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FIVE

The Decision for War in Korea

On June 25, 1950, less than five months after the signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty, war shattered the uneasy peace in Korea. Move by countermove the war escalated, and in mid-September, when the United Nations forces launched their counteroffensive at Inchon, a few miles west of Seoul, Beijing increased its commitment to backstopping the North Korean regime.

As we shall see, senior leaders in both Moscow and Beijing knew at least as early as the end of 1949 that the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung was aiming to attack the South, though none of the principals, including Kim himself, then had in mind the precise timing or conditions of the assault.[1] Khrushchev remembers that during Mao Zedong's visit to Moscow, Stalin asked the Chinese Chairman "what he thought about the essence behind such an action [by the North Koreans]. . . . Mao answered with approval and also expressed the opinion that the United States wouldn't interfere in an internal matter which the Korean people would decide for themselves." A Chinese source quotes Mao as saying, "We still should help 'Xiao' Kim. Korea now faces a complicated situation."[2]

After providing some new information on the rise of Kim Il Sung, we will analyze how Soviet and Chinese views on Korea were affected by the just-concluded Sino-Soviet negotiations on the alliance and broader strategic goals. In doing so, we will be revisiting as well as adding to the many explanations of the origins of the war. We do not seek to develop an entirely original account of the genesis of the war or to deal systematically with the major (and still conflicting) interpretations of other scholars.[3]

Any specialist writing on this topic is immediately confronted by the scarcity of reliable sources. Because of extreme secrecy, even the head of the Soviet secret police learned nothing about Kim's decision to cross the 38th Parallel. During a meeting of the Central Committee in mid-1953, Minister of Internal Affairs Kruglov acknowledged that "we were not aware of the decision on the Korean problem."[4]

However, the documentary gap is partially filled by eyewitness accounts, and we expect the opening of the many Russian archives to produce new troves of information over the coming years.[5] Hundreds of articles and memoirs by Chinese, Soviet Koreans, and Russians have been published since 1989, and a handful of these, we believe, are reasonably reliable (though it should be kept in mind that virtually all sources on the war are biased in varying degrees). Moreover, many high-ranking participants are now willing to share their knowledge and have done so with us on the promise of anonymity. We will use these sources, both old and new, in an attempt to present a coherent and consistent version of the chain of events leading to the North Korean assault on the South that fateful Sunday in June. We recognize, however, that the full story of those events is yet to be told.

Over the past four decades, the genesis of the Korean War has been examined from quite contrasting vantage points. At first, attention was focused on high-level politics, on the contacts between Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and Mao. Later, the focus shifted to analyzing the domestic Korean and Cold War factors that contributed to the outbreak of the conflict.[6] Our own evidence indicates that we need to concentrate once again on high politics.

The Soviet Union and Korea

The search for the origins of the decision to start the war leads inexorably back to the relationship between the Soviet Union and Kim Il Sung's Korea. Throughout the early postwar years, Kim was wholly dependent on Moscow, and North Korea can be justly called a Soviet satellite.[7] The history of that relationship has been extensively treated and is not directly relevant to this study.[8] Here, we simply wish to introduce the Soviet sources that shed additional light on it.

Sometime in 1939 or 1940, Kim Il Sung arrived in the Soviet Far East and was assigned to the Khabarovsk Infantry Officers School. In the summer of 1942, the Soviet General Staff ordered the creation of the 88th Brigade, consisting of four battalions: one Chinese, one of the local peoples of the Far East, one Russian, and one Korean.[9] Stationed in the village of Viatskoe in the Khabarovsk district, the Korean battalion was specifically tasked to train cadres for a future Korean People's Army (KPA). Kim Il Sung was given the rank of captain in the battalion and appointed its commander. He quickly gained a reputation for discipline; Soviet officers recall his strict rules against heavy drinking.[10]

Even at this early date, Kim shared his vision of a united Korea with his brigade comrades. One of them recalls that the new battalion commander "never believed in peaceful unification; he never had such an idea. He only

stuck to the idea of armed unification." During his five years in Khabarovsk, Kim "prepared himself" for the coming battle, and though he "did not speak to us explicitly about armed unification, . . . he was telling us that we were future generals and would fight together."[11]

On October 10, 1945, the Russian cargo ship *Pugachev* carried Kim and the 66 officers of the 88th from Khabarovsk to the port of Wonsan. These officers were to serve as the core of the North Korean high command throughout the coming decades. Later, after Stalin agreed to the ouster of the local popular leader Cho Man-sik,[12] Kim, then still only in his mid-thirties, became the Soviet commanders' choice for national leader. Stalin thoroughly approved of the selection. For him, Kim's experience in the USSR and training under Soviet commanders made him much more trustworthy than any potential rivals.[13] Kim himself was less certain and at first refused the assignment. But he finally relented after Col. Gen. Ivan Chistiakov, commander of the Soviet 25th Army, urged him strongly to reconsider.[14]

As all this suggests, the Soviets were by this time firmly in the saddle in North Korea. But earlier, in 1945, just as Stalin's troops were entering the country, Mao had made his own attempt to establish a foothold on the peninsula, ordering a Yan'an-controlled Korean detachment fighting the Japanese in North China to break off and head for Korea.[15] Now he summoned some ten or so prominent Koreans who were serving in his revolutionary army and informed them of his decision to send them to Korea. "Kim Il Sung has said that Korea was liberated by the Soviet army," he told them. "If Soviet headquarters does not nominate reliable people, it would be bad." As members of the so-called Yan'an faction, some of these men eventually rose to prominence in the North Korean hierarchy. Nevertheless, virtually all the dominant positions and the real power remained in the hands of Soviet-oriented Koreans and their Soviet advisers.[16]

But this is not to say that the Soviets had things all their own way. Although Stalin may have regarded Kim as a puppet, the reality turned out to be far more complex. In fact, Kim was able to use Stalin's trust for his own aims even as Stalin was using him.

The emerging Cold War had a direct bearing on their relations. In his memoirs, V. I. Petukhov, a well-informed Soviet diplomat, describes the atmosphere of profound distrust that surrounded the work of the Soviet-American commission on Korea in 1947. On the Soviet side, even the most innocent American actions, he writes, were interpreted as a provocation.[17] The Russians very quickly concluded that their interests on the peninsula were irreconcilable with those of the United States; the Americans had by then already drawn the same conclusion.

The two sides were most at odds about which political parties or organizations should participate in a government for a unified Korea. Though Kim Il Sung and the South Korean leader Syngman Rhee were both claiming to have the broad support of the Korean people, the Soviets were convinced that Kim was correct in his assertions that the "progressive forces" in the South were powerful, and that the "revolutionary situation" there was ripe.[18] In any case, even without the evidence of their own eyes in the mounting uprisings, protests, and strikes against the Seoul government, the Soviets could be expected to side with Kim and support his claim to national leadership.[19]

Over time, Soviet reports on the South became interchangeable with the reports Stalin was receiving from Kim himself. All optimistically assessed the South's "revolutionary readiness."[20] The Soviet ambassador to Pyongyang, Terentii Shtykov, embraced Kim's claims. He invariably accompanied Kim on his trips to Moscow and helped him persuade Stalin of the validity of his assessments.[21] Skillfully playing on the firm Soviet commitment to his regime and on the ever more bitter U.S.-Soviet global hostilities, Kim managed to make Moscow see the situation on the peninsula through his own eyes. His success in this regard was to have a profound effect on the developments in Korea thereafter. By 1949, the contrived similarity of Soviet and Korean views helped set the context for the process that led to the Korean War.

While Soviet troops were still stationed in Korea, the formation of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in August 1948 and of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that September formalized the de facto division of the peninsula at the 38th parallel. Each state claimed to represent the entire nation and remained adamantly antagonistic to the other. From then on, each worked to unite Korea on its own terms and with the assistance of its principal foreign patron.

In Kim's case, that assistance included massive amounts of military hardware, for when the Soviet 25th Army, then numbering more than 120,000 men, pulled out at the end of the year, it handed over all its weapons to the newly formed Korean People's Army (KPA). Additionally, the KPA inherited the armaments seized from Japan's defeated 34th and 58th armies.[22] According to a Soviet source, Moscow's military assistance to the KPA in the late 1940s and early 1950s exceeded that given to Mao's PLA during the same period.[23]

This conspicuous difference in Stalin's treatment of China and the DPRK had much to do with their respective positions in the Soviet orbit. During most of this period, the Chinese were still in the throes of a life-and-death civil war, whereas North Korea was well on the way to building a Com-

munist regime under Soviet tutelage. Direct Soviet involvement in the rise of Kim Il Sung and the formation of the DPRK helped mold both Stalin's stance toward the need for combat on the peninsula and Kim's view of the irrelevance of China in his own sphere of operations.

In fact, the Chinese and Korean Communists did not engage in any serious talks until August 1948, and even then these discussions, between the representative of the People's Government of the Northeast, Li Fuchun of the CCP Central Committee's Northeast Bureau, and members of Kim's government, concentrated solely on economic matters of bilateral interest.[24] The Northeast government did not station a full-fledged trade representative in Pyongyang until the spring of 1949.[25] Despite the arguments put forward by some Western scholars, China was a bit player in the drama being played out on the Korean Peninsula until a few months before the war began.[26]

Nevertheless, relations between the Chinese and Korean Communists were quite close. When Kim left Manchuria for the Soviet Union, probably in 1940, he was a member of the Chinese Communist Party, though, at heart, Kim remained Korean.[27] At the end of 1946, as Lin Biao's forces fell back before the Nationalists' offensive in South Manchuria, most of the families of the Communist troops from the region fled to North Korea. Kim Il Sung ordered special camps built to house them until it was safe to return to China. The Chinese Communists, including Mao, often expressed their personal gratitude for this assistance. Moreover, the Northeast Field Army (predecessor of the Fourth Field Army) recruited thousands of soldiers of Korean nationality living in Northeast China, and most of these were subsequently transferred to the North Korean army.[28]

These ties influenced Kim as well as the Chinese, but not always in a positive way. Even as he ordered the local Korean authorities to provide sanctuary to the Chinese, he told these officials, "We will help them, but we don't have to give them full support. We'd better help them properly. These Chinese are too sluggish. If I had only one division, I could destroy the Central [Nationalist] army right now."[29] During the period preceding the Korean War, personal relations and experiences affected the Sino-Korean relationship in notable but often complex ways.

As influential as these experiences and relations were, the main story was unfolding within Korea itself. Despite the North Koreans' distinct military advantage after the Soviet evacuation, and the widespread discontent against Rhee's government, Kim apparently did not consider the time ripe for war. He could not be sure of victory in an all-out conflict because he had no assurance of Soviet support, and there were still U.S. troops in the South.

Still, Stalin was not averse to egging Kim on when the two got together for talks in the spring of 1949.[30] According to Stalin's interpreter, in the course of their meetings, "Stalin asked: 'How is it going, Comrade Kim?' 'Everything will be all right,' [Kim said, but] he complained, 'Only the southerners are making trouble all the time. They are violating the border; there are continuous small clashes.' Stalin became gloomy: 'What are you talking about? Are you short of arms? We shall give them to you. You must strike the southerners in the teeth.' After thinking for a while, he repeated, 'Strike them, strike them.'"[31]

Stalin's response must be understood in the context of the overall situation of the moment. Kim was talking only about "small clashes" and how he should cope with them. Stalin's puzzlement stemmed from his knowledge that Kim had ample arms to counter virtually any southern incursion; the scale of Soviet military assistance to Kim had been immense, as both knew. Their conversation was not about an all-out offensive against the South, and Stalin did not give Kim the go-ahead for one.[32] Stalin, as we have so often remarked, remained cautious so long as the possibility of a major conflict with the United States existed. With U.S. troops still on station in the South, Stalin would not risk a move that would engage them.

After Kim returned home, the essence of Stalin's advice or at least its general spirit leaked to the top Soviet military advisers in Korea. Picking up on the idea of "striking the southerners in the teeth," they began exhorting Kim to take more aggressive action along and below the 38th parallel. The resulting clashes, they forecast, would undermine the morale of Rhee's government and help ensure Kim's ascendancy.[33] Kim gladly complied.

In short order, "large, well-equipped guerrilla bands, trained at the camp near the Korean capital [Pyongyang], infiltrated into the South to establish bases in the rugged mountains along the ROK's eastern coast."[34] Kim clearly hoped that these bands would overthrow the Seoul regime and unify the country under his rule. His target date was the fall of 1949.[35] Although this guerrilla struggle was organized and supported from the North, Kim in public was calling for unification by peaceful means and eschewing all overt military action.[36] His strategy was fully in accord with the guidelines laid down in his conversation with Stalin.

