we'd gotten a flow of warning messages through there [Korea] all the time, a lot of them emanating from Rhee, but [there were] constant probings by the North Korean forces across the border."<sup>116</sup>

Another piece in this puzzle is a letter from William Knowland (who heard Hillenkoetter's testimony) to Herbert Hoover, a year later, seeming to imply that there had been advance warning of an invasion.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore the day *before* Hillenkoetter's testimony, that is, the day the war broke out, Robert F. Whitney, a *New York Times* Washington correspondent, reported a statement from Hillenkoetter "that his agency was aware that conditions existed in Korea that could have meant an invasion this

week or next," and furthermore, "At the Pentagon . . . an aide said privately that the United States expected the attack and had made all the preparations that could be made." The aide said in particular that ships had been readied to evacuate Americans, "as evidence that the invasion was not a surprise." Whitney went on to say, "The fact that the Government had taken no diplomatic steps was cited by some observers in the capital as evidence that the invasion was not specifically anticipated by intelligence sources."<sup>18</sup> That is, unless one does not want a diplomatic step, and wants a surprised and outraged United Nations.

Whitney also said that observers thought Truman would not have gone to Independence if he thought an attack was coming. We have seen that Truman was outraged because Hillenkoetter told him nothing. As Prouty noted, the best strategy is for the president himself to be unwitting, which is easier with one who takes his intelligence reports in digested form. Then you get the maximal outcome, a surprised president.

Close readers will remember that it was none other than General Lemnitzer whom Wayne Morse named in questioning MacArthur in 1951 about reports that military supplies were dispatched to Korea in advance of June 25: "I have no recollection of it" was MacArthur's response. And it is Lemnitzer and General Burns (the latter deeply involved in covert operations on Taiwan) who take upon themselves the task of discrediting Hillenkoetter. There are three other pieces of evidence indicating that Morse was on to something: first, about five days before the war began, General Ridgway requested information on naval aircraft "Hellcats," small gunboats, and other military aid items destined for Indochina which might be diverted to Korea.<sup>19</sup>

Second, Wellington Koo related a story told him by Gen. Ho Shih-lai in 1970, who replaced Chu Shih-ming in Tokyo in May, 1950. "He had never mentioned [it] to anybody else," Koo said. Ho told him,

when war in Korea was approaching in June, with North Korea about to attack South Korea, Gen. MacArthur in Japan sent Admiral Cooke . . . to ask the Generalissimo for Chinese troops to be sent to South Korea to check the North Korean invasion. The Generalissimo accordingly designated General Chou Chih-jou to negotiate with Admiral Cooke. . . . The discussions were still going on, when the war in Korea actually broke out.<sup>20</sup>

Cooke was in Tokyo for the Johnson-Bradley meetings, and returned to Taiwan before June 25.

Most curious of all is the news that came creeping into the letters column of *Army* magazine in 1985, that in the week of June 19, 1950, the Pentagon "approved, printed, and distributed" a plan called SL-17, which assumed a KPA invasion, a retreat to and defense of a perimeter

at Pusan, followed by an amphibious landing at Inch'ön. Clay Blair wrote soothingly that the Pentagon "produced war plans for every conceivable contingency,"<sup>21</sup> but this is the first time we have heard that it also specialized in clairvoyance—just when the CIA predicted an imminent invasion, with a request for war materiel to be diverted to Korea shortly after that.

Once again, conclusions cannot be drawn here, but must await declassification of materials that would shed more light on this particular part of the story. It makes legitimate, however, the speculation that a small group of officials in Tokyo and Washington saw the attack coming, prepared to meet it, and then let it happen—while keeping Congress in the dark, then and thereafter.

An alternative scenario, another mosaic, would question whether anyone saw the attack coming, whether the CIA's June 19 report (if there was such a report), was right in saying that the North was preparing an imminent invasion. Instead, the quickening of American support for and attention to Korea circa June 14 would be based on a coming southern provocation, with MacArthur or Chiang (or both) witting, but regular officials in the containment current (Ridgway, the Pentagon, maybe Rusk) supplied with disinformation about North Korean intentions; perhaps cowboys in the rollback current work with Tokyo or Taipei to thicken the stew. Some officials secretly prepare to contain the attack for Achesonian reasons; others prepare to provoke the attack to save the generalissimo's hide. The reader will want to refer back to chapter 15 to see why this timing is so suggestive. But it is just a scenario.

#### THE MOSAIC OF PREFERENCE

What is the *most likely* mosaic? There is no question now that movement toward war quickened in mid-June. Appleman rightly dates the rapid southward deployment of the KPA from June 15,<sup>22</sup> but was it for invasion or for summer war games? We have documented that the North carried out major military exercises just before the war. Corson says the following:

The movement of war materiel was detected and traced as moving in ever increasing quantities from the Soviet Union via Manchuria into North Korea. Significantly, this logistical flow provided hard intelligence showing that the Soviets were building up the North Korean supplies of ammunition and petroleum products, the basic ingredients consumed in an attack. At the time, American intelligence about North Korean forces in terms of training hours, vehicle utilization, and ammunition authorizations for training purposes was quite good, and the

analysis of the build-up suggested in one example that the North Koreans had received in one three-week period the equivalent of twenty years' artillery shells (based upon the training level which had remained constant for the previous three years).

The invasion then came, Corson says, when the North Koreans, who "had been detected 'exercising,' turned south and crossed the thirty-eighth parallel."<sup>123</sup> That is unquestionably what happened. But what made them turn south, on June 25? The structure of action was in place, but what explains the timing?

OTHER SOURCES do not agree with Corson that the logistical buildup pointed toward an invasion. MacArthur said on June 28 that "there is no evidence of a logistic buildup in northern Korea to support extensive operations"; the CIA said at that time that such a buildup "may have occurred over the past year" (that is, not in the months just before the war). But subsequent CIA information was that "intelligence reports do not indicate pre-invasion stockpiling (of combat equipment) of a magnitude required to support current operations."<sup>124</sup>

By and large the only equipment the Americans captured that could clearly have been new equipment stockpiled for an invasion were trucks with low mileage on their odometers. In September 1950, MacArthur had "physical proof" of only ten military items delivered to the Koreans in 1949 and 1950—some machine guns, grenades, radio receivers, and the like. As we have seen, KPA military equipment included "surplus Soviet stocks" of World War II vintage, much of it left behind by departing Soviet troops, captured American weaponry gotten from the Nationalists in Manchuria, and stocks of Japanese equipment, both that left in place in 1945 and that manufactured in North Korea in former Japanese arsenals.<sup>125</sup> Soviet aviation gas did come into Manchuria in early 1950, but the CIA thought it was for Chinese air power, to cover the invasion of Taiwan.