Initially, Kim's strategy of provoking border clashes and employing guerrilla tactics appeared to succeed. In glowing reports to Moscow, Soviet military advisers held up the KPA's performance in a battle in July 1949 near Kaesong as evidence of the winning spirit of the North.[37] But on both the political and the military front, the tide soon turned against Kim. Though the fighting continued, the guerrillas failed to take a single city, let alone

rally the majority of the South's people to their side. By the winter of 1949–50, the core guerrilla bands were suffering serious defeats and defections, though many survived to fight in the South after the war broke out.[38] One former North Korean general concludes, "I know that Kim Il Sung pinned his hopes on the guerrilla movement in the South. But, by this time, December 1949, Syngman Rhee had effectively subdued the guerrillas."[39]

Consequently, Kim now faced some hard choices. Political negotiations and the guerrilla option had failed, and Rhee's government was gaining vitality. If he was going to unite the country under Communist rule, Kim would have to resort to a full-scale offensive, and soon. To do this, he needed Stalin's consent and pledge of support. But even with the advantage of his proven loyalty to the Soviet leader, it would take all his talents of persuasion to convince the Kremlin that the South would erupt in rebellion if the North itself attacked. An American specialist on Korea has concluded that the intensifying of guerrilla activity after Kim returned to Pyongyang in April and the exaggeration of the guerrillas' achievements may have been designed to deceive or convince Stalin.[40]

What Kim could not have known, however, was the degree to which Stalin's strategic calculus regarding Asia had changed. Mao now occupied a principal place in Stalin's security thinking. After his talks the previous July with Liu Shaoqi on a global division of spheres of responsibility, Stalin would not take any serious decision in Asia without at a minimum consulting Mao, even though Korea still fell within Moscow's orbit. During the late summer and fall of 1949, the Soviet leader was busily preparing for the Sino-Soviet summit, and with that foremost in mind, he would not have contemplated authorizing any moves toward war by Kim on his own.

Consultations for War

Many chroniclers of the events leading up to the war state that before its outbreak on June 25, Kim Il Sung secretly visited Moscow for talks with Stalin "more than once."[41] If few agree on the dates or details of actual visits,[42] solid evidence exists that Pyongyang, Moscow, and Beijing actively exchanged views and proposals in the year preceding the war.*

*In 1966, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a top secret report for General Secretary L. I. Brezhnev and Prime Minister A. N. Kosygin on events leading up to and through the Korean War. Written at a time of heightened Sino-Soviet tensions, the document, while biased, substantiates all major points raised in this and the following chapter on those events but differs on some important details. It states that Kim and other North Korean leaders as early as 1948 sought to unify the peninsula by military means and disregarded proposals for peaceful reunification. By Jan. 1950, the North was adding to its force of 110,000 men. It also concluded that the United States would not enter the war. Kim actively sought the backing of Stalin and Mao for his war aims, but Stalin stressed the need for greater preparation and only approved Kim's ideas in principle. Finally, the Soviet leader approved the plans "during Kim's visit to Moscow in March–April 1950," and began to supply all needed military aid. During Kim's visit to Beijing "in May," Mao also gave the nod and stressed that the Americans would not intervene to save "such a small territory." Mao promised to send men and matériel north "in case the Japanese entered the war," a contingency given by the document as the reason for Mao's movement of troops after June 25. Continuing, the document states that Kim proposed a three-stage approach to war: massing troops at the 38th parallel, proposing a peace plan, and attacking when the plan was rejected. The final operations plan envisaged a North Korean advance of 15–20 km per day and victory in 22–27 days. After the U.S. landing at Inchon in September, Mao, fearing U.S. attacks on China, rebuffed Kim's plea for aid. Stalin pressured the Chairman to intervene, but Mao sent Chinese troops, the "volunteers," only when China itself was threatened. For their part, Soviet advisers took part in all phases of the operations and helped turn the tide after October. "O Koreiskoi Voine 1950–1953 gg. i Peregovorakh o Peremirii" [On the Korean War, 1950–1953, and the Armistice Negotiations], Aug. 9, 1966; document from TsKhSD [Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (former Central Committee Archives)], F. 05, Op. 58, d. 45, pp. 122–25. The authors are grateful to David Holloway for providing his notes on this document.

We should note that the former head of the Korean Section of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department states that no minutes were taken during the secret Kim-Stalin talks. Interview with Vadim P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992. Assessments of Moscow's role in decisions concerning the Korean War differ sharply; few of these assessments have dealt with Kim's visits to the Soviet Union. See, for example, Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, pp. 506, 511; Sun Lizhong, *Peng Zhong Zai Guowai*, p. 22; Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 2: Chaps. 10, 18; Merrill, *Korea*, Chap. 1; Simmons, *Strained Alliance*, Chap. 5; and Stueck, "Soviet Union."

The only visit Kim Il Sung made to Moscow after his tour in March–April 1949 came in late March of the following year. In addition, Kim followed up this visit with a trip to Beijing in May (not on his way home from Moscow in April as is sometimes reported).[43] These consultations were integral to the process leading up to the war. Although many sources dwell on other reported visits by Kim to Moscow between April 1949 and March 1950,[44] we now know from an August 1992 interview with a senior Russian diplomat who has thoroughly canvassed the Soviet-era archives that these trips did not occur. It seems likely that the active flow of communications between Moscow and Pyongyang at this time has been misinterpreted as Kim-Stalin meetings. What matters is the evolution of the exchanges, not whether specific visits did or did not occur.

Nevertheless, we will review here the accounts of the oft-cited visits by Kim to Moscow in December 1949 and February 1950. We do so partly to suggest the kinds of information that appear to have been exchanged between Moscow and Pyongyang in these months (on which the archives do have significant documents) and partly to indicate how pseudohistory can become widely accepted in efforts to explain the origins of one of history's tragedies.

We turn first to accounts of the December 1949 visit. To repeat, the reader should keep in mind that this visit did not in fact occur. Allegedly arriving in Moscow on the eve of Mao's visit, Kim had in mind something quite different from the ideas Stalin had suggested in the spring. He had already told Soviet advisers in Pyongyang that Korea was not a suitable place for guerrilla warfare and now sought Soviet sanction for a full-scale conventional attack against the South.[45] As two Chinese authors put it, Kim Il Sung had gone to Moscow to press Stalin on "his idea of military unification of Korea."[46] It was logical for Kim to put forward this proposal at the moment of his disillusionment with the prospects for the guerrilla struggle in the South. A conventional invasion remained his only viable option.

A passage in Khrushchev's account (in the original Russian version) appears to relate to this first visit. He quotes Kim as telling Stalin that the North Koreans "wanted to touch the South with the point of a bayonet. . . . After the first impulse from North Korea, there would be an internal explosion and the people's power would be established, which means the same power as exists in North Korea."[47] The head of the KPA Operations Directorate in 1950 recalls "an atmosphere of envy within the KPA's hierarchy" over the fact that Mao's armies had defeated the Nationalists and were unifying their country, and this theme undoubtedly was part of Kim's case for action.[48] In reply, Stalin expressed his general sympathy toward Kim's intentions, a response that Khrushchev finds quite natural in a convinced Communist like Stalin, who was bound to see the battle for the South as an internal matter for the Korean people.

The one purportedly direct account we have of this alleged meeting, by a senior Soviet diplomat, generally coincides with the above but adds some detail: "After October [1949], the Koreans were inspired by the Chinese victory and by the fact that the Americans had fled from mainland China completely; they were sure that the same could be accomplished in Korea quite quickly. They came with such a proposal to Moscow in November–December 1949. . . . During this late 1949 visit, Stalin responded to Kim in the following way: 'The Americans abandoned China because they had been dealing with the problems of this country for a long time. They well understood how enormous the task was to rescue Chiang Kai-shek and the limitations of their potential to accomplish it. Korea is a quite different case. The Americans will never agree to be thrown out of there and because of that, to lose their reputation as a great power. The Soviet people would not understand the necessity of a war in Korea, which is a remote place outside the sphere of the USSR's vital interests.' "[49]

Despite the obvious erroneous dating of this account, we see here what

was to become a recurrent pattern in the exchanges between Stalin and Kim before the war. The Korean leader, usually via the Soviet ambassador in Pyongyang, would present his case for completing "the task of national liberation," and Stalin would express his general sympathy for reunification but, until April 1950, refuse to sanction an all-out attack. He feared any conflict that might provoke an American confrontation with the Soviet Union.*

At the same time, Stalin's reluctance to support Kim's proposal, however it may have reached the Korean leader, may have been tempered to some extent by Stalin's growing preoccupation with drawing a line between China and the West. He also could see some merit in the proposal within the framework of his earlier decision to facilitate those offensive actions toward Asia that could succeed but would not implicate the Soviet Union. The conquest of South Korea would enable him to widen the buffer zone along his eastern frontier, to acquire political leverage against Japan or, perhaps, a springboard for an attack against it, to test American resolve and capabilities, and to divert American power away from Europe. All these were pluses so long as the Soviet Union could appear to remain aloof.

For all these reasons, the Soviet leader found Kim's reunification ideas interesting enough to discuss them with Mao later in the month. But the very fact that Stalin had not yet met Mao undoubtedly caused him to avoid giving Kim a firm yes or no. In essence, the Soviet leader put all Korean war planning on hold and told Kim to return after the Soviet-Chinese summit had ended and Mao had left. The summit, he was suggesting, would provide the basis for further deliberations on the feasibility of a quick military victory in Korea. Though we have no information about the nature of the Mao-Stalin exchanges on the Korean problem beyond the statement of two Chinese authors that "Mao was more cautious than both Kim and Stalin. He raised the possibility of American military intervention during his talk with Stalin in Moscow,"[50] this statement fits well what we know of Mao's thinking at that moment. Even assuming that Acheson and Tru-

*Molotov relates that "it seemed that [the Korean War] was not needed by us. The Koreans themselves had forced it on us. Stalin was saying that we cannot avoid the national question concerning a unified Korea." Lee Sang Jo, who was a North Korean ambassador to the Soviet Union and defected to it, states, "There, of course, were consultations with Stalin, but the initiative still came from Kim Il Sung, who persuaded the Soviet leader of the success of the plan for a 'national liberation war' personally devised by himself. Although Stalin worried about the possibility of Washington's interference, he at last gave his approval." According to Gen. Dmitrii Volkogonov, Stalin had long been wary of any "aggravation of the situation on the Korean Peninsula [and] did whatever he could to avoid a direct confrontation between the USSR and the U.S.A." *Sto Sorok Besed s Molotovym*, p. 104; Makhov, "Stalin Had Approved"; Volkogonov, *I. V. Stalin*, 2.2: 107–8.

man had announced the new U.S. position toward Korea and Taiwan before he and Stalin ever mentioned Korea, the Chairman could hardly be expected to take the U.S. pullback in aid on faith.[51] The possibility of becoming involved in a shooting war with the Americans in Korea in itself would have given Mao pause. But beyond that, he had just obtained the promise of Soviet assistance for the invasion of Taiwan and would not have wanted an Asian rival for that aid. One Soviet official recalls learning from the Chinese leadership that Mao's negative response to Kim's proposals for war was dictated by the need to recover from the devastation of the civil war and to liberate Taiwan.[52]

Despite their wary attitude toward Kim's ideas for attacking the South, Stalin and Mao, one former DPRK general says, did respond to Kim's appeal for troops. Even though he and his generals knew quite well that Syngman Rhee's army was far weaker than the KPA, Southern-initiated border clashes and the militant speeches of the South Korean military calling for Korean unification by force gave Kim the evidence he needed to stress the "threat from the South."[53] Stalin appears to have been taken in by this evidence. A senior official in Moscow recalls seeing documents at the very end of the 1940s expressing Stalin's "great doubts that the North Korean regime could be preserved and would not fall."[54]

The specter of a northern collapse undoubtedly made Stalin more receptive to Kim's request for troops. Mao learned of the request while he was in Moscow, suggesting that Stalin raised the matter directly with him. The idea was simple: transfer some 14,000 Korean Chinese from the PLA to the North Korean army.[55] The Soviet leader was thereby backing the Korean enterprise but distancing himself from any direct involvement.

Everyone seems to have realized that Kim's need for additional manpower hinged on his plan to invade the South. Marshal Nie Rongzhen recalls that the KPA had been armed with Soviet weapons but was unable to recruit enough men to "sustain a large-scale war." "Therefore," he writes, "in January 1950, Comrade Kim Il Song sent Kim Kwang Hyop [commander of the KPA Second Army] and other comrades to China requesting the return of 14,000 soldiers of Korean nationality, most of whom had joined our . . . Fourth Field Army." Kim Kwang Hyop asked the Chinese to arm these soldiers from China's own arsenals, since to "negotiate again with the Soviet Union . . . would lose much time." On January 22, Mao ordered Nie to arrange for the return of the Koreans and to provide them weapons. Nie remarks, the "Korean comrades were quite satisfied."[56]

These troops, many of them battle-hardened, were merged into the KPA units being readied for the coming offensive. An officer who was later to become deputy director of North Korea's NKVD recalls: "They could not

send the Chinese army, so they just sent [ethnic] Koreans and made them wear Korean army uniforms. And they were deployed at the 38th parallel. They were all from China's Yanbian area, where there are a lot of Koreans. Kim Il Sung kept everything secret, and he was very good at it, so that the ordinary Koreans had no idea that these people were from China. In the trains, all these people were wearing North Korean army uniforms, and they said that they were just trained there [in China]. They played a very important role in the attack on South Korea."[57]

Let us now turn to the reported February 1950 meeting. Again, it did not occur, though the exchanges attributed to the alleged encounter suggest the nature of the communications traffic between Moscow and Pyongyang. The only bit of direct information we have on an alleged visit at this point comes from two Soviet military historians, who say that Kim Il Sung talked with Stalin for two and a half hours that month, and that Molotov and the interpreters of the two sides were also present.[58] For obvious reasons, the former head of the Korean section of the International Department of the CPSU's Central Committee has no record of a February meeting,[59] but the second part of Khrushchev's well-known account is sometimes said to relate to it. Khrushchev mentions that he attended a reception in honor of Kim at Stalin's dacha, and that after the talks with Kim, Stalin telegraphed Mao in Beijing, asking for his opinion on Kim's proposals in writing.[60] If Mao was now back home, this reception must have been held sometime between his departure on February 17 and his arrival in Beijing on March 4.[61] Had this meeting occurred, it would have helped explain the complex relations then developing between the Soviets, Koreans, and Chinese.