The knowledgeable Walter Sullivan said the North's "feverish" mobilization, according to American intelligence officers, only began after the United States came into the war; it "had not carried out its mobilization plan at the time the war began." When Muccio telephoned Tokyo intelligence sources on the morning of June 25, he was told that there was nothing unusual showing up, anywhere in the world. The KMAC G-2 report flow also showed no evidence of an impending invasion, and KMAC officials went beyond that in telling reporters on June 25, "there had been no intelligence reports of troop movements or concentration of supplies."<sup>126</sup>

Corson's information does not acknowledge four things: a similar

buildup in the summer and fall of 1949; the DPRK's substantial capability to manufacture its own ammunition; the flow of tens of thousands of Korean soldiers back through Manchuria from the Chinese civil war, carrying with them tons of ammunition and other equipment; and the inevitable change in "training schedules" that would come with the KPA nearly doubling in a few months. It is sophistry to present the North Korean buildup as an artifact merely of late spring 1950, when the same evidence existed in the fall of 1949, and to dwell on this while ignoring the rapid movement of ROKA troops from the interior to the parallel in the same period, which make the KPA actions understandable.

British sources noted that by the end of the summer, 1950, captured documents and POW interviews had still not shed light on how the invasion occurred; they also remained in the dark about the June 25 timing. The Soviets might have wanted to give the United States a slap in the face because of the peace treaty issue; M. E. Dening wrote, "this would account for the timing, which is otherwise a complete puzzle." One perspicacious reporter found it incredible that a military commander would choose to start a war at the beginning of the rainy season, and thought this indicated the North did not plan to push beyond Seoul.<sup>127</sup>

Again: the North was exercising large numbers of troops, and suddenly turned south. This would be consistent either with a closely-held plan for invasion, or a response to a southern provocation: but most likely both. In October 1987, during tough and often bitter negotiations with North Korean officials about letting a Thames film crew enter the country, and after being pressed time and again to answer the question, "who started the war," even though we had said that was not a proper "civil war" question (which elicited the response that it was not a civil war, but a war of aggression by American imperialism), at length I remarked that I thought the war in 1950 was intimately linked with the near-war in 1949, but that because crack soldiers were not back from China, the North did not want to fight in 1949, even if the South did. In 1950 the expeditionary force had returned, and perhaps then the North awaited the first southern provocation to settle the hash of the Rhee regime. This was met with a memorable, eloquent silence, as the officials exchanged glances and hard faces suddenly turned soft. They said nothing more about it.

Yi Pöm-sök may have been close to the truth about what happened next, when he said that the North, in his view, had originally intended a limited campaign, but found the going so easy (with the collapse of the 12th Regiment and the 7th and 2nd Divisions) that they just kept on rolling.<sup>128</sup> From this we deduce that the goal was to grab and hold Seoul, and form a coalition government; the war plan was probably developed in stages over the period January 1949–June 1950, so that certain expecta-

tions and standard operating procedures entered the calculations, proliferated their own sets of interests, and imparted the machine-like automaticity and incipient rigor mortis characteristic of military bureaucracies as they prepare for the decisive moment. I still think that the North chose that moment at some point between June 15 and 25, and that it was not their preferred moment, but one forced upon them by the imbricated march of events in the last week of June.

So, what is left of Mosaic One, that the North launched an unprovoked invasion? The evidence suggests considerable doubt, even today, that the North launched a premeditated, carefully planned, full-scale invasion on June 25. Mosaic Three is barely worth considering; there is no evidence for the North's claim that the South launched a major invasion all along the parallel; nor was this their claim when the war began. And what of Mosaic Two? It still cannot be dismissed by honest historians. If one knew the Korean situation for years, and one knew what happened in the summer and fall of 1949, and one was well connected with intelligence apparatuses that would know, or at least suspect, that the North Koreans would wait, in the summer of 1950, for the first major southern provocation and then take off southward; and one understood that the United States would respond only to an attack that could be presented as unequivocal and unprovoked, and one had journeyed to Seoul to tell this to Rhee, and to Washington to tell it to Koo, and to Tokyo to tell it to MacArthur, and to Taipei to tell it to Chiang, in other words if one were Colonel Goodfellow, one might have reason to join the army on June 12, 1950, at the age of fifty-nine. Then one makes a first, deep cut, "pulls a trick" that will suck in the North Koreans. And, perhaps, a few days earlier someone draws up a report projecting an imminent invasion, and then destroys the report, and lets an unwitting and sincere president stew over Hillenkoetter instead of ask what happened.

This is the mosaic that will most outrage the complacent reader, steeped in the American fallacy of insufficient cynicism. But it also fits the logic and the evidence—in part. Here is, in fact, the rollbacker's scenario. It also happens to accord with Acheson's containment scenario, although it is not necessary that he be witting for it to work—always in the passive mode, leaving the initiative to the enemy. It is the one mosaic bringing the containment current and the rollback current together: Korea came along and saved them both (for a while), as it did Rhee and Chiang. At least the honest historian must retain some skepticism here, pending further information; the evidence, I believe, renders I. F. Stone's famous judgment both prescient and disturbing: as he put it, "the hypothesis that invasion was encouraged politically by silence, invited militarily by defensive formations, and finally set off by some minor

lunges across the border when all was ready would explain a great deal."<sup>129</sup> But who knows?

Let us return to Mosaic One, and assess sole responsibility to North Korea for the events of June 25, 1950. Let us assume, as Freud would not, that Acheson's slip was innocent: it was an attack "without warning, with[out] provocation." To leap from that to the official judgment that this was outrageous, unprovoked aggression across an international boundary against an innocent and unsuspecting enemy would be a specious brand of empiricism that lifts the invasion from the fighting in the summer of 1949, for which all sides had responsibility (the United States included), and from the South's provocations in 1949–1950, not the least being the American-directed subjugation campaigns against the guerrillas. Even without that, such judgments abstract from the milieu in which, just two years earlier, the United Nations was used to make the thirty-eighth parallel an "international" boundary (not that any Koreans, Rhee included, recognized it as such), and in which, five short years earlier, the United States initiated the division of an ancient nation's integrity, deepened (with much Soviet help) a premature "cold war," and sponsored reactionary and pro-Japanese forces that set up a separate southern regime against even existing State Department policy, let alone the desires of the Korean people. With all this accomplished, the ultimate irony became possible: Koreans invade Korea. The truth is, the very existence of the southern state was a provocation to the North, and vice versa. Americans who remember their civil war ought to be able to understand that.

#### CONCLUSION: "THE NATIVE HUE OF RESOLUTION"

Who started the Korean War? This question cannot be answered. We have only seen fit to present three mosaics, two of them partially supported and partially unsupported by the meandering streams of evidence. The vexed reader, discomfited by the author's innuendos and his unwillingness to commit himself to one interpretation or another (so that he may be hanged by his thumbs for it by one group or another), has gotten what he deserved for asking the wrong question. From the start of this project it has been our position that the question pregnant with ideological dynamite, "who started the Korean War," is the wrong question. That is why it will not be answered. It is not a civil war question, it only holds the viscera in its grasp for the generations immediately afflicted by fratricidal conflict. No one cares anymore that the South fired first on Fort Sumter; they may still care about slavery or the union. No one wants to know who started the Vietnam War, although some remain outraged by the manner in which it ended: but that is ideology.<sup>130</sup> A new generation has arisen in South Korea that wants to know who started the

war, but with the political sensibility of the morally outraged youth opening fire on the old fogeys. Here is a sure sign that the viscera are weakening, prelude to a later generation that will extrude this question from its guts and cease being captive to "history" in the Nietzschean sense, so that they may be free to act in the present toward the reconciliation of the Korean people.