We are left to guess at what kind of proposals Mao was supposed to react to, but Kim may well have conveyed some new thinking in those early months of 1950. A retired North Korean general recalls that about this time he heard Kim say "he placed great hope on the uprising of 200,000 members of the South Korean Workers' Party [the counterpart to the Korean Workers' Party in the North and now under Pyongyang's control]. He also directly stated that we placed great hope on the guerrilla movement in Chirisan [Chiri Mountain in the Sobaek Mountains in the southern part of the peninsula]."[62]

All this echoed Kim's messages to Moscow in December, but according to another former North Korean general, there was a vital new element in Kim's views at that moment. Kim and his colleagues were now persuaded "that the Americans would never participate in the war. We were absolutely sure in this. . . . The argument was the following: the Americans had not participated in the civil war in China. America was losing the giant,

China, but still had not intervened. America would not participate in such a small war on the Korean Peninsula."

Washington's recent policy statements apparently did much to encourage this view. In the words of one senior North Korean official, after Truman and Acheson had appeared to exclude Korea from the U.S. defensive perimeter, Kim "was convinced that 'the U.S. would not enter the Korean War,' or 'even if they did enter the war, they would not hold sway over the destiny of the war.'"[63] Although considerable controversy surrounds Pyongyang's reaction to Acheson's speech, we believe that Kim used the speech to bolster his case with Stalin irrespective of what his "true" attitude to the speech may have been.[64]

Kim presumably considered one more argument at about this time. A senior Soviet diplomat recalls that during one of Kim's secret visits in 1950 (which can only mean the one in March–April, not February), the Koreans stated that the Americans would be deterred from intervening by the Soviet-Chinese alliance.[65] This argument would have flowed naturally in March, when the treaty had just been concluded.

Despite such Korean assurances and arguments, Stalin could not shake his serious doubts about the use of force on the peninsula, and we should recall that he had already cautioned Kim, "The Americans will never agree to be thrown out of [Korea and] lose their reputation as a great power." Still, according to Khrushchev, when Kim Il Sung reported to Stalin in Moscow, the Korean "was absolutely sure of success. . . . As I remember, Stalin then was expressing his doubts; his worry was whether America would become involved or would disregard [*propustit' mimo ushei*] it [the North's attack on South Korea] completely. [Kim and Stalin] were inclined to think that if [the war] would come quickly (and Kim Il Sung was sure that it would be ended quickly), then the USA's involvement already would be excluded."[66] Stalin wanted to box any conflict on the peninsula between the extremes of escalation into a global conflict and Washington's total dismissal of the matter as irrelevant to its interests.

Simply put, Kim Il Sung was merely a pawn in Stalin's grand chess game. Stalin was principally interested in how a war in Korea would affect his relations with the United States. Only if that war would promote his larger schemes would he agree to it. Kim's assertions that a rebellion would follow a shock invasion of the South would have been a positive factor for Stalin in this regard. Although he welcomed the idea that direct U.S. involvement would be excluded, Stalin was ambivalent about the potential value of the conflict should Washington "disregard" it. The trick was how to keep the Americans out while making them appear to be the loser.

25. Chinese poster of Mao and Stalin celebrating the Moscow visit after Mao's return to Beijing

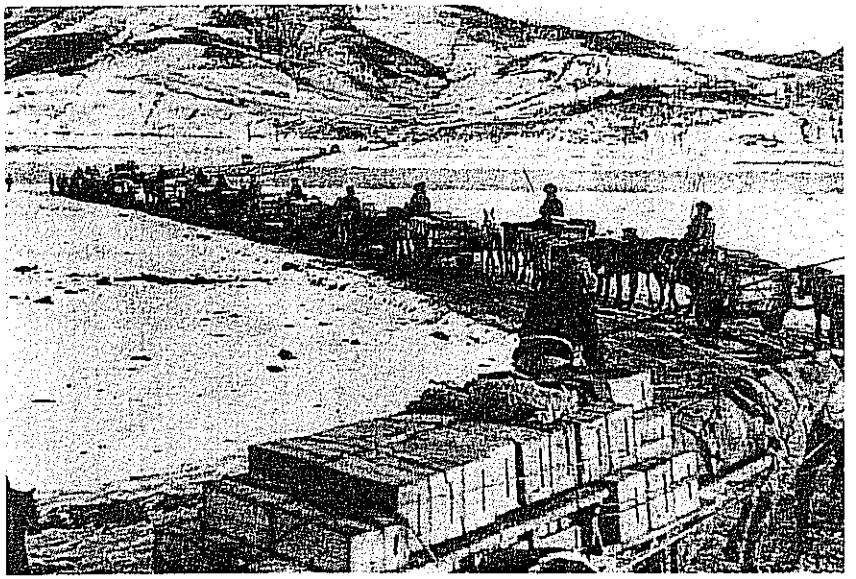
26. (*above*) The Sixth Session of the Central People's Government, held in Beijing in April 1950. From left to right: Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, unidentified man, Mao, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, and Lin Biao.

27. (*left*) Mao speaking to the Central People's Government Council in his call for full preparations to meet the U.S. actions in the Taiwan Strait and Korea, June 28, 1950

28. (*right*) The North Korean leader Kim Il Sung speaking after the UN counteroffensive at Inchon, Sept. 1950

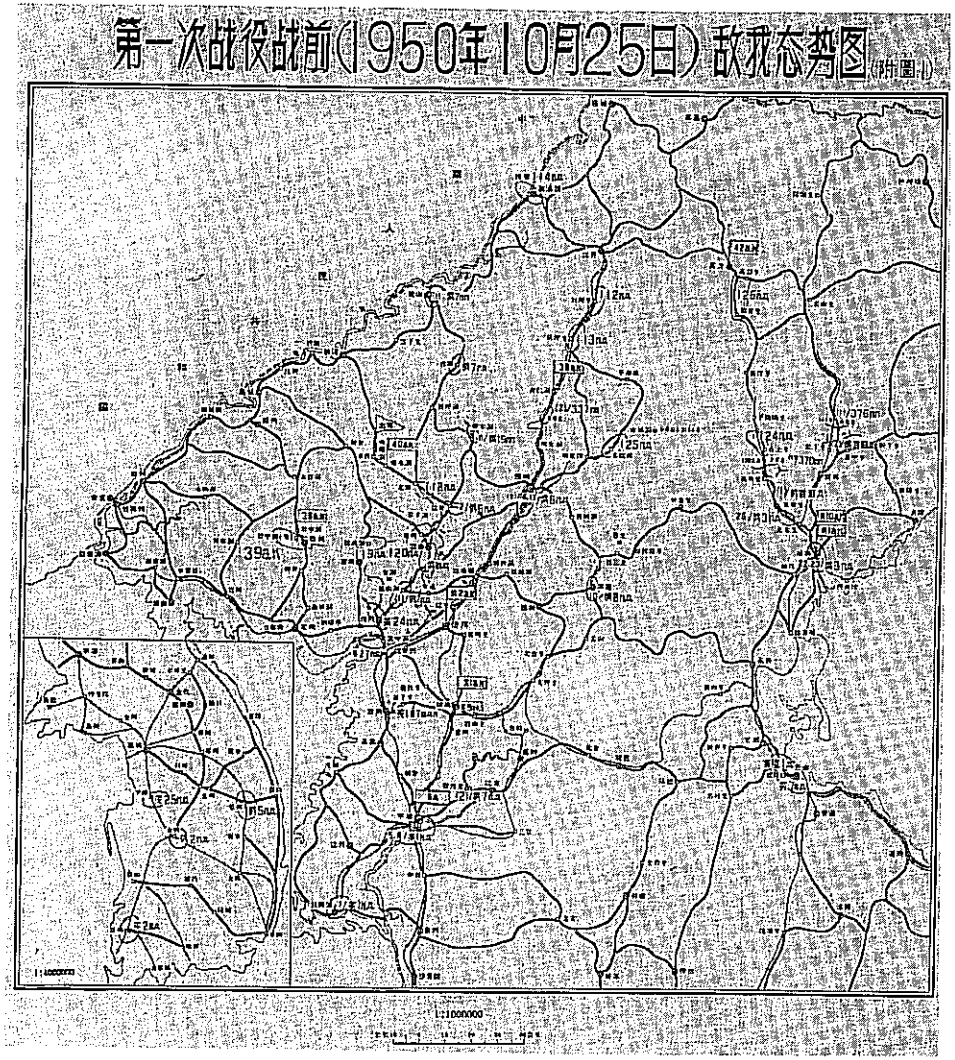
29. (*left*) Zhou Enlai at the meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference where he issued China's warning against sending U.S. troops north of the 38th parallel, Sept. 30, 1950

30. Zhou Enlai and Soviet Ambassador N. V. Roshchin exchanging instruments of ratification on the Feb. 14 treaty and agreements, Beijing, Sept. 30, 1950. Standing at left, back row, is N. T. Fedorenko, counselor of the Soviet embassy and translator at the Mao-Stalin talks.

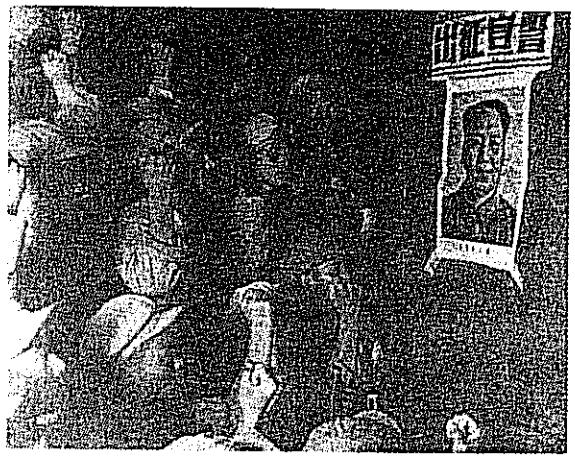


31. Chinese delivering provisions and ammunition to North Korea across the frozen Yalu River, Oct. 1950

32. War matériel being trucked to North Korea, Oct. 1950



33. Chinese map with unit designators in Russian. The map shows the military positions of both sides before the first Chinese campaign, Oct. 25, 1950.



34. Chinese People's Volunteers taking an oath before entering Korea, Oct. 1950

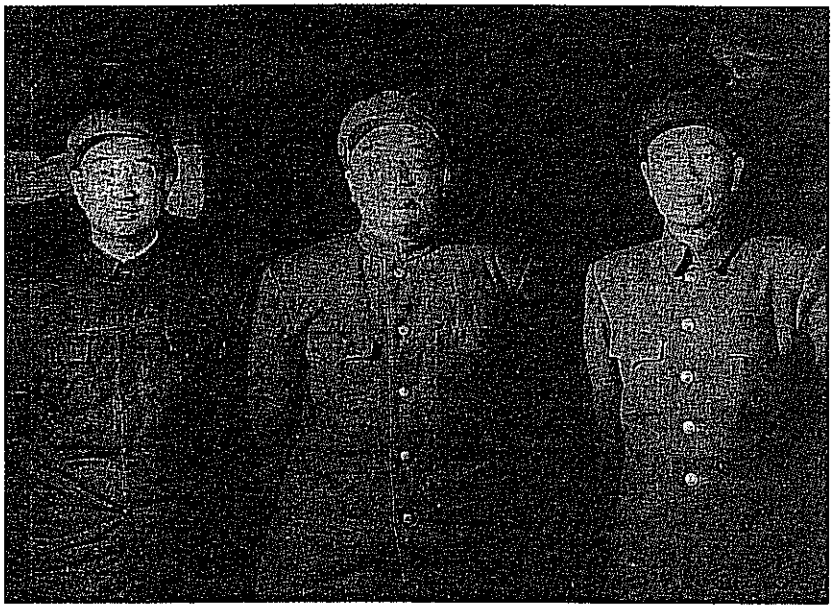
35. CPV troops crossing the Yalu River, Oct. 1950

36. CPV soldiers moving into position in Korea, Oct. 1950

37. CPV Commander Peng Dehuai inspecting the front line positions, 1951

38. Korean women placing a wreath at the tomb of Mao Anying, Mao's oldest son, killed in a U.S. air raid in North Korea, Nov. 1950

39, 40. Kim Il Sung (righ
and Peng Dehuai meetin
in North Korea, Oct.
1950 and Sept. 1951



41. Left to right, CPV Chief of Staff Xie Fang, Peng Dehuai, and CPV First Deputy Commander Deng Hua in the CPV's cave headquarters in Korea, early 1952

42. Mao and Kim Il Sung at war consultations in Beijing, date uncertain

Because Stalin did not want to commit the Soviet Union itself to an action that could result in war with the United States, he sought to induce Mao to back the North Koreans. His desire to draw China into the decisions on Korea was undoubtedly intensified after Acheson's speech on January 12 and as part of his quest to draw a line between Beijing and the West. Khrushchev recalls that in answer to Stalin's request for an opinion on probable U.S. reactions to a North Korean attack, Mao ventured "that the USA, perhaps, would not be involved, because this was an internal question that would be solved by the Korean people themselves."[67] This exchange took place shortly after Mao's departure from Moscow. Because Mao had earlier expressed his doubts about how the United States would react to Kim's attack, it was quite natural for the Soviet leader to have raised the matter again.

The very fact that Kim had not yet received a definite yes or no from Stalin forced him to make a secret visit to the Soviet capital from March 30 to April 25.[68] The Korean leader had used the early months of 1950 to mobilize convincing evidence for his arguments that the victory of his proposed blitzkrieg was assured.

In the spring, the KPA undertook combat reconnaissance missions in the region of Ongjin Peninsula and to the north of Kaesong. From the interrogation of the many southerners taken prisoner in these actions, the North Korean high command concluded that Kim's forces enjoyed overwhelming superiority in tanks and airplanes, and that the South's state of military readiness was poor. The optimism seems justified, for as three former high officials in the DPRK state, "Kim Il Sung had already prepared everything for this attack. There was a 100,000-man army, tanks, airplanes, artillery—everything was ready."[69] Stalin was known to prefer solid facts over "empty talk," and facts like these obviously resonated in his mind.

A former high-ranking North Korean diplomat has provided the most detailed account of the April meeting, which took place in Stalin's so-called "near" dacha and included Pak Hon Yong, the leader of the South Korean Communists. When Stalin asked about events in Korea, "Kim Il Sung answered that the situation was not bad, and that the North and South were getting ready for unification." But he could not predict how the Koreans would respond to "decisive measures," he said. This did not seem to bother Stalin much. People were like Panurge's flock, he replied: "they would follow the leading ram wherever he might go." Pak Hon Yong then spoke up. He described in glowing terms the conditions of the resistance movement against the regime of Syngman Rhee. He said that a "200,000-strong detachment of Communists in South Korea was ready to rebel at the first

signal from the North, and that the population of the South was waiting for land reform and other democratic transformations such as those already conducted in the North."[70]

According to Yoo Sung Chul, who was present at the meeting, Kim recognized that his main task was to calm Stalin's fears of U.S. intervention. To this end, "he made four points to persuade Stalin that the United States would not participate in the war: (1) it would be a decisive surprise attack and the war would be won in three days; (2) there would be an uprising of 200,000 Party members in South Korea; (3) there were guerrillas in the southern provinces of South Korea; and (4) the United States would not have time to participate. Stalin bought the plan."[71]

After listening to the Koreans' presentations, Stalin remarked that "the Korean friends should not expect great assistance and support from the Soviet Union, because it had more important challenges to meet than the Korean problem." Stalin stressed his preoccupation with "the situation in the West" and urged the Koreans to consult with Mao because he had "a good understanding of Oriental matters." The Soviet leader was bluntly telling the Koreans that China was now first among equals within the revolutionary movement in Asia.[72]

Another former North Korean official expands on this last point. Bombarded by Kim's "persistent assertions and requests," he writes, Stalin "reluctantly consented" to his proposals for the attack. Stalin "could not find any excuse for refusal," since Kim had insisted that "he would liberate the people groaning under the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee." Still, Stalin told Kim that even if the United States participated in the war, the Soviet Union had no intention of joining the fray.[73] "Consented," it must be emphasized, did not mean final approval. Stalin was giving a nod to the general idea of an invasion but had made consultations with Mao a condition for his unequivocal assent to any future detailed plan of action.

We find something of the same kind of sliding out from full responsibility in Kim's cautious response to Stalin's question about the situation in the South. Kim could not argue against his own earlier prediction that a "southern rebellion" would result from a shock offensive from the North, but he feared the consequences if that prediction should prove wrong. He thus assigned Pak Hon Yong the task of replying to Stalin, making his colleague the likely scapegoat if the rebellion failed. Less than three years after the end of the war, Pak was tried and executed, though he was not publicly charged with misleading Kim on the revolutionary readiness of the South, for that might have reflected badly on Kim's own judgment and be taken as an admission that Kim had started the war.[74]

Just as Kim was making Pak accountable, so too was Stalin making Mao

responsible for the outcome in case of Kim's catastrophic failure. He had to obligate the Chinese, and this is why he told the Koreans to consult Mao. As Stalin evidently judged the Korean situation, Beijing's involvement there would be perceived quite differently in the West from a PLA invasion of Taiwan. If required, Chinese military actions in Korea had the best chance of sharpening the line between China and the West, and Stalin now put a more Machiavellian construction on his earlier prediction that the Americans would "never agree to be thrown out" of Korea or to lose "their reputation as a great power." Later, this American obsession with reputation would fall under the heading of "credibility," and Stalin had thought of a way to use it against them.

When he emphasized that he was mainly preoccupied with the West, and that he would never fight the Americans in Korea, Stalin was reiterating his consistent stance on the matter. This posture excluded any possibility that he would personally give Kim the green light for the invasion. Instead, the Soviet leader told Kim, "'Since I alone cannot decide, I will pass your war plans and military assistance request on to the Party political committee [Politburo] for decision.' Accordingly, Kim Il-song simply returned [home to Korea]."[75] During his final conversation with Kim in April, Stalin once again urged Kim to consult Mao and gave him at least a tacit but still conditional go-ahead before they parted. The Soviet leader said, "If you should get kicked in the teeth, I shall not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao for all the help."[76]

Stalin here maneuvered himself into the enviable position of having everything to gain and nothing to lose. By forcing Mao to affirm Kim's scheme, Stalin forever after could say that he had left the decision to Mao. Fully aware of Mao's determination to seize Taiwan, Stalin could be reasonably sure of Mao's assent and could be confident that the onus for the attack, whether successful or not and regardless of the U.S. reaction, would rest solely on Mao (and Kim).

This was the background to Kim's visit to the PRC after returning home from Moscow. Despite some Soviet and Korean skepticism about whether the Beijing meeting actually took place, Shi Zhe has said that Kim stayed in his house during the visit.[77] Other knowledgeable sources, Soviet as well as Chinese, bear him out. The authors of a recent Chinese account of China's decision to enter the war flatly state, "In April 1950, Kim Il Sung paid a secret visit to Beijing on his way back from Moscow," though we now know that Kim flew from Pyongyang to see Mao from May 13 to 16.[78]

But much as Stalin had badgered Kim about the need to persuade Mao and to get his guarantee of support for the coming war, these authors say that the Korean leader "only informed Mao of his determination to reunify

his country by military means during the visit and released no details of his military plan, let alone the date of the action."[79] In fact, it could hardly have been otherwise, for no officially approved plan yet existed. Before Kim could proceed further in his planning, he needed the approval of Stalin, who in turn was awaiting the results of Kim's approach to Mao.

Some five years later, Marshal Peng Dehuai recalled that Mao disagreed with Kim's proposed action but had no way of opposing or stopping it, and a senior Soviet diplomat with knowledge of the archives has told us that Mao at first expressed considerable skepticism when Kim told him that Stalin had reassessed the North's potential for a successful assault on the South.[80] Still, the Chinese were pursuing the unification of their own country and could not deny the Koreans the chance to do the same. Mao offered various arguments in the hope of getting Kim to reconsider, but the Korean would not listen and "did not take [them] seriously."[81] He kept guaranteeing that the KPA could "solve the Korean problem" on its own.

A Soviet diplomat recalls that throughout the multiple bilateral talks on Kim's proposals for war, the Soviets knew that the Chinese Politburo opposed the idea.[82] This stands in seeming contradiction to Mao's positive though noncommittal answer to Kim's request for backing. The contradiction disappears, however, if we take into account Mao's preoccupation with Taiwan at this time. By now, the Chinese leader had secured a promise of Soviet support for the invasion of Taiwan. He could not express his fears of American intervention in Korea without admitting to Stalin the likelihood of the same U.S. involvement in Taiwan, thereby jeopardizing that support. Mao had to be positive.

But the Chairman did raise the question of U.S. intervention in Korea with Kim, and this time in a way that did not exclude the possibility. Mao asked him whether he would like China to send troops to the Sino-Korean border if the Americans did become involved. Kim answered that he would achieve victory within a month, and that the United States could not deploy its forces before then. He rejected the need for sending Chinese troops to the border and appeared confident that the Soviet assistance in hand or in the pipeline was all that would be needed.[83]

Stalin was not long in adding his blessing to Mao's for Kim's war objectives. We may never know the exact details of the series of bilateral conversations among the three leaders, but what is obvious even from the material at hand is how skillfully Kim had achieved his ends by playing on the complicated relations between Stalin and Mao. We would predict that if any transcripts of conversations turn up, they will reveal a pattern of Kim exaggerating Stalin's support to Mao, and vice versa. In the process, Kim

Value of Soviet Military Assistance to North Korea, 1949–1951
(in 000s of rubles)

Year	General[a]	Specific recipients		
		Air force	Armored force	Chief Artillery Department
1949	249,962	195,293	n.a.	51,388
1950	869,677	347,757	1,238	383,164
1951	2,612,822	1,182,044	179,253	881,585

SOURCE: Soviet General Staff document in the possession of G. Kuzmin [pseud.].
[a]The total of all military aid, including assistance to the air force, armored force, and Chief Artillery Department, plus other unspecified recipients.

was restricting his own future options and his ability to hedge against failure.

Moreover, even before Mao gave his "approval" of Kim's intentions, the Soviet leader began to act. According to the North Korean general who headed the Ordnance Directorate of the North's Ministry of Defense, "After [Kim's] April meeting with Stalin, Moscow . . . began to send additional weapons. As soon as Kim Il Sung returned home, the weapons began to arrive in huge numbers at the [DPRK] port of Chongjin. The quantities were obviously bigger than before. This was a final stage in the preparations for war. On arrival, the weapons were immediately distributed among the troops deployed along the 38th parallel."[84]

Two sets of data suggest the scale of this Soviet assistance and, to a limited extent, the timing of its delivery. The ruble value of the shipments for the years 1949, 1950, and 1951 is shown in the accompanying table. The Russian original on which it is based is titled "Actual Deliveries in Industrial Prices," but neither the table nor the surrounding text explains how to convert the prices into foreign currency equivalents. Nor do we know what the prices of Soviet armaments were in this period, though we assume the figures were for internal use and not charges to the North Koreans. It is clear, for all this, that Soviet military deliveries to North Korea jumped dramatically after 1949, and the bulk of these were reportedly put in train soon after Kim's return to Korea in April 1950.

Exactly what was shipped, and when, are unknown, but our second set of figures shows that the KPA was well equipped to go into battle. On the eve of the war, it possessed 258 T-34 tanks (under the 105th Tank Brigade), 178 warplanes, roughly 1,600 artillery pieces and mortars, and several detachments of naval vessels. According to Soviet estimates, the North had a decisive advantage over the South in tanks, personnel, artillery and mortars, and planes. The South had the edge in only one category, naval ves-

sels.[85] But that edge bore little on the land battle being planned, and the overall superiority of the North corresponded to the level prescribed in Soviet military doctrine for a successful offensive.[86]

Mao's Target: Taiwan

Meanwhile, through this whole period of consultations, Mao had been concentrating on his own invasion plans. On February 4, while he was still in Moscow, he had ordered the army to organize the paratroop units needed for an assault on Taiwan; a week later, he approved a report from the Third Field Army designating four divisions to train for the landing operations. On March 11, following his return to Beijing, Mao endorsed the efforts of a former Nationalist general, Zhang Zhizhong, to bring Taiwan under Beijing's control through negotiations—the so-called path of peaceful liberation—as part of the propaganda preparations for the armed attack that Mao regarded as inevitable. At the end of the month, he set in motion plans for an assault on the Zhoushan Islands off Zhejiang Province as a prelude to a landing on Quemoy. After Quemoy, Taiwan would be next.[87]

As the phased plan for the invasion of Taiwan was coming together, Mao, on April 21, sanctioned a major demobilization of the People's Liberation Army. We may never know the full reasoning behind this decision, which stayed in force even after Kim's visit later in the month and, even more incredibly, until after the war had begun. Was the Chairman so confident that the civil war, including the occupation of Taiwan, would come to a successful conclusion? Was he so reassured by Kim's predictions of a quick victory and lack of interest in a pledge of backup troops that he could dismiss Korea as China's problem? Or, was Mao simply positioning himself to stay outside the conflict on the peninsula if it got out of hand? Chinese scholars consider the first question the most relevant one in citing three reasons for Mao's decision: the elimination of most of China's ubiquitous bandits, the limited troop requirements for the invasion of Taiwan and Tibet, and the overriding need to cut military expenses and convert to a civilian economy.[88]

Whatever his thinking, Taiwan was the main target. On April 29, Mao directed Liu Shaoqi to rewrite a report on the situation at home and abroad "in a more tactical way" and to deemphasize China's role in the worldwide struggle between socialism and imperialism so as not to irritate the United States.[89] Although fierce anti-American propaganda continued to fill the pages of Chinese newspapers, Beijing made modest conciliatory gestures toward Washington, including the release of three captured American airmen and minor diplomatic initiatives.[90] On the other hand, on May 11,

Mao severely criticized the Political Department of the 32nd Corps for permitting contacts between its officers and American missionaries in Fujian Province opposite Taiwan.[91] By this time, the PLA had begun assembling the invasion force along the coast, from Shandong to Fujian provinces, and Mao feared that news of these preparations would reach Taipei via the Americans.