Old Korea hands, such as they were, intuited our position in the immediate aftermath of June 25. Col. Maurice Lutwak had been an Occupation provincial governor, remaining in Korea from 1945 to 1950. In July 1950 he said that the Russians "are like men who have a lion by the tail and can't let go"; he was convinced that the Russians did not plan the attack. If they had, they would have chosen winter when the roads and surfaces were hard, not the monsoon season. "The North Koreans are so individualistic," he said, "that I believe they began it themselves."<sup>131</sup> The Americans had tigers by the tail: ones like the Tiger of Mt. Paekdu and Kim Sök-wön. Perhaps they began it by themselves.

Someone took an off chance, someone risked their universe to gain an end in June 1950. And this is lost irretrievably to history, unavailable to any retrospective uncovering: the act of will, resolution, method, intended to shape history, give it a direction. The problem with our detailed empirical inquiry is, as Shakespeare put it, that

The native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.

Whichever "Tiger" made the cut, Korea's historical and peculiar dementia is to pull in foreigners, the whole world if needs be, to resolve Korean problems, without thinking through all the consequences. Whether it was some *yangban* emissary squinting at Hideyoshi's eyes to divine his intentions in 1590 and getting an invasion, or the *Ilchinhoe* aiding the Japanese and getting colonization, or Kim Il Sung hoping to suck in the Soviets or the Chinese, or Rhee or Kim Sök-wön or Yi Pöm-sök seeking to suck in the Americans: this is a pattern. The phenomenon is a kind of implosion, a "black hole" whose vacuum no one governs. One way or another that is what happened in the early morning hours of June 25.

Imagine: that the Korean War should have started in remote and isolated Ongjin, within the realm of far-off, remote Korea; that the conflict was between the Kim Il Sungs and the Kim Sök-wöns; that the United States and then China should have been drawn into this black hole; and that global war was at the doorstep six months later: it is still amazing, daunting, terrifying.

It became an unmitigated tragedy for all concerned, this war that began with an incident at Ongjin. Who caused the Korean War? No one and everyone, all who were party to the intricate tapestry of events since 1945. Who "caused" the Korean War? Placing that emphasis, we abandon history for politics, for philosophy, for the human terrain where there are not "facts."

Who started the Korean War? This question should not be asked. Koreans, especially, should stop asking this question, and instead develop that worldliness and disgust for narrow "fatherlandishness" that Nietzsche demanded of Germans—that they should learn to "love the south in the north and the north in the south."<sup>132</sup> This is a condescending thing for an American to say. But Germans only learned this lesson in the hardest way possible. Koreans have still not learned it.

55. Smith Papers, box 282, diaries, entries for June 1, 13, 20, 1950; *New York Times*, June 21, 1950.
56. Koo Papers, box 180, top secret account of June 15, 1950, meeting, apparently by Chen Chih-mai for Koo.
57. Koo oral history, vol. 6, p. J-464.
58. *Current Biography*, 1949, pp. 65–66.
59. Koo Papers, box 180, top secret account of June 15, 1950, meeting; Koo oral history, vol. 6, p. I-246, p. J-464. The transcriber got the name down as "Russell Sheperd," or "Shippard," but it is the same man.
60. After the Hainan battle, Willauer wrote that "everyone out here, including myself . . . seems to conclude that we are rapidly losing the cold/hot war in the Far East." Shortly thereafter he went to the Philippines, while Chennault went to Korea. Willauer then returned to Washington from Taiwan in mid-June. Tofte knew Korea and Manchuria, having worked for the Danish East Asiatic Company in Manchukuo in the 1930s (Leary, *Perilous Missions*, pp. 109–10, 124–25).
61. *Current Biography*, 1949, p. 66; Koo Papers, box 218, diary entry for August 29, 1951.
62. Donovan Papers, box 75B; Koo oral history, vol. 6, p. I-239, I-268–70; on McKee and McCarran, see Blum, *Drawing the Line*, p. 67. McKee was involved with Donovan in the Committee to Defend America by Aiding Anti-Communist China; McKee was the first officer on the letterhead, Donovan the third, in a communication sent to Sen. Wayne Morse about the CNAC planes detained in Hong Kong, dated March 22, 1950 (Morse Papers, box A/22).
63. Donovan Papers, box 75B.
64. Goodfellow Papers, box 1, Ellen Dockery to David Namkong, June 12, 1950. She does not explain why he did so, and this is the only such reference in the Goodfellow Papers. Immediately after the war began, Goodfellow cabled Rhee, saying in full, "Tell Gen. Chae to hold fast. Help is coming. This is your hour. The prayers of the Democratic world are for you. Wish I were with you." On July 28 Goodfellow told S. T. Ryang the following: "I have been working on the Korean situation and expect to hear more on my assignment very soon" (box 1).
65. Donovan Papers, box 132C, appointment diary for 1950. These are Donovan's wife's diaries, it would appear, but they clearly carry entries for some, if by no means all, of Donovan's meetings.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. NA, manuscripts of the Office of the Chief of Military History, box 620, "History of the Korean War," vol. 1, pt. 2, ch. 2, "The Initial Attack"; see also the information on the 6th Division and Pang Ho-san in Almond Papers, periodic intelligence report no. 190, April 4, 1951, and an unnumbered report of April 21, 1951.
2. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, pp. 21–22. Hausman was then an advisor to Chief of Staff Chae. Five American advisors were said to have been in Ongjin, but they sent no messages until 6:00 A.M., when they said the peninsula was about to be overrun. This makes it doubtful that the advisors were with Korean troops; they may have been sleeping, or recently returned from a Saturday night visit to Seoul or a camptown. See Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, pp. 114, 118. See also RG338, KMAC file, box 5415, "General Survey of Enemy Situations," Chŏng Il-gwŏn, undated but probably August 1950; Lim Ŭn, *Founding of a Dynasty*, p. 174.

3. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 21. Prof. Dae-sook Suh told me the story, which may be apocryphal, about Kim threatening Kim Sŏk-wŏn.
4. MA, RG6, box 78, ATIS translation issue no. 2, October 5, 1950, translating an article from the KPA newspaper *Powi* [Defense], July 2, 1950; also DPRK radio broadcast, noted in *ibid.*, box 59, intelligence report no. 2848, June 27, 1950.
5. *New York Times*, *New York Herald-Tribune*, and *Washington Post* reported on June 26 that two companies of the 17th Regiment had occupied Haeju. The UK military attaché in Tokyo cabled on June 27 that two battalions of the 17th regiment occupied Haeju (FO317, piece no. 84057, Gascoigne to FO, June 27, 1950).
6. U.S. Information Agency, "The Communist Invasion of the Republic of Korea," July 12, 1950, a copy of which is in Smith Papers, box 100. On the very first page it refers to "a large-scale invasion" at Ongjin on August 4, 1949, and a "renewal" of the offensive on October 14, 1949. (The August 4 attack, as we have seen, was against a South Korean position north of the parallel.) The attached chronology, which also cites the above battles, strangely refers to "extremely heavy guerrilla warfare commencing across the 38th parallel," September 9–20, 1949; the parallel was mostly quiet in this period, as we have seen.
7. *New York Times*, August 12, 1950. Malik appears to have based his presentation on North Korean materials sent to the United Nations (see DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Documents and Materials Exposing the Instigators of the Civil War in Korea* [P'yŏngyang: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950], pp. 133–36). In any case that is what I used for the information in the text. Han's use of the term "daybreak" does not square with assertions elsewhere in the same North Korean materials that the attack began just after midnight, except that the North Koreans use words translated as daybreak or "early dawn" to mean as early as 1:00 A.M., as we will see, and on p. 122 in this same collection of documents, the text reads "at midnight, June 24th, Rhee Syngman [*sic*] in carrying out the orders of his American masters started the invasion."
8. Karunakar Gupta, "How Did the Korean War Begin?" *China Quarterly* 52 (1972); see also commentary by Chong-sik Lee, William Skillend, Robert K. Simmons, and Gupta's reply, *China Quarterly* 54 (1973), pp. 354–68. Note that the official history is content to say that a journalist in Ongjin put out the first account, misleading Shin Sungmo. John Merrill also points out that the second edition of the *Han'guk chŏnjaeng-sa* "omits all references to [1949] border clashes since they were regarded as being too 'political'" (John Roscoe Merrill, "Internal Warfare in Korea, 1948–1950: The Local Setting of the Korean War" [Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1982], p. 149).
9. The Kolkos were among the first to suggest that the North Korean aim might have been limited to Seoul, and to argue that Soviet strategies avoided direct attacks on cities (as did Chinese strategies, we might add). Kolko and Kolko, *Limits of Power*, pp. 578–79, 586.
10. *Seoul Times*, October 14, 1947; HST, PSF, CIA file, box no. 255, CIA, "Communist Capabilities in South Korea," ORE 32–48, February 21, 1949.
11. On the attempt to penetrate Hwanghae see NA, OCMH manuscripts, box 620, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict," 1952; also the Vanderpool Papers; also reports of anticommunist resistance, CIA file, NA, OCMH manuscripts, box 248, CIA daily intelligence summary for January 18, 1951; this and other CIA reports in the period put the resistance "north of Haeju."
12. Kim, *Military Revolution in Korea*, pp. 57–63. Yi Ch'ŏng-ch'an headed the Capitol Division only from June 15 to July 15, 1950; later, as commander of the Third Division, his troops were the first to cross the parallel into the North in the fall of

- 1950 (Ridgway Papers, box 19, Van Fleet to Ridgway, February 17, 1952, enclosing Yi's biography). On Kim Paek-il and the Capital Division in the summer of 1950, see RG338, KMAG file, box 5418, "KMAG Journal," entry for August 5, 1950. On the 17th Regiment in Namwŏn, and its superior training, see Plans and Operations file, 091 Korea, U.S. Military Advisory Group to the ROK, October 15, 1949. It is apparent that the 17th was treated as a separate unit, not under a particular division, in periodic intelligence reports from the ROKA headquarters in RG338, KMAG file, box 5418, July 9–November 7, 1950.
13. Most of the information and quotations are in Muccio's report, 795.00 file, box 4267, "Tiger Kim vs. the press," May 12, 1951. Muccio wrongly placed Kim in Pusan when the war began, and got the date of his removal wrong (saying it was July 7, 1950, when it was definitely after August 2). See also USFIK 11071 file, box 65/96, Yōsu Rebellion packet; also "The Yosū Operation, Amphibious Stage," by Howard W. Darrow. At Yōsu, Kim refused to follow the orders of two American advisors who told him not to try to land the 5th Regiment at Yōsu; he tried to do so anyway, and failed. On the beheading incident, see RG338, KMAG file, box 5418, "KMAG Journal," entries for July 26, August 2, 1950. On Rhee and Tiger Kim, see Ridgway Papers, box 20, draft of a message Muccio planned to present to Rhee, May 3, 1951, chiding Rhee for relying on Tiger Kim, Montana Chang, and No Tōk-sul for intelligence information, rather than the established agencies.
14. *NDSM*, May 19, 1950. Pak's statement was given extraordinary, front-page treatment. Articles on the 18th Regiment defection in the North emphasized the Kwantung Army experience of Kim Sōk-wŏn and Kim Paek-il, and said all soldiers under them were required either to fight southern guerrillas, or to prepare for a "northern expedition" (*HGND NDSM*, May 11, 1949).
15. KMAG G-2 Weekly Summaries nos. 8–11, May 18–June 15, 1950; G-3 Operations file, box 121, operations report no. 51, June 9–16, 1950.
16. RG242, SA2010, item 2/76, Haeju materials from the KWP agit-prop department, marked "absolutely secret." The student also said, "soldiers from the Rhee side are being seized, they say, but everyone knows it isn't so." It is not clear what this refers to; it could mean he does not believe the South is attacking, or that he does not believe that the North is winning the engagements.
17. FO317, piece no. 84079, Tokyo Chancery to FO, enclosing the report of a military attaché's trip to Korea, April 19, 1950. This report said a civil war was not likely in the summer of 1950, however, because American advisors "have in the past successfully discouraged such an invasion" (i.e., by the ROKA), and the North Koreans would not move, they thought, pending the outcome of the current communist drive in Southeast Asia.
18. McCormack, *Cold War/Hot War*, p. 83. Rankin later indicated he did not mean he thought the South might be ready to attack, but merely that something was afoot.
19. Interview with Thames Television, 1987. Peach went on to say that he still did not think that the 17th Regiment had attacked, followed by a North Korean response.
20. MA, RG9, box 38, Far East Air Force Commanding General to other units, June 26, 1950; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 66. See also George Howard Poteat, "Strategic Intelligence and National Security: A Case Study of the Korean Crisis (June 25–November 24, 1950)" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1973), p. 12.
21. MA, RG6, box 80, ATIS Supplement, Issue no. 3, December 5, 1950: "Full translation of a file, dated 25 June to July 9, handwritten in Russian, containing radio communications, copies of interrogations, and intelligence summaries, presumably kept by Soviet military liaison interpreter, Lt. Murzin, whose signature appears." These were captured in Seoul on October 4, 1950; it could be that the

documents constitute a disinformation plant, but then why would they be so sketchy and inconclusive, and also so damaging to the North Korean position that the South launched an attack all along the parallel?

22. Committee for a New Direction for U.S. Korea Policy, *Conference for a New Direction in U.S. Korea Policy* (New York: 1977), p. 100. Admiral Lee's full remarks are as follows:

I believe it's time to reconsider the cause of the outbreak of the Korean War. I can definitely declare, to judge by my own experience in naval engagements under my own command, that that view is entirely wrong.

On June 23, two days before the outbreak of the war, the Korean army chief of staff issued "Combat Order No. 2." All the Korean army units were alerted and ordered to "go into action at 5, June 25." From 10 P.M., June 23, partial attacks were started to divert attention from the up-coming full-force invasion of the North. This was reported throughout the world by AFP wire services.