The timing of this buildup was hardly coincidental. Once Mao was certain of the imminence of war on the Korean Peninsula, he accelerated his own battle plans. In late April, around the time Kim was in Moscow, Premier Zhou Enlai sent a cable to the Soviet defense minister, Nikolai Bulganin, requesting a speed-up in the delivery of such naval requisitions as ships, airplanes, and coastal artillery. Zhou, who among his other duties was to play a major role in creating China's defense industry, now wanted a guarantee that these items would be delivered by the summer of 1950, and no later than the following spring.[92]

Simultaneously, the CCP Central Committee issued an instruction proclaiming "the liberation of Taiwan . . . the most important task for the entire Party" and ordering Party organizations in East China specifically to provide all necessary assistance in preparation for the Third Field Army to cross the Taiwan Strait. Tacitly, a race had begun between Mao and Kim. Each rushed to fire the first volley, an act that could doom the other's plans. Neither leader would have acted differently even if he had foreseen that outcome.

The Decision

For Stalin, Kim had obeyed his request to consult Mao, and Mao had not opposed the plan for war. Yet Stalin had acted before Mao's response.

Shortly after Kim's return to Pyongyang from Moscow, he received confirmation of Stalin's attitude toward an invasion of the South. The "confirmation" came in the form of a team of Soviet advisers sent to oversee the preparations for war. They included Major General Vasiliev (a battle veteran and hero of the Soviet Union who recently had replaced Major General Smirnov as head of the advisory group), Major General Postnikov (adviser to the KPA General Staff), and Major General Marchenko (an adviser to the KPA General Political Bureau). At this time, a bilateral working group was formed to consider how to proceed. The Korean members included Kim Il Sung, Kang Kon (chief of the KPA General Staff), Kim Chaek (deputy commander of the KPA), and Ho Ka I (or A. I. Hegai, a leader of the Soviet Koreans and member of the Politburo of the Korean Workers' Party). It was "almost certainly" in the course of a meeting of this working group that Kim Il Sung "declared his final resolution to start a war."[93]

Yoo Sung Chul, who as head of the KPA Operations Directorate was in on all the proceedings, provides a revealing picture of the decision-making process. According to him, the new Soviet advisers were chosen for their combat experience; all were from the Soviet General Staff in Moscow:

> I did not know, but I thought, that when they sent the advisers, they would have had to consult first in Moscow how to start the war. But they arrived empty-handed. They didn't bring any written order with them. . . . After the May 1st celebrations, Postnikov summoned me. I went to him, and he asked me if we had a plan in our staff. I answered yes. Every army, of course, has an operations plan. We had composed ours on our own. I translated it from Korean into Russian.
>
> Postnikov said, no, this plan is no good. He did not like the way we treated coordination between different branches of troops. Moreover, our plan was a defensive one, and he did not like it. He said that they [the Soviet military advisers] would draft one themselves. After a few days—I do not remember, three or four days—they drafted a combat order and passed it to Kang Kon, the chief of staff. Kang Kon summoned me and told me that it was top secret. He ordered me to translate it [from Russian into Korean]. I translated it and passed it to Kang Kon. Kang Kon gave this plan to Kim Il Sung. We did not send it to Stalin for approval, though probably the advisers sent it [to Moscow] themselves.
>
> When they were writing this operations plan, they did not consult with anybody. They did everything themselves. They did not study the terrain and did not know it. . . . Because of that, they made a lot of mistakes. . . .
>
> [This operations plan] was an order for a counterattack and included movement and combat orders for each unit. Another document concerned the coordination between the different branches of the armed forces, among the army, navy, air force, artillery, etc. Besides that, there was a document on engineering support. These were separate documents. There also was a document concerning logistics, on providing supplies from the rear. . . . The draft in Russian was entitled "Preemptive Strike Operations Plan." Presumably, at this same time, the advisers rushed their plan to Stalin for his approval. This top secret plan was then and forever after referred to as a "counterattack" plan, even though it included a "plan to conceal the preparations for a southern invasion as military exercises."

Other sources agree that both the Soviet and the Korean drafters knew the plan involved an attack, not a counterattack. The idea was to use the turmoil and guerrilla struggle in the South and the continuing border skirmishes along the 38th parallel as a "pretext." As Yoo says, "Even after Kim Il Sung dies, you won't be able to find any legal document about an attack; it was a counteroffensive. The meaning of this was (and that was stated there) that South Korea was attacking us and that we would counterattack. . . . It was a fake, disinformation to cover ourselves."

The Soviet role in drafting the plan causes us to examine in some detail Stalin's shift of position on Kim's project, from a wary endorsement of the invasion to an evident willingness to participate in the planning. As one senior Soviet diplomat puts it, "Up to April 1950, Stalin was always cautioning Kim Il Sung concerning his plans for military action, but after that he for some reason changed his mind and began to push for a military solution very actively."[94] One reason for this change of heart relates to the broader strategic framework that so preoccupied Stalin. During April–May, the American hands-off policy, especially toward Korea, was receiving ever closer scrutiny in the Kremlin. Stalin may have been impressed, for example, by the statement of Tom Connally, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, that Korea was not an indispensable part of the U.S. defense strategy and that the Communists could overrun Korea whenever they "take a notion" to do so.[95] It certainly impressed Syngman Rhee, who chastised Connally on May 10 for extending "an open invitation to the Communists to come down and take over South Korea." While some scholars have concluded that statements like Connally's finally convinced Stalin that the Americans would not oppose the North's invasion, we believe his reasoning was far more complex.[96]

March and April had marked a noticeable hardening of American policy toward China. On March 15, Acheson publicly denounced the Sino-Soviet treaty as "an evil omen of imperialistic domination," and the Chinese leadership for having sold out China to the Soviets.[97] His words seemed to be given force a month later, when the Communists invaded Hainan Island on April 16. As if to demonstrate the accuracy of the CIA's estimate that the Chinese possessed "the capability of carrying out their frequently expressed intention of seizing Taiwan during 1950,"[98] the PLA defeated the Nationalist forces in about two weeks. This estimate came only three days after the President received NSC 68, a report on U.S. objectives and programs for national security that, according to the historian Gordon Chang, strengthened the military point of view on China within the U.S. administration.[99] More and more senior officials and analysts advocated stepping in to ensure the Nationalists' hold on Taiwan. Enough signs of a broad behind-the-scenes review of the administration's Asian policies had surfaced in the press that experts in Moscow could not have missed it, though only solid intelligence could have given them a complete and accurate picture.[100]

Stalin would have concluded from press reports and intelligence that, though the Americans might want to aid Taiwan or even South Korea, it would take them many months to amass and get that aid to the western Pacific. The timing was on Kim's side if he moved quickly and decisively. In the worst case, U.S. intervention would lead to a clash between Beijing and Washington and a denial of Taiwan to the Chinese Communists. The resulting rise in Sino-American hostilities would only increase Mao's reliance on Stalin.

Furthermore, Stalin was well aware that the United States would be most reluctant to go to war with the Soviet Union over Korea. With an army that had been sharply reduced after World War Two, it could not run the risk of Soviet retaliation against Western Europe or Japan. Moreover, the Soviet leader reportedly minimized the danger of any such escalation because he had bought Kim Il Sung's argument that a North Korean attack would touch off a revolution in the South, making for a quick and easy consolidation of control.*

Thus, we would argue, it was a mixture of short- and long-term estimates of the U.S. posture in Asia, as of April 1950, that finally led Stalin to become directly involved in Kim's military designs. In doing so, as we have remarked, the Soviet dictator would be pursuing his goals on several levels—to expand the buffer zone along his border, to create a springboard against Japan that could be used during a future global conflict, to test the American resolve, to intensify the hostility between Beijing and Washington, and, finally and foremost, to draw U.S. power away from Europe.

For Mao, meanwhile, these matters were still of little concern. He had a new problem to contend with. The massive buildup of forces opposite Taiwan that he had envisioned was taking longer than expected. Thus, in early June the Central Military Commission postponed the attack on Taiwan itself until the summer of 1951. The planning for the seizure of key intermediate islands was ordered to proceed.[101]

This change in the invasion timetable helps explain why on June 15, only ten days before the outbreak of the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, Mao instructed the acting chief of the General Staff, Nie Rongzhen, to integrate Nationalist defectors into the regular PLA divisions and to develop agricultural units to make the army more self-sufficient. Mao ordered the large-scale demobilization of the PLA to go forward and approved plans for an ideological indoctrination campaign after the troop reductions had been completed later in the year.[102]

With the Taiwan invasion on hold, Mao could proceed with operations to consolidate his grip on the mainland and did not even hint at the necessity of heightening the level of military preparedness or beefing up his forces on the Korean border in anticipation of the war. Just the opposite. On June 23, the then deputy commander of the units chosen for the invasion of Taiwan, Su Yu, asked the Central Military Commission to transfer three or four corps (*jun*) to East China as a reserve force for the later campaign in the Taiwan Strait. Mao approved this proposal.[103] Riveted to the long-term preparations for that campaign, Mao paid no special attention to Korea, where the conflict would break out 48 hours later.

*The best proof that the Soviets really believed in these optimistic estimates is the fact that the battle plan, which they initially drafted, scheduled the first stage of the military operations to end with the occupation of Seoul after just three or four days of combat. The plan was predicated on the assumption that uprisings throughout the South would result in a lightning victory within about a month. We shall return to the battle schedule when we review the initial stage of the war. See above, footnote to p. 136.

Mao, as we have shown, was aware of Kim's preparations for military action because he had dispatched ethnic Korean troops and weaponry to the KPA in January, communicated with Stalin on the issue in February, and had relevant conversations with the Korean leader in April. At the same time, there are good reasons to accept the conclusion of Korean and Chinese authors that Mao was not informed about the details of the Korean plans or the timing of the assault.[104] His low priority for China's military preparedness on the very eve of the war is perhaps the best justification for this conclusion.

Keeping Mao out of the picture was Kim's intention. A striking fact about the two months before the war is that the North Koreans—and the Soviets—took steps to keep the Chinese in the dark about their military preparations. According to Yoo Sung Chul, for example, members of the pro-Chinese Yan'an faction "who had entered various military positions were excluded" from helping to draft the operations plan in part "because we had to maintain security."[105] And a former senior North Korean supply officer vividly recalls that before the outbreak of the war, all Soviet weapons were transported to the DPRK by sea instead of by rail through Chinese territory for the specific purpose of denying the Chinese any hard intelligence about the North's preparations. Another retired North Korean officer confirms that purpose.[106] Mao's endorsement had not won Kim's trust.

The PLA's generals were thus in the worst possible position. They knew that an attack was coming in Korea but not when or how. Their armies were being demobilized even as they were supposed to be readying them for a major invasion far to the south. Their leader anticipated an American response to the North's action in Korea, but, as we shall see, they could adopt only modest countervailing measures (such as strengthening the Strategic Reserve).* Mao had spoken, and they could only fall in step behind him.