On Lee's court-martial, see MA, RG6, box 58, Intelligence Report no. 2833, June 12, 1950. Another source says that when Lee was cleared he was transferred to Chinhae, and was in late June commander of a "Training Task Group" (795.00 file, box 4299, Embassy to Seoul, June 23, 1950). It is possible, of course, that he might still have been in the Haeju area on June 23, since these reports do not give the dates of his court-martial or his assignment to Chinhae.

I must say also that I participated in this 1977 New York conference, but came to think later that it had been somehow influenced by the North Koreans, even though many anticommunist Koreans attended. A very garbled transcription of my remarks was published in the conference volume without my editing or approval.

23. FO317, piece no. 84097, "Draft Brief for the U.K. Delegation New York: on Korea," no date but probably September 1950.
24. MA, RG6, box 78, ATIS issue no. 1, September 26, 1950. I have not found the Korean original.
25. MA, RG6, box 9, MacArthur's second téléconference with Washington, June 26, 0955 hours; box 59, intelligence reports nos. 2847–2851, June 26–30, 1950; Drumwright, July 20, 1950, account, Smith Papers, box 100.
26. *Haebang ilbo*, July 8, 1950.
27. The casualty report is cited in MA, RG6, box 79, ATIS translation issue no. 15, January 3, 1951, from *NDSM*, June 28, 1950 (I have not found an original of this issue).
28. Merrill, "Internal Warfare," p. 149.
29. Donovan Papers, box 8B, Ryan to Donovan, March 8, 1952.
30. Oliver, *Rhee and American Involvement*, p. 290; Noble, *Embassy at War*, p. 87; Noble Papers, "Activities Log," June 30, 1950, entries for 1833 and 2130.
31. Keyes Beech met Kim Paek-il on the night of June 27 in Seoul, at KMAG headquarters (see his *Tokyo and Points East* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954], p. 112).
32. Ridgway Papers, box 16, memorandum of August 9, 1950; Appleman, *Nahtong/ Yalu*, p. 324. It would appear that Kim Sōk-wŏn commanded the Capital Division from July 15 to mid-August, when he switched to the 3d Division. Kim Paek-il was accompanied in the fall of 1950 by Colonel Edward Rowney (the Reagan administration's key arms negotiator with the Russians in the early 1980s) (see Almond Papers, "Korean War Diaries," entries for November 1950). In a Thames



- Television interview in February 1987, Rowny told me he could not remember Kim Paek-il.
33. HST, Muccio Oral History, December 1973 (emphasis added).
  34. *New York Herald-Tribune*, May 29, 30, 1950.
  35. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, pp. 22–23; Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 115. Blair's account differs a bit in the details. He gives the time Darrigo awoke as 3:30 A.M., whereas Appleman, Sawyer, and the missionary give a time of 5:00 or 5:30. According to an internal history, the 13th and 15th Regiments of the 6th KPA Division opened their main attack at 5:30, and the town fell by 9:30 A.M. (NA, Manuscripts of the OCMH, box 620, "History of the Korean War, vol. 1, pt. 2, ch. 2, "The Initial Attack"). Blair says that "at first [Darrigo] believed it to be the South Koreans firing their 105-mm snub-nosed 'infantry cannons,' but as the noise increased in fury, he realized it was not South but North Korean artillery." This account, of course, is not inconsistent with it being ROK artillery at first, the KPA in response (*Forgotten War*, p. 59). Lawrence Zellers, an American missionary living in Kaesŏng in June 1950, told me that there was no sign of any military activity that he could see on June 24, when he returned to his home just below Sŏng'ak-san from a wedding in Seoul; he had witnessed "repeated and sometimes prolonged border skirmishes" during the summer and fall of 1949 ("mortar and artillery fire would almost always arch over our heads from both sides"). He frequently heard artillery early in the morning, and then Darrigo's jeep would take off down the road to ROKA 12th Regiment headquarters. On the morning of June 25 at a bit past 4:00 A.M. he heard artillery and small arms fire. As usual Darrigo jumped in his jeep and headed south. Zellers rolled over and went back to sleep; at about 7:30 he awoke to see People's Army soldiers "moving around and past our house." They left him alone until June 29 when all the local missionaries were questioned at length by North Korean police. They threatened him with execution, but later imprisoned him in the North (Letter, Lawrence A. Zellers to Bruce Cumings, August 24, 1987).
  36. MA, RG6, box 9, Army to CINCFE, June 26, 1950; Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 99. The mines were not placed, as MacArthur later acknowledged in his congressional testimony. See also Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 7. A year before the war Roberts wrote that the area between Seoul and the parallel had been "loaded" from January 1949 on: "Three divisions are on the line . . . all the 'Artillery' [sic] and Anti-tank guns (91 and 127) are in Seoul vicinity or to the North thereof. The Engineers are prepared to do a demolition-delay job on all roads leading into Seoul" (RG 319, box 548, Roberts to Bolte, July 4, 1949). The absence of defensive demolitions in June 1950 would suggest a southern plan for a march into the North, or for a rapid withdrawal.
  37. RG242, SA2010, item 3/43, "Pogasŏ" [Report], signed by Yu Pyŏng-jun, June 29, 1950. Yun was the unit commander of the second engineering company of the 241st Army. Parts of this report are illegible. Blair says the North "mysteriously removed" the railways in May 1950, but many other sources place it in 1949 (*Forgotten War*, p. 58).
  38. John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 25–27.
  39. 795.00 file, box 4267, "Tiger Kim vs. the Press," May 12, 1951; Schnabel and Watson, JCS, *Korean War*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 98.
  40. Ridgway Papers, box 19, Thomas D. McPhail to Ridgway, April 15, 1965.
  41. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 26.
  42. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27; Smith Papers, box 100, Drumwright account, July 5, 1950.
  43. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 117.
  44. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, pp. 27–28; Army G-2 said on June 28 that the reports of landings at P'ohang were erroneous (HST, PSF, CIA file, box 262, joint daily summary no. 3, June 28, 1950). The *New York Times* reported on March 6, 1950, that guerrilla landings on the East coast, said to originate in North Korea (although it is just as likely that the points of origin were in the South), were a weekly affair.
  45. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 24; NA, manuscripts of the OCMH, box 620, "The Initial Attack." No details on this attack are given, except the units involved and the time the 1st Regiment was hit.
  46. Smith Papers, box 100, Drumwright account of July 5, 1950. Col. James S. Gallagher, advisor to 2d Division, got word of an invasion at 8:00 A.M. Sunday morning, when the 2d Division got orders to move north from Taejon (Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, pp. 116, 120). They left at 1430 by train. Blair says the 7th Division gave way because the 2d did not arrive in time (*Forgotten War*, p. 60).
  47. *MacArthur Hearings*, vol. 5, p. 3385.
  48. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 36, 47.
  49. See Laurence Lafour, *The Long Fuse*, 2d. ed. (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1971), pp. 196–204, 254–64; also 795.00 file, box 4262, Muccio to State, June 25, 1950, two cables, one sent at 2:00 P.M. and the other 6:00 P.M., Seoul time.
  50. Smith Papers, box 100, Drumwright account of July 5, 1950; Noble Papers, Harold Noble letter to "Bell" Noble, June 26, 1950; also 795.00 file, box 4262, Muccio to State, June 25, 1950, two cables.
  51. 895.00 file, box 5695, Bunce, Allison, and others, meeting at the State Department, March 15, 1950; box 5692, Allison to Secretary of State, October 31, 1953; Drumwright to Robertson, December 10, 1953; box 5693, Ray to State, April 7, 1950; MA, RG9, box 43, KMAG to SCAP, March 25, 1950; Goodfellow Papers, box 1, Goodfellow to Rhee, October 3, 1950. Lady tried to go back to Korea in late July in spite of official opposition, but was blocked by Sebald (MA, RG6, box 80, SCAP to State, July 20, 1950).
  52. John Gunther, *The Riddle of MacArthur* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 165–66.
  53. *Chosŏn inmin-gun*, June 26, 1950. On the use of the term *saebyŏk*, see an article in *NDSM*, May 22, 1950, saying the Odaesan guerrillas entered Ch'unch'ŏn on May 1, "at 1 a.m. dawn (*saebyŏk*)."
  54. RG242, SA2005, item 2/67, broadcast transcript of Kim's "Appeal to All the Korean People," June 26, 1950: Lecture notes belonging to a KPA soldier, captured in August 1950 (RG242, SA2010, item 1/62), say this: "In the course of five years, Rhee became a lickspittle [of the imperialists] and prepared to provoke [*tobal*] a civil war. Through the night and morning of June 24–25, Rhee's army touched off the war\* [*sic*]." The asterisk then noted, "The provocateur was American imperialism."
  55. Schnabel and Watson, JCS, *Korean War*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 55n; Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 20. The two documents were first released on May 2, 1951; the text and various statements about them by American representatives are in State Department, *The Conflict in Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951). The DPRK denounced the materials as false two weeks later (*KCNA*, May 16, 1951).
  56. Office of the Executive Secretariat, box 5, daily summaries, April 20, 23, 1951. The declassification had been done, and a decision made to make use of them, by April 23.

57. MA, Willoughby Papers, box 12, Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison to Willoughby, August 5, 1965; Willoughby to Pattison, August 10, 1965.
58. MA, RG6, box 78, ATIS issue no. 6, November 8, 1950.
59. *Korea Herald*, June 27, 1979.
60. Lim takes it upon himself to refute every anomaly in the record, from the Haeju business to T. L. Soong's soybean scam. This is the surest evidence of any that the book was ghost-written in Seoul (*Founding of a Dynasty*, pp. 173–74 and ch. 5). Also interview with Hyŏn Chun-gŭk, August 1981.
61. MA, RG407, entry 429, box 350, ATIS Issue no. 2, October 30, 1950, "Order no. 1, dated 6/22/50, issued by Lee Kwon Mu, CO, 4th Infantry Division, Captured in Taejon area, 16 Jul 50."
62. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 20.
63. MA, RG6, box 79, ATIS issue no. 15, January 3, 1951.
64. MA, RG6, box 81, "Interrogation Reports, North Korean Forces," ATIS, August 25, 1950, interrogation reports nos. 603 and 605.
65. MA, RG6, box 61, intelligence summary no. 2883, August 1, 1950.
66. Ibid., box 78, ATIS issue no. 4, October 21, 1950.
67. Both are in *ibid.*, ATIS issue no. 1, September 26, 1950. The first document said that ROKA losses included "one Japanese advisor."
68. Ibid., ATIS issue no. 1.
69. Ibid.
70. I was told this by an archivist at the Suitland National Records Center on September 5, 1984. After this episode, South Korean nationals were placed in plain view of archivists when they used the collection. Another individual who worked with the National History Compilation Committee, forwarding copies of the captured materials and other archival documents to Seoul, told me that the Committee refuses even to accept, let alone to publish, anything from the collection that departs from the South Korean line on the war, or its version of national history in the period. This, of course, makes the South's war histories of little use; but it also makes the captured materials one of the only collections of primary Korean documentation not tampered with by Seoul or P'yŏngyang.
71. U.S. State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take-over* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 113, 117. Even Gen. Yi Sang-jo, deputy chief of staff of the KPA, was left in the dark about the war plan and was surprised when the war broke out, according to recent testimony. He nonetheless still believes that Kim Il Sung started the war, with Stalin's approval. See the report of an interview of General Yi, who now lives in the USSR, by Prof. Choi Pyong-kil, in *Korea Times*, June 18, 1989.
72. RG242, SA2005, item 4/75.
73. MA, RG6, box 78, ATIS issue no. 14, December 29, 1950.
74. MA, RG6, Box 81, ATIS issue no. 834, August 21, 1950; ATIS issue no. 423, August 7, 1950.
75. RG242, SA2009, item 10/58, "*Chŏnsi chŏngch'i munhwa saŏp*," issued by the Cultural Department of the KPA 655th detachment.
76. RG242, SA2008, item 10/56, "*Chŏnt'u sokbo*," no. 1, June 16, 1950. Issue number two, which I have not seen, was translated in ATIS issue no. 3, October 12, 1950 (MA, RG6, box 78). Dated June 18, it says much the same thing, in the available translated extracts: "A large-scale military exercise will be held near the 38th parallel. Therefore, no soldier should communicate with people outside. Everyone should be cautious, in order that this top secret not be disclosed to the enemy."

77. RG242, SA2006, item 20/28, handwritten record of a meeting on June 4, 1950, of the KPA 3d technical detachment, 6th beginning group.
78. RG242, SA2010, item 3/81, various orders in Korean issued to or by the 855th KPA unit.
79. Willoughby Papers, box 10, Korea Liaison Office file, report nos. 475-C (May 2, 1950), 498-C (May 15, 1950), and 518 (May 25, 1950). The very few reports from the KLO file in June show nothing of particular import about an impending invasion.
80. Baldwin, *Embassy at War*, p. 315. Gen. Richard Stilwell told a Thames Television interviewer in 1987 that North Korea still had "an extraordinarily large military force offensively postured bellied up against the [DMZ], and capable of launching a direct attack with, er, without warning, any strategic warning, perhaps within 24 hours of the first indication one might receive."
81. Reproduced in McCormack, *Cold War/Hot War*, p. 58. Henderson also quoted Col. Min Ki-sik as saying that one usually hears that the North was always attacking the South: "This is not true. Mostly our Army is doing the attacking first and we attack harder." Min had recently returned from training at the Infantry School, Fort Benning.
82. The reference is to a reported outbreak of schistosomiasis among PLA forces gathering to invade Taiwan.
83. FO317, piece no. 92804, FK1075/1, July 5, 1951, including Pratt's 1951 pamphlet, "Rearmament and the Far East," and excerpts from his speeches.
84. Prouty, *Secret Team*, pp. viii–xiii, 34–36, 67.
85. Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, *The Fish Is Red: The Story of the Secret War Against Castro* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 80–81. I am indebted to Kevin Marchioro for calling this book to my attention.
86. *New York Times*, June 8, 1984; a Public Broadcasting System consultant to the documentary, Austin Hoyt, told me about the interview with Stilwell in February 1987.
87. HST, Acheson Papers, box 65, Wallace to Acheson, July 26, 1950, enclosing a copy of the *China Weekly Review's* article, "Background to the Civil War in Korea"; Acheson's letter to Wallace, August 10, 1950, contains the quotation in the text, verbatim.
88. Eisenhower Library, Anne Whitman file, NSC, 179th Meeting, box 5, January 8, 1954.
89. Ibid., boxes 4 and 9.
90. Arthur Krock Papers, box 1, notebooks, Book II, entries for July 1950. Johnson telephoned Krock on June 25, 26, 1950 (Johnson Papers, box 141, appointment book, June entries).
91. *MacArthur Hearings*, vol. 4, pp. 2572–84; RG46, *MacArthur Hearings*, deleted testimony, box one, Johnson testimony of June 14, 1951.
92. Johnson Papers, box 138, Johnson to Willoughby, June 29, 1950; Koo Papers, box 180, memo of meeting with Griffith, June 28, 1950; Koo oral history, vol. 6, p. A-24. Griffith apparently did not elaborate on what he meant.
93. Bradley, *General's Life*, p. 503.
94. Military History Institute, Carlisle, Willoughby Papers, box 10, "The North Korean Pre-Invasion Build-up," circa early 1951. Willoughby may not have written all of this, but it represents his views.
95. Ibid.
96. *MacArthur Hearings*, vol. 3, pp. 1991–92.
97. James, *Years of MacArthur*, vol. 2, pp. 5–14.