For these reasons, a mood of apprehension permeated the Chinese high command in the two months before June 25. At least some PLA com-

*In the winter of 1949, Mao had removed the Thirteenth Army (made up of the 38th and 39th corps) from the Fourth Field Army to form a support force for local PLA units in times of emergency. The following May, against the possibility of crises in Taiwan, Korea, or Vietnam, Mao added the 40th corps, then on Hainan Island, to this so-called Strategic Reserve. The unit was based in Henan Province. Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, p. 16; Du Ping, "Wise Decision," p. 8; Sun Mei, "Introduction to the Various Armies," p. 21.

manders feared that Pyongyang's attack on the South might endanger the young Chinese state. Nonetheless, they could not impede Kim's plans or even appear to be disapproving. Their lack of precise knowledge of the North's timetable was obviously Kim Il Sung's doing, and for this reason, it is not surprising that "on the very eve of the war, relations between the PRC representatives in Pyongyang and DPRK authorities were very tense. Sometimes the Soviet embassy even had to mediate, stressing to the Koreans that the Chinese were their comrades, brothers, and natural allies."[107]

Allies they may have been, but after the war, Chinese leaders, behind closed doors, still voiced their bitterness at having been excluded from the final decision-making on the war. In the mid-1950s, Peng Dehuai and Chen Yi fumed that Kim's "surprise attack" was designed solely by him and Stalin, without consultations with Beijing but at a terrible price for China.[108] As one indicator of the Chinese attitude toward that "surprise attack," we may note that from June to October of 1950—until the Chinese troops entered the war—Beijing did not send any substantial assistance to its "Korean brothers."[109]

The War Begins

The timing of the attack for 4:00 A.M. on Sunday, June 25, was Kim's decision. The fighting began on the Ongjin Peninsula in the west, an area of recurrent border incidents, and then spread along the parallel. The approved operations plan had not specified a date or time. Behaving in his usual manner, Kim consulted with only a handful of senior Koreans. He "simply made up his mind and went ahead. But he normally made up his mind after listening to the Russian advisers." One knowledgeable Korean general adds, "June 25th was proposed by the advisers. It was Sunday, and they may have used the experience of war with Germany, when Hitler attacked Russia on June 22, also a Sunday."[110]

General Kang Sang Ho, who attended the cabinet meeting that rubber-stamped the decision for war, notes that it was held only an hour before the invasion began:

> Even there, Kim was talking about a counterattack, about South Korea attacking. According to the Constitution, only the cabinet could decide questions of war and peace. Kim said that the South Koreans were already attacking. So as commander-in-chief, Kim ordered a counterattack. He said, "Now war and peace should be determined by the cabinet. I order the war to begin. Do all of you agree?" Everyone did.[111]

We now return to the question of the Soviet–North Korean plan for prosecuting the war. Scheduled to last about a month, the war was to proceed

down the peninsula in stages, and the outcome, it was stated, would hinge on the first few days of battle. It is in this sense that Yoo Sung Chul, one of the retired North Korean generals we interviewed, recalls, "The Korean War was planned to last only a few days, so we did not plan anything in case things might go wrong. If you fight a war without preparing for failures, then you are asking for trouble." Another, General Chung Sang Chin, explains that with the conquest of Seoul, "We thought that Syngman Rhee would capitulate, and that the Americans would not intervene. After three days we reorganized the army. The Soviets drafted a new battle plan. We started to assign orders to the units but communications were very poor, and U.S. aircraft were taking a very heavy toll." Finally, an officer of the KPA engineering unit that occupied Seoul laments, "After the occupation of Seoul there were no further preparations. . . . We had to reorganize our communications. We organized two new corps, the first occupied Seoul and the other fought in the east. Communications between divisions, corps, and armies were disconnected. Each unit moved on its own, and each had its own plan."[112]

The Korean and Soviet generals we have interviewed concur that the stages planned to follow the conquest of Seoul never occurred. Improvisation was necessary because communications and coordination among North Korean echelons and units were poor and because the predicted grand uprising in the South never materialized, though there was some serious fighting by guerrillas and infiltrators. But Kim's passion for secrecy had made it impossible to organize opponents of the Rhee regime sufficiently to even attempt a nationwide rebellion. One former North Korean general notes, "Kim supposed that Pak Hon Yong would take care of the guerrilla and Party members [for the uprising in the South], but he failed."[113]

If the southern guerrillas did not get the word, it is no wonder that Washington was caught totally by surprise. Within hours of the North's early-morning assault, Washington received reports of what was clearly an all-out offensive, and Department of State intelligence specialists promptly concluded that the "move in Korea was decided only after the most minute examination [by the Kremlin] of all factors involved in the Far Eastern situation." Moscow, it was believed, had acted to liquidate the South Korean government "on ground militarily most favorable to the Soviet Union" and to back "possible Chinese moves in support of Ho Chi Minh [in Indochina], Burmese Communists, or Malayan Communists."[114]

Department policymakers had definite views on the proper U.S. response, including an urgent request for a meeting of the UN Security Coun-

cil.[115] Although they were uncertain about China's precise role in Kim Il Sung's decision to launch the attack, they believed that, at the very least, China had not opposed the strike. As they saw it, if the United States did not make a strong reply, there might be "a defeat for U.S. policy in Korea," and this in turn might "cause Chinese Communist leaders to adopt more bold and militant tactics in their attempts to promote Communism in other parts of Asia." Conversely, not only would a powerful U.S. response "produce a marked psychological reaction" on these leaders, but "the prestige of the Chinese Communist regime would suffer" and "the relative weakness or ineptness of the USSR in its Korean adventure" would be exposed. Such an outcome, so the argument went, would weaken Beijing's ties to Moscow.[116]

At dinner that evening at his temporary residence, Blair House, President Truman listened to his military and political lieutenants assess the unfolding crisis and then "emphasized the importance of making the survey of possible next moves by the Soviet Union."[117] The President apparently concurred with senior Department of State officers that if the Soviets "could get away with this move they would probably move in other areas."[118]

It was these other moves that were of paramount concern. In the case of the People's Republic of China, the worry in these and related conversations was not Chinese intervention but whether Taiwan would survive an invasion from the mainland. There was no mention of Korea at all, for example, in a memo that Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, approved on June 14. Only eleven days before the outbreak of the war, it warned that "the strategic interests of the United States will be in serious jeopardy if Formosa [Taiwan] is allowed to be dominated by a power hostile to the United States" (meaning the PRC).[119]

As for the Soviet Union, once the war started, many U.S. officials concluded that it would stay out of the war. They could adduce no evidence of Soviet intentions to intervene directly on the Korean Peninsula. Such senior Soviet specialists as George Kennan and Charles E. Bohlen expressed the opinion that Moscow would instead do its utmost to "get the United States involved with Asiatic troops, particularly Chinese."[120] Even after the beginning of the all-out Chinese offensive in late November, Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall argued that the United States should not become "involved in a general war in China with the Chinese Communists. To do this would be to fall into a carefully laid Russian trap."[121]

The U.S. and South Korean fortunes on the battlefield steadily deteriorated until mid-August, when U.S. air power and armor began to take their toll on the overextended North Korean forces.[122] During this time, news

from the war zone absorbed Washington; neither China nor the Soviet Union, whatever their ultimate intentions, was of comparable concern.[123] In any case, U.S. leaders felt reasonably confident about their initial assessments of the Chinese and Soviet unwillingness to risk war with the United States.

Nevertheless, on June 27 the President took the precaution of ordering the U.S. Seventh Fleet to prevent all military action in the Taiwan Strait, thereby bringing U.S. military power to the salvation of the Nationalists on Taiwan and into direct opposition to Beijing. Given the preponderance of naval forces on the American side, China had no military means to reply, and intercourse between Washington and Beijing quickly degenerated into a war of words.

But as the exchanges flew back and forth, analysts in Washington were somewhat mystified that, in public at least, Beijing did not appear to assign a high priority to the war.[124] There is no evidence that they took special note of a Chinese editorial of July 6 implying that since the United States would be unlikely to concede defeat, the war could be a prolonged affair.[125] Despite warnings from the Indian government "against dismissing lightly" Beijing's allegations that the U.S. actions in the Taiwan Strait constituted aggression against China and were a harbinger of direct military action against China, Washington had no way of judging such statements and added them to a long list of things that might go wrong.[126]

In fact, China had good reason not to assign much priority to Korea. For the moment, its immediate problem was coping with the ominous reality that Truman had committed naval units to the Taiwan Strait. For the moment, the significance of that reality put any thought of coming to Kim's defense on the back burner. Mao's overriding concern with China's own predicament came across most tellingly in his remarks at a meeting of the Central People's Government Council on June 28:

> The U.S. invasion of Asia can only touch off the broad and resolute opposition of Asian people. On January 5, Truman said in an announcement that the United States would not intervene in Taiwan. Now his conduct proves that what he said was false. Moreover, he shredded all international agreements related to the American commitment not to intervene in China's internal affairs. The United States thus reveals its imperialist nature in its true colors. It is very advantageous to the Chinese people and the people of Asia [to draw a lesson from the U.S. policy toward Taiwan]. The United States is unable to justify in any way its intervention in the internal affairs of Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The sympathies of the Chinese people and the vast people of the world lie with the countries that have been invaded, and by no means with American imperialism. . . . People throughout the nation and the world, unite and make full preparations for frustrating any provocation of American imperialism.[127]

The Chinese leader considered the U.S. actions toward Taiwan tantamount to a declaration of war.[128] His speech was published in *Renmin Ribao* on June 29 and was evidently intended for a Washington audience.

The most striking fact is that Mao did not make a point of U.S. interference in Korean affairs. He directed his anger instead mainly at American policy toward Taiwan. In a twinkling, Mao's dream of realizing China's complete unification was shattered. His announcement that "it is useful for the Chinese people" to draw a lesson from the U.S. policy toward Taiwan, we believe, demonstrated his anger and appeared to be an omen of how he would later act.

For a time, however, Mao remained determined to put into effect the decision to reduce the strength of the PLA by 1,500,000.[129] On June 30, the Central Military Commission and the Government Administration Council (replaced by the State Council in 1954) agreed to create a body called the Central Demobilization Commission, with Zhou Enlai as head, to oversee this troop reduction.[130] Moreover, as late as July 12, the Chinese high command proceeded with the first stages of the stretched-out Taiwan invasion plan by authorizing assaults on several offshore islands.[131] As we shall see, the schedule for the attack in the summer of 1951 was not finally scrapped until early August.

In this, Mao at last acknowledged that the outbreak of the Korean War had dramatically altered China's strategic position. Beijing was now compelled to face challenges in two directions at once, Taiwan and Korea. Mao's strategic doctrine had long called for concentrating forces in only one direction, and he had to choose.[132] As early as June 30, Zhou Enlai told the head of the navy, Xiao Jingguang: "The change in the situation adds difficulties to our plan to attack Taiwan. . . . The present plan for our armed forces [to cope with the changed situation] is to continue demobilizing the ground forces, strengthen the navy and the air force, and postpone the schedule for attacking Taiwan."[133] The decision communicated to Xiao reflected Mao's first doubts about where his priorities lay. The earlier order to put off the attack on Taiwan was now extended to include the intermediate offshore islands.

Mao waited for Washington's response to what he saw as China's forbearance to no avail. Slowly and not without reluctance, the Chairman began to change his mind. In the middle of July 1950, the Central Military Commission for the first time cited the Korean fighting as the reason for postponing the liberation of Taiwan for the time being.[134] On August 11, it formally delayed the invasion until 1952, and at the end of September, Mao banned the use of slogans promising liberation by a definite date from the National Day celebration.[135] With the Taiwan invasion on long-term hold and the war in Korea escalating, Mao began to concentrate on countering the American threat at hand.[136]

Beijing Prepares for War

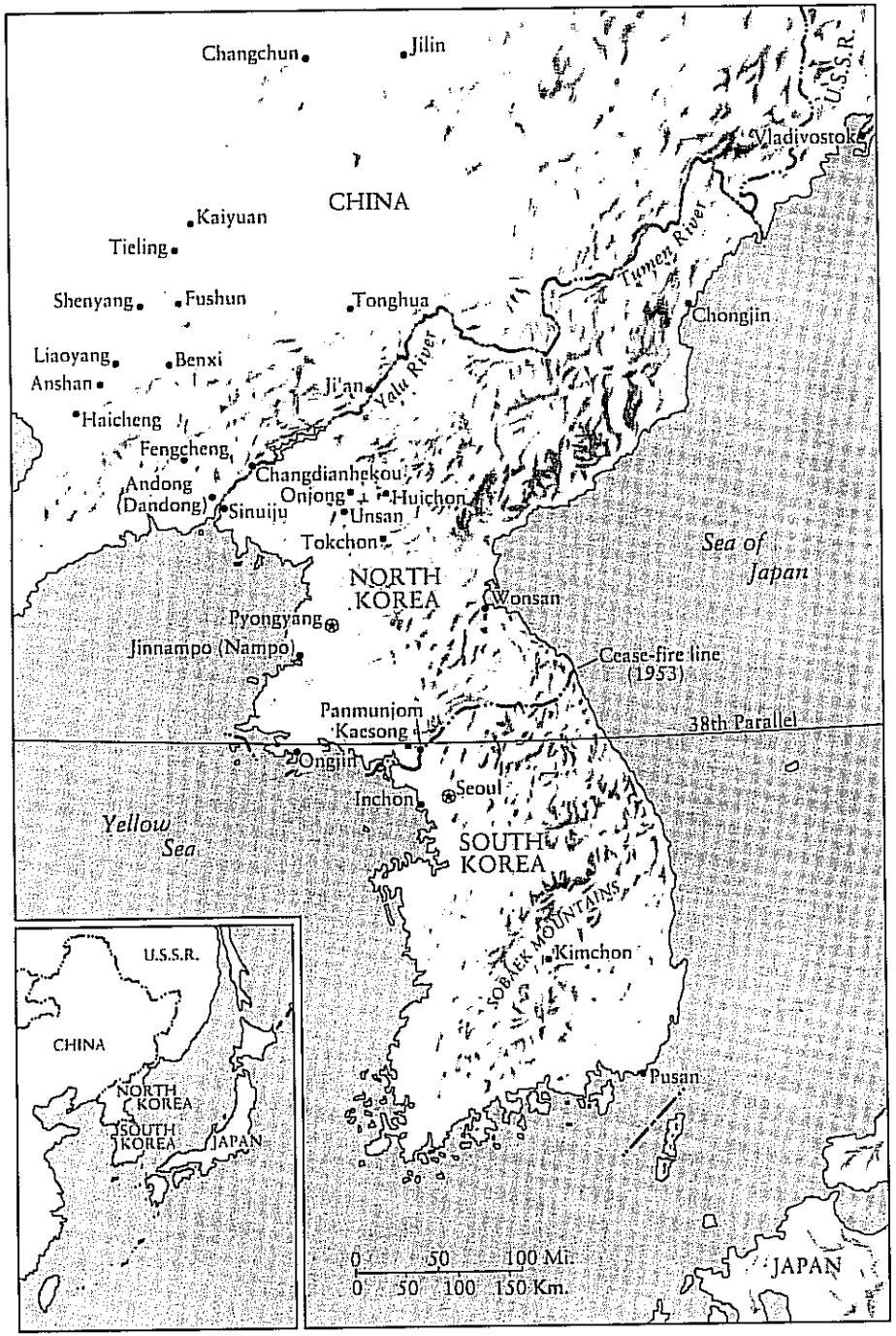
In the eyes of the Chinese leaders, the Korean conflict was a revolutionary war and could not be used to justify the "American armed invasion of Taiwan."[137] Thus, when weighing their own future conduct, two questions reportedly preoccupied them: why was Washington's response to the Korean crisis so swift, and why did the United States drastically change its policy toward Taiwan?[138]