98. MA, Willoughby Papers, box 13, "Aid and Comfort to the Enemy," early 1951. See also Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlin, *MacArthur, 1941-1951* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 352-54. The North Korean attack came "as a jolt to Washington," he says, but not to Tokyo.
99. MA, RG6, box 40, daily intelligence Summary, no. 2684, January 14, 1950.
100. MA, RG6, box 58, intelligence summaries no. 2803-2850, May 13-June 29, 1950.
101. MA, RG9, box 40, Commanding General, Far East Air Force, to other units, May 20, 1950; *ibid.*, June 10, 1950. Both formerly top secret.
102. Little is known about signals intelligence capabilities in Korea, but unit 8609 of the Army Security Agency is mentioned in G-3 Operations file, box 34A, CINCFE to Army, September 4, 1950, attachment. See also Corson, *Armies of Ignorance*, p. 318. On KPA radio silence procedures, see NA, OCMH manuscripts, box 616, "History of the Korean War," vol. 3, "Enemy Tactics," p. 4.
103. Mathews Papers, box 90, diary, "Korea with the J. F. Dulles Mission, June 14-29, 1950." Bradley also says Roberts, his "old friend," reassured him that an invasion would not occur and, if it did, the South would be able to handle it (*General's Life*, p. 530).
104. Acheson Papers (Yale), box 1, Allison to Acheson, November 7, 1969; Ayers Papers, box 26, diary, entry for July 1, 1950; Far East file, box 4123, Dulles, "Notes on Korea," June 29, 1950.
105. FO317, piece no. 84060, Gascoigne to FO, July 5, 1950; James, *Years of MacArthur*, vol. 1, p. 572; vol. 2, p. 196.
106. *MacArthur Hearings*, vol. 1, pp. 235-241.
107. *New York Times*, June 27, 1950; *Manchester Guardian*, June 27, 1950. Sen. Leverett Saltonstall said that, according to Hillenkoetter, the CIA gave a "final warning" about the attack on June 17; it is not clear if this was a separate report from that of June 19 (see *MacArthur Hearings*, vol. 1, p. 436).
108. RG218, JCS, file 383.21, box 25, section 21, "Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," through Maj. Gen. J. H. Burns, signed by Maj. Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, June 29, 1950. On the missing June 19 CIA report, see Schnabel and Watson, JCS, *The Korean War*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 52. Here they identify it as a CIA "field agency" report, presumably meaning it was sent in from Korea. The Joint Chiefs are at pains to say in another part of this Korean War study that they had no warnings of imminent attack, either from American or South Korean agencies. See JCS, "The Korean Conflict," manuscript in NA, vol. 4, ch. 2, Wilber W. Hoare, Jr., "The Week of Decision," pp. 1-2.
109. Acheson Seminars, June 23, 1953. Kennan clearly knew little about Korea. In the same session, he said that Soviet puppets were in charge in P'yongyang, not Mao's people, and that the Russians trained several divisions of Koreans from Kazakhstan and moved them in to fight the war. If so, none was ever captured in three years of fighting.
110. *New York Times*, June 24, 1950; CP, 1977, item 175D, CIA report, sanitized, signed by Hillenkoetter, June 27, 1950.
111. Corson, *Armies of Ignorance*, pp. 154, 315-21.
112. Ronald Lewin, *The American Magic* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 65. His book, on signals intelligence in World War II, illustrates how important the same intelligence would be to Korea, should it come available. Roberta Wohlstetter did a careful study of Pearl Harbor, showing the difficulty of separating "intelligence" out from raw reports, or signals versus "noise" (*Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, 1962).
113. RG 338, box 5417, March 6, 1950, G-2 HQ intelligence report, grade G-4.
114. Koo Woo Nam, *The North Korean Communist Leadership, 1945-1965: A Study of Factionalism and Political Consolidation* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1974), pp. 92-93. Söl was purged in August 1953; he had been in the Political Administration section of the KPA Supreme Command. A Korean who wishes to remain unidentified told me that "Yun" was probably Yön Chöng, a man who worked for Willoughby's KLO and who claimed to have given the KLO advance information on the North Korean invasion, and that the source of this information was probably Söl Chöng-sik. Yön later undertook a risky mission for Willoughby, seizing patients from a Wönsan Hospital to see if they were sick with bubonic plague.
115. *United States Policy in the Far East, Part 2: Korea Assistance Acts, Far East Portion of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1950* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 464; Corson, *Armies of Ignorance*, pp. 315-21.
116. Ridgway Papers, Oral Interview, March 5, 1982; Rusk's June 20 testimony is in Selected Executive Session Hearings of the House Committee on International Relations, vol. 7, "U.S. Policy in the Far East," Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 464. Hanson Baldwin reported a CIA warning of June 9, describing "a marked buildup" along the parallel; "capabilities of an invasion at any time were mentioned." This must refer to the June 14 report. About four KPA divisions, plus Constabulary units, had been in position for a long time at the parallel, he said. "But commencing in early June, light and medium tanks probably of Japanese manufacture, about 30 122-mm Soviet-type field guns and other heavy equipment were assembled at the front, and troop concentrations became more noticeable" (*New York Times*, June 28, 1950).
117. On June 17, 1951, Hoover sent to Knowland "a note from a reliable friend," unnamed; the content of the note is not known. On June 19, 1951, Knowland responded: "Your friend's information is substantially correct. I do know that Admiral Hillenkoetter appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee for I was present at the time" (Hoover Presidential Library, PPI file, box 395).
118. *New York Times*, June 26, 1950. Whitney's dateline was June 25 from Washington.
119. G-3 Operations file, box 121, Bolte to Ridgway, June 20, 1950. Bolte refers to Ridgway's request, but does not say when it was made, and I have not been able to find it.
120. Koo oral history, vol. 6, p. A-116.
121. Blair, *Unknown War*, p. 87; Col. Donald McB. Curtis drafted SL-71, and discussed it in a letter to Army, July 1985.
122. Appleman, *Naktong/Yalu*, p. 19.
123. Corson, *Armies of Ignorance*, pp. 316, 318.
124. HST, PSF, CIA file, box 248, memo of June 28, 1950; box 250, CIA, "Military Supplies for North Korea," September 13, 1950.
125. 795.00 file, box 4269, MacArthur to Army, September 1, 1950 (MacArthur was responding to Soviet claims in the United Nations that all Soviet weaponry used by the KPA was from stocks left behind in 1948; the ten items were stamped as manufactured in the USSR in 1949 and 1950, but could have come via China); *New York Times*, September 7, 1950.
126. Walter Sullivan, *New York Times*, July 31, 1950; 795.00 file, box 4262, Muccio to State, June 25, 1950, cable no. 933; *New York Times*, June 25, 1950, quoting United Press accounts; Hanson Baldwin, *New York Times*, June 30, 1950.
127. FO317, piece no. 84064, Sawbridge to FO, August 17, 1950; piece no. 84130, Denning minute on no. FK10338/4, July 7, 1950; *Manchester Guardian*, June 26, 1950.

128. 795.00 file, box 4262, Muccio to State, June 26, 1950, cable sent at midnight, quoting Yi Pöm-sök.
129. Stone, *Hidden History*, p. 44.
130. See for example Harry Summers, *On Strategy* (New York: Presidio Press, 1982), and my critique, "Parades of Remembering and Forgetting: Korea, Vietnam, and Nicaragua," *The Nation* (October 1986).
131. United Press account of Lutwak's July 20, 1950, speech in Charleston, S.C., *New York Times*, July 21, 1950.
132. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), p. 195.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Alisdair Cooke, *Manchester Guardian*, June 27, 1950; *FR* (1950) 7, pp. 125–28, containing Muccio's telegram no. 925, an editorial note, and an interview with Rusk on August 7, 1950. The "editorial note" does not say who called Acheson, but Acheson says it was John Hickerson. See Acheson Seminars, transcript for February 13–14, 1954.
2. The "editorial note" (*FR* [1950] 7, pp. 125–28) says that Truman ratified the decision to go to the UN at 11:20 P.M. June 24, and that Lie was then called at 11:30, but Acheson says that he instructed Hickerson at 10:30 P.M. to call the Security Council together, which would be almost an hour before he called Truman; he is most explicit in saying Hickerson was told he should "proceed at once," and "if the President had a different idea, it would be perfectly possible to change what [Hickerson] was doing." When he called Truman, he told him "what I had authorized Hickerson to do," and the president "approved." Acheson related that on July 19, 1950, Truman sent him a note saying in part that Acheson's initiative in "immediately calling the Security Council of the U.N. on Saturday night and notifying me was the key to what developed afterwards. Had you not acted promptly in that direction, we would have had to go into Korea alone." Acheson also says that Truman wanted to return at once, but Acheson suggested he wait until the next day. See Acheson's account in Acheson Seminars, February 13–14, 1954. On the Blair House discussions, see *FR* (1950) 7, pp. 157–61 and 178–83.
3. Acheson Seminars, transcript of February 13–14, 1954. Kennan quoted from remarks he put down in a notebook in late June 1950. Bradley also noted Acheson's domination of the decision process, in *A General's Life*, p. 536. Kennan supported Acheson's decisions in a memo written on June 26, saying that "we should react vigorously in S. Korea" and "repulse" the attack. If the United States failed to defend the ROK, he thought, Iran and Berlin would then come under threat (Kennan Papers, box 24, Kennan to Acheson, June 26, 1950). For Acheson's discussion of the decisions, see *Present at the Creation*, pp. 405–7.
4. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 405.
5. Stimson's diary, quoted in Beard, *Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*, p. 553. See Acheson's notes for the Acheson Seminars (HST, box 81), where on p. 12 he writes, "June 25 removed many things from the realm of theory. Korea seemed to—and did—confirm NSC 68." Harsh is quoted in Hodgson, *America in Our Time*, p. 46.
6. CP, 1979, item 439B, "Notes on Meetings," May 16, 1951.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 16 of notes.
8. HST, George M. Elsey Papers, "President's Conversation with Geo June 26, 1950. I am indebted to Barton Bernstein for bringing th my attention. On June 30 in an NSC meeting, Truman made clea limit the war to Korea, and to the restoration of the 38th parallel—t ment. HST, PSF, NSC file, box 220, summary of the 59th meeting. In its "Review of the World Situation," July 19, 1950, the CIA said to draw this line would have seriously discredited the whole US pol ment" (HST, PSF, CIA file, box 250).
9. This sequence is clear, for example, in Glenn Paige, *The Korean Deci*.
10. Acheson Seminars, transcript of February 13–14, 1954. Robert D that Taft was not the first to protest, others having spoken on June 2 the "big gun" (*Tumultuous Years*, p. 220).
11. Acheson told Lucius Battle, in regard to a conversation with Army Se Pace on July 13, 1950, "We have agreed to make no record of it. Rej (HST, Acheson Papers, box 45, Appointment book entry for July 1 the secret meeting regarding MacArthur, see Acheson Seminars, 1 February 13–14, 1954.
12. General Bradley supported Achesonian containment at the first Blair ing, remarking that "we must draw the line somewhere." But he qu advisability" of introducing American ground troops in large nun Frank Pace and Louis Johnson. At the second meeting on June 26, Ge ley and Collins again expressed the view that committing ground t stretch American combat troop limits, unless a general mobilization taken. Louis Johnson now supported Acheson, however, while false the press that he, not Acheson, had advocated a defense of Taiwan (. pp. 157–61, 178–83). This led Truman to think once again of dismissi Truman said that, contrary to press reports, "they had trouble getting department to move," and "if this keeps up, we're going to have to secretary of defense" (Ayers Papers, box 26, Diary entry for June 29.
13. Acheson Seminars, transcript for February 13–14, 1954.
14. Allison, *Essence of Decision*, pp. 10–38.
15. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 202.
16. Acheson, *Among Friends*, pp. 185, 192. Truman always defended Ache trace of the humiliation he must have felt from time to time.
17. Quoted in Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 256.
18. Stone, *Hidden History*, p. 105.
19. Eben Ayers Papers, box 26, Diary entry for November 7, 1948. Trui nating and often humorous notes to himself during the Korean War 1 betray the mind of a sophomore history student, complete with num spellings ("Isenhower," "Acheson," always "Chiang Kai Chek"). In Ap fulminated that "Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Attila and the cut throat were gentlemen beside the Bolshevik [sic]"; this and many similar rem the point that a little history can be a bad thing. The notes also sho determination, a deep patriotism, and a simple belief in the greatn United States. See HST, PSF, box 333, "Longhand Notes" file, 1945–19
20. *FR* (1950) 7, pp. 148–54, "Intelligence Estimate," Office of Intelligence Hillenkoetter's CIA report for the president on June 25 said the action viet probe to test our resolve, but that if the United States intervenes, t will "either disclaim or otherwise localize the Korean conflict" (HST, PSI box 248, Hillenkoetter's daily summary for the president, June 25, 1950; no date on this report, but it clearly was done on June 25, from the cc