To Mao, the answer to both seemed plain: he quickly concluded that the real U.S. aim was to threaten China itself, and he began to act accordingly. His first move shortly after the fighting broke out was to secure his own border by ordering Chinese anti-aircraft units stationed in Andong (now Dandong) to cross the Yalu River to the Korean city of Sinuiju with the objective of protecting the bridges there (see the map on p. 160).[139]

Mao had no doubts about who had launched the war or why. For him, this was a revolutionary war, a struggle for liberation, and he had already blessed Kim Il Sung's aims.[140] But whether because of what seemed to be an early and growing obsession with the minutiae of the Korean conflict or for some other reason, he clearly had doubts about the outcome. The war was barely weeks along when he predicted that the North probably could not achieve an early conquest and began to weigh the potential impact of a massive U.S. intervention on China's security.[141] On July 7 and 10, Premier Zhou Enlai, who was Mao's deputy and the person in charge of daily affairs at the Central Military Commission,* called its senior members into emergency session to examine the PLA's options in dealing with the mounting conflict.[142] At the July 7 meeting, these officers decided to transfer crack units from the Fourth Field Army to the Northeast, near the Korean border.[143] They then passed a major five-part resolution, which an official Chinese source has briefly summarized as follows:[144]

1. [Concerning] the movement and deployment of troops: by the end of July, four corps and three artillery divisions will be deployed at Andong, . . . Ji'an, and Benxi [in Northeast China];
2. [Concerning] the organization of headquarters: Su Yu is appointed com-

*Zhou was in charge of the commission's day-to-day operations from Oct. 19, 1949, to July 1952, when Mao, disgruntled by Zhou's increasing stature within the military establishment, removed him from that role and named Peng Dehuai as his replacement. Four years later, in 1956, Mao ruptured the tie altogether by removing Zhou from the post of commission vice-chairman. Based on Deng Lifeng, *Xin Zhongguo*, pp. 7, 262; and Qi Shengping, "Description of Marshal Liu Bocheng," p. 3.



Korea and Adjacent Areas

mander and political commissar of the Northeast Frontier Force Command, and Xiao Hua is appointed deputy political commissar;

3. [Concerning] preparations for [adequate] logistic support;

4. [Concerning] preparations for bringing up (the related military units) to full strength: the General Logistics Department [of the Central Military Commission] is charged with formulating relevant plans for implementation by the prescribed time; and

5. [Concerning] political mobilization: in general, political mobilization should be conducted under the slogan of defending national security. The General Political Department [of the commission] is made responsible for working out a directive with concrete plans.

Mao signed the commission's resolution at midnight on the 7th and directed the acting chief of the General Staff, Nie Rongzhen, to implement it. The resolution was the first high-level decision to prepare for China's entry into the Korean War.

It was passed the same day as the Security Council authorized the creation of a UN command for Korea under a U.S. general.[145] Since the Soviet representatives had not yet ended their walkout, this resolution, like the earlier ones of June 25 and June 27 branding North Korea an "aggressor," went through without a veto. Although Soviet, Chinese, and Korean authors have called the Soviets' absence "a mistake," it was by no means inadvertent. Indeed, the decision was taken at the Politburo level.[146] Andrei Gromyko recalls that he advised Stalin to order the Soviet representative, Iakov Malik, to return to the Security Council and use the veto to defeat any resolution hostile to North Korea or the Soviet Union. But Stalin merely responded, "In my opinion, the Soviet representative must not take part in the Security Council meeting." Gromyko even argued that the Soviet absence would allow the Security Council to dispatch the forces of other countries to South Korea as "United Nations troops." Stalin was unmoved by this argument.[147]

There are two reasonable explanations for Stalin's behavior. First, he may still have believed at this point that the war would go according to the approved operations plan. In that case, the UN decisions would be irrelevant. The second (but not mutually exclusive) explanation is connected with the Sino-Soviet treaty. On the very day the war began, it became clear that the United States would intervene. Given Stalin's long-held policy of avoiding a Soviet-American clash, we believe that he would have reasoned as follows. Should the situation deteriorate to the point that China felt it had to become involved, one side or the other might formally declare "a state of war." That would activate the treaty, thereby obligating Moscow to "immediately render military and other assistance [to Beijing] with all means at its disposal" (Art. 1). Stalin would have been appalled at the pros-

pect, and he would have welcomed the thought that the United States would not declare war with its troops operating under a UN banner. Not surprisingly, the Soviet vice–foreign minister stated at this time that the Soviet Union would not interfere in Korean affairs, and that other countries should not intervene as well, a statement that Chinese officials privately characterized as a "precious jewel" for Truman.[148] The record shows that both Mao and Stalin knew where the other stood on the issue of overt Soviet support.

At the meeting of July 10, the Central Military Commission decided to send the Strategic Reserve to the Northeast, to supplement what was by then a thoroughly thinned-out PLA force.[149] With the wind-down of the civil war, more and more troops had been transferred to South and Southwest China, to the point where only the 42nd Corps and local security units, a total of 170,000 men, with five infantry divisions as the main force, remained in the Northeast Military Region opposite Korea.[150] These divisions represented only one twenty-seventh of the PLA strength.[151]

On July 13, the Central Military Commission ordered the new and old deployments consolidated into a new command, the Northeast Frontier Force (NFF). Su Yu was appointed commander and political commissar and Xiao Jingguang deputy commander. It is clear from the appointment of the two generals who had been responsible for the attack on Taiwan, that Mao had now singled out the Northeast as the principal area of military concern.* The initial troop strength of the NFF—consisting of the Strategic Reserve (i.e., the Thirteenth Army, or the 38th, 39th, and 40th corps), the 42nd Corps (from Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province), and three artillery divisions (the 1st, 2nd, and 8th)—would total 255,000 men.[152]

Two days later, the commission ordered the entire Thirteenth Army and the 42nd Corps to set off for the Sino-Korean border. By the end of the month, these forces had taken up position in Andong, Fengcheng, Ji'an, Tonghua, Liaoyang, Haicheng, Benxi, Tieling, and Kaiyuan, all close to the frontier.[153] Over the next two months, the troops underwent intensive combat training with the U.S. army as their postulated enemy. Their commanders ordered ex-Nationalist officers and soldiers, especially those who had fought alongside U.S. soldiers in Burma, to lecture on American tactics.[154] By then, the Chinese leaders were confronting the very real possibility of an enlargement of the war.

*Su Yu, deputy commander of the Third Field Army, had been in overall charge of the plan to occupy Taiwan, and Xiao Jingguang, commander of the navy, was responsible for transporting the PLA invasion forces. Zhou Jun, pp. 67, 72. The commission's "Decision on Strengthening the Frontier Defense of the Northeast and Creating the Northeast Frontier Force" also ordered Deng Hua and Huang Yongsheng, commanders of the Fifteenth and Thirteenth armies, to swap posts. But only this part of the plan was carried out. No Northeast Frontier Force headquarters was ever formally established; Gao Gang, who headed the Northeast Military Region, assumed command of the NFF units. Du Ping, "Wise Decision," p. 9; Huang Yi, "Zhou Enlai," 1: 9; "Frontier Force."

At the outset, as the North Korean forces surged toward the southern tip of the peninsula and appeared on the verge of total victory, the war had caused concern in China, but it did not receive priority attention.[155] Apart from ordering the Northeast People's Government in Shenyang to provide some arms and economic and medical aid to North Korea,[156] China's leaders continued to be preoccupied with the problem of economic reconstruction. As July wore on, bringing increased U.S. involvement, however, the central government in Beijing began to have second thoughts about Kim Il Sung's power to win a quick decision. As Zhou Enlai was to reveal some weeks after the fact, Mao had concluded in late July that the military "situation already suggested that the war might turn into a protracted war."

According to Nie Rongzhen, after analyzing the situation in early August, when the North Korean troops had reached the point of their farthest advance, Mao "and the Central Committee thought that there would probably be complications and a reversal of the situation, because . . . the U.S. imperialists might launch a counteroffensive . . . and because [the North Korean] troops had advanced too far in isolation, leaving their rear area vulnerable."[157] Mao had expressed the same fears to Yoo Sung Chul, the director of the KPA Operations Bureau, when Yoo briefed him in August or early September.* Probably at this same time, Deng Hua, the commander of the Thirteenth Army, asked to send observers to Korea. The request was rejected by the Koreans.[158] Still positive about his ultimate victory, Kim preferred to keep the Chinese at arm's length. Mao's warnings were relayed to Kim and Stalin. Neither took them seriously.[159]

On August 5, Mao contacted Gao Gang, who had taken command of the units deployed as the Northeast Frontier Force units the previous month.[160] Responding to a telegram from Gao, Mao gave Gao authority to redeploy these units as necessary and declared that they were "unlikely" to be assigned any "operational tasks" before the end of August.

Although the order establishing the NFF indicates that its mission was

*According to Lim Un, *Founding of a Dynasty*, pp. 187–88, Mao told Yoo: "It is excellent that the Korean people have driven the enemy into the southern sea. But if you push them hard into a corner and lay siege to them for a long time, they will unite tightly like clenched fists. . . . It is difficult to attack the enemy once it is united closely. On such an occasion, it is not so bad for you to retreat to some extent and untie the enemy. Then they will dissolve their union as they stretch bended fingers. . . . By doing this, you can dissipate their strength by cutting off their fingers one by one. . . . From a tactical point of view, sometimes retreat is better than an attack. . . . Your enemy is not an easy one. Don't forget you are fighting with the boss of imperialism. Be prepared for the worst all the time and examine seriously the possibilities of retreat."

originally conceived as a defensive one,[161] Gao was now clearly being told to get it combat ready, and quickly. He was specifically ordered to

> position these units for battle by the first ten days of September. . . . Please convene a meeting of cadres at the corps and division levels in the second ten days of the month and there instruct them on the purpose and significance of the operation and its general direction. By the end of the month, various units should make full preparations and await orders to set off. You must solve [in time] the ideological problems of the troops so as to keep up their morale and have everything in a state of readiness.

On the same day, August 5, Nie Rongzhen, in accordance with Mao's decision, issued orders to the same effect: the NFF was to "complete all preparations within this month and stand by for action pending further orders."[162] By late August, U.S. and Taiwanese intelligence had noticed these troops on the move.[163]

August was also the time that the Chinese came to grips with the prospect that American atomic weapons might be used if the PLA entered the war. As they weighed their choices in confronting the United States in Korea, China's top commanders met many times both in Beijing and in the Northeast, and this issue was to come up in both meetings and private conversations. Although abundant evidence has come to light that the United States did consider the nuclear option in Korea, virtually all of the conclusions on the Chinese assessment of the situation have been based on indirect evidence.[164] Because of the importance of this issue to broader strategic considerations in the Sino-Soviet alliance, we must consider how the Chinese dealt with the prospect of an American nuclear response to any PLA intervention.

Beijing's public position, as we have seen, was that the Soviet Union had broken the U.S. nuclear monopoly and "boosted the courage of the revolutionary people."[165] This propaganda line served China well so long as war was a remote contingency. Facing a direct confrontation with the United States in combat, however, had a way of clearing the mind of propaganda. The Chinese high command had to reexamine the validity of its position on the bomb as it weighed its choices for and against direct intervention. At the end of this process, these leaders concluded that the United States would probably not use atomic bombs against China or their forces in Korea.[166]

Beijing's reexamination was prompted in part by scare stories sweeping throughout China. Ironically, these stories may have originated from some government publications in July that had deliberately raised the specter of "the menace of the atomic bomb."[167] Rumormongers, some of them agents of the Nationalists, had fanned a doomsday mood by spreading tales about

the power of atomic weapons and promoting popular alarm that they might be used.[168] Atomic panic even seized a fraction of the Thirteenth Army. Reportedly, 10 percent of its officers and men dreaded both the U.S. army and the atomic bomb, and called the Yalu River bridge the "gates of hell."[169] To offset the rumors and fears, the Party launched a campaign to restore morale and confidence in the military's ability to protect the Chinese people.[170]

Despite these reassurances, the leadership itself continued to debate the odds of Washington's using nuclear weapons against China. General MacArthur, in a visit to Taiwan in late July, had appeared to sanction a nuclear first strike, and after the visit, Chiang Kai-shek issued a statement "indicating that the talks [with MacArthur] laid the foundations for a joint defense of Formosa and Sino-American military cooperation."[171] At a meeting in early August, He Long, a member of the Central Military Commission, is said to have bluntly asked, "Is there any chance of the Americans using the atomic bomb?" Nie Rongzhen answered reassuringly: "They might use it, but remember that the United States no longer enjoys an atomic monopoly. . . . So they may be less eager to use it nowadays." But Ye Jianying, Su Yu, and some of the other senior commanders there could not shed their anxieties so easily and kept on asking about Washington's nuclear intentions.[172]

In another high-level meeting, the Politburo studied the argument that U.S. planes might drop atomic bombs on advancing troops in order to defeat human-wave assaults, a tactic then under consideration if China entered the war. The majority of Party leaders reasoned that this would be most unlikely, but even if the bomb were employed on the front lines, Chinese troops would not face a catastrophe. They could devise tactics to minimize the danger to themselves and bring the U.S. defenders within their range of damage.[173]

These conclusions on both the strategic and the battlefield use of nuclear weapons were based on several different arguments. At the most general level, the advocates for action held to the precepts of People's War and its line that only men, not a weapon of mass destruction, could determine the outcome of any war. Moreover, what the Americans would later call a nuclear umbrella had been extended to China by the terms of the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Americans would be deterred, a word never used but clearly implied.[174]

The advocates further argued that the nation's industry and cities could not be effectively targeted by the small number of nuclear weapons then assumed to be in the U.S. arsenal. The industrial base was underdeveloped, mostly small-scale, and scattered, and the urban population was less than

10 percent of the country. A nuclear strike against China would be highly destructive but not decisively so. All these views found official expression throughout the next decade.

The Politburo deduced that Washington might want to select the PLA's bases and troop concentrations in the Northeast as the priority targets for a U.S. nuclear strike. The Soviet Union had vital interests in the Northeast, thanks to the secret agreements concluded in February, and Moscow would have to retaliate in order to protect its own bases in Lüshun and other places. The high command restated its conviction that the Americans would have to weigh possible Soviet retaliation when they pondered the pros and cons of a nuclear strike against China.

The foregoing arguments mostly concerned an attack on China proper, but the advocates of action also argued that the United States would not resort to nuclear weapons in Korea either. The Chinese forces were experienced in mobile and guerrilla warfare; they could scatter and hide, as indeed they did prior to their massive intervention in October. After entering Korea, they could take cover in strong, concealed fortifications, and the Chinese believed that the role of tactical nuclear weapons in the mountainous battlefields of Korea would be limited. Finally, the Chinese and UN forces would be confronting each other in what was called "jigsaw pattern warfare" (*quanya jiaocuo de zhanzheng*). In this confusing and ever changing battlefield, the Americans could not avoid hitting themselves.

These arguments proved compelling to the Politburo. Party and military leaders used only a minimum of time debating the likely conditions or consequences of the use of atomic weapons, even as they pursued a political campaign to ease fears in the public and the army about the bomb's effects. A typical instance of this campaign occurred on August 13 when commanders of the Thirteenth Army convened a meeting of officers at the division level and above in Shenyang to discuss how to accelerate preparations for war. When the possible U.S. use of nuclear weapons came up on the agenda, the arguments were familiar and well rehearsed: the atomic bomb could not decide the outcome of war; any war must ultimately be determined by the soldiers on the ground; the battlefield use of atomic bombs would destroy not only Chinese, but also U.S. troops; the Americans would have to think twice before employing a weapon that was universally opposed by the people of the world. The basic tone of the meeting was that the Americans would almost certainly not resort to the bomb in Korea. By this time, no one was seriously offering counterarguments, and the mood of confidence was dutifully transmitted to the skeptical but reticent soldiers.[175]

Nonetheless, there were some quiet dissenters in the high command. In

his capacity as commander of the Fourth Field Army, Lin Biao, for example, let slip his anxieties about the devastation that could be wrought by atomic weapons. It should be stressed that accusations against Lin on this matter long predated his purge and denunciation. Mao had originally picked Lin to command the Chinese forces in Korea. On September 30, Mao discussed the appointment with Lin, who underscored the U.S. possession of the bomb and the terrible consequences it could inflict on China. Allegedly, when Mao persisted, Lin refused the assignment on the excuse of poor health.[176]

Six days later, at a meeting of the Central Military Commission to discuss how to ensure Soviet assistance to Chinese forces in Korea, Lin Biao again voiced his concerns about the bomb. After listing the many problems the leadership was facing in its efforts to consolidate the new regime and reconstruct the warworn country, he said, "We have a certainty of success in defeating the Nationalist troops. The United States is highly modernized. In addition, it possesses the atomic bomb. I have no certainty of success [in fighting the U.S. army]. The central leadership should consider this issue with great care."[177]

We will never know whether Lin Biao was speaking only for himself or voicing what other Chinese generals, such as the earlier skeptics He Long, Ye Jianying, and Su Yu, may have felt but had been unwilling to say openly. Lin was at least repeating what many in the populace and the army ranks were grumbling about: the great gamble of making war on a nuclear-armed nation. In the final analysis, as expected, Mao's unwavering stand on the nuclear issue ended the argument. Within days, the time for decision arrived, and at the moment of truth in early October, no one raised the nuclear question.

App., Doc. 46.
Wu Xiuquan, "Process," p. 14.
Ibid.
Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, p. 450; Wu Xiuquan, *Huiyi*, pp. 240–41.
Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, p. 450.
App., Doc. 44.
Wu Xiuquan, *Huiyi*, p. 241.
On the Chinese perception of the Western reaction to the treaty, see *ibid.*, 48–49.
Mao implied the existence of the Additional Agreement in a speech he made arch 1958 (see Mao [39], p. 164), but Goncharov, "From Alliance Through osity," p. 14, was the first open mention of it.
Han Nianlong, pp. 30–31.
Interview with a senior Soviet diplomat stationed in Beijing during the s, Dec. 1990.
Mao [39], p. 164. In an attempt to avoid mentioning the Additional Agreement, some Soviet writers have interpreted Mao's "two colonies" as a reference to no-Soviet joint enterprises in Xinjiang and the Northeast. See Borisov, *Iz Is-*p. 73; and Bazhanov, p. 50.
The quotations in this and the next paragraph are from Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, 6.
Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.
App., Doc. 41.
App., Doc. 42.
The editorial did not carry Chen Boda's by-line; see "New Epoch." This and llowing four paragraphs are based on App., Doc. 43.
For the text of the revised editorial "New Epoch," see *ZhongSu Youhao xi Xuexi Shouce*, pp. 21–24.
Clubb to Acheson, Dec. 23, 1949, in FRUS 1949, 8: 644; Acheson to Bruce, 5, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 6: 295.
Sulzberger, "Secret Codicils." In January, according to *Pravda* (Feb. 1,), U.S. newspapers reported that a secret "Harbin agreement" and a secret scow agreement" had been concluded in October that gave the Chinese the to pass through North Korea enroute to the Soviet Union, gave permission e Chinese to establish a pilot training school in the Soviet Union, set aside l regions in China for stationing Korean troops, and permitted the deploy- of Soviet troops in Xinjiang and Manchuria.
Sun Siding, pp. 9–10; Deng Chao, "Imperialism," pp. 14–15.
Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, pp. 446–47.
Ibid., p. 446; Wu Xiuquan, *Huiyi*, p. 241.
App., Doc. 46.
Unless otherwise cited, the information in this and the next paragraph is a well-informed Soviet specialist, 1990. The text of the 1945 "Agreement Be- the Republic of China and the U.S.S. R. Concerning the Chinese Changchun ay" is in U.S., Dept. of State, *United States Relations with China*, pp. 593–

App., Doc. 31.
Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, p. 210.
Gromyko, *Pamiatnoe* (1988), 2: 128–29. See also Gittings, p. 153.

60. Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, p. 465.
61. App., Doc. 52.
62. See the reports in *Pravda*, Feb. 24–27, 1950. Perhaps not without a certain irony, Stalin assigned Vice–Foreign Minister A. I. Lavrentev to accompany Mao to Beijing. As ambassador to Yugoslavia, Lavrentev had played a prominent role in Tito's split with Moscow.
63. Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, p. 471.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 451.
65. In 1956, at a CCP Politburo meeting, Mao chided Peng Dehuai, his defense minister, for not understanding that the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance was inevitable. Quan Yanchi, *Mao Zedong*, p. 119.
66. Mao designated 10 people to give speeches at the meeting. Four were Party bigwigs (Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiaoping), and six "democratic figures." For their names and Mao's comment, see App., Doc. 53.
67. For the text of the speech, see App., Doc. 54.
68. Deng Liqun, "On the Eve," p. 149, for example, argues that at this time the Additional Agreement expelling "imperialist forces" from Xinjiang and the Northeast was "favorable for us; it also coincided with our political course."
69. Interview with a well-informed Soviet specialist, 1989.

Chapter Five

1. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100.
2. The quotation is from Merrill, *Korea*, pp. 26–27, which is based on the original tapes of the Khrushchev memoirs. Merrill has shown that there are serious omissions in the English transcripts about the events surrounding the Korean War. One especially misleading example he points to is *Khrushchev Remembers* (1970), pp. 368–69. We will use the full Russian text of Khrushchev's memoirs on the war published in *Ogonëk* (Khrushchev, "Korean War," pp. 27–28) and, where necessary, will compare that text with the English version. In his published memoirs, Shi Zhe does not mention the Stalin-Mao discussion of Kim Il Sung's intention to attack the South during Mao's visit. According to Chen Jian, a Chinese scholar who read the original manuscript of Shi's memoirs, Shi said: "Stalin told Mao Zedong, 'Kim Il Sung came. He wants to move against the South. Kim is young and brave; however, he overestimates the favorable factors and underestimates the unfavorable ones.' Stalin asked for Mao Zedong's opinion." Interview with Chen Jian, Aug. 1992.
3. Among recent studies on the origins of the Korean War adding to an already vast literature on this subject, see Cumings, 2 vols.; and Foot, *Substitute for Victory*. In our judgment, the best summary of the "competing explanations" of the war's origins is Merrill, *Korea*, Chap. 1; and the most intellectually interesting effort to examine who started the war is Cumings, 2: Chap. 18. See also G.-D. Kim, "Who Initiated the Korean War?," pp. 33–50; and H. Kim, pp. 326–70.
4. "Top Secret, Copying Prohibited," p. 213. At this time, the NKVD was no more. Before its successor, the KGB, was established, the secret police operated under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
5. Interview with the Soviet Korean specialist Vasilii Mikheev, May 1991. According to Syn Song-Kil and Sin Sam-Soon, pp. 242–43, there are no documents on the decisions leading to the Korean War in either the Soviet Ministry of Foreign

Affairs or the Soviet Ministry of Defense archives. (This is a pseudonymous article written by a former high official in the North Korean Foreign Ministry now living in Moscow and a Russian expert on Korea.) According to one report, a Central Committee–ordered search for documents on the war in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives in 1989 turned up only one item—a transcript of a conversation between Mao and Mikoyan in April 1956, in which Mao recalled his Moscow talks with Stalin on Korea. But we now know that those archives contain other relevant documents, though they are scattered and mostly still classified. Interview with a former Soviet military adviser to North Korea, who claims to have had access to these archives, as well as to those of the military, Dec. 1991. For a discussion of the archival materials that are becoming available, see the Preface.

6. For a useful discussion of the historiography of the war, see H. Kim, pp. 335–68.

7. See, for example, Whiting, pp. 42–43.

8. On the history of Korean communism in general, see Scalapino and Lee, 2 vols; for the Soviet role in this development specifically, see 1: Chap. 5.

9. The unit is variously called the 88th International Independent Brigade (Wang Yizhi, p. 157; Yoo Sung Chul, interview of April 13, 1992); the 88th Special Independent Ambush Brigade or the 88th Special Sharp-shooting Brigade (Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Nov. 15, 1990, pp. 21, 22); or the 88th Special Sharp-shooting Patrol Brigade (*Chungang Ilbol*, Seoul, June 15, 1992, in FBIS: East Asia, June 17, 1992, p. 16). According to Wang Yizhi, the 88th was formally created on Aug. 1, 1942. The *Chungang Ilbol* article, purportedly based on a Soviet Ministry of Defense document, gives these details: the brigade was ordered into creation by Stalin in June 1942, was under the command of a Chinese officer, Senior Col. Zhou Baozhong, consisted of 400 Chinese and Koreans and 150 Russians and Nanai tribesmen, and was attached to the Soviet Far Eastern Army.

10. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this and the next paragraph is from Morosov, p. 10. This article is based on an interview with Col. Grigorii Kuzmin, the pen name of a well-informed Soviet military historian who served as a senior military adviser in North Korea and had access to closed Soviet military archives. See also Maksimov, p. 4. Kuzmin kindly granted us an interview as well, and we are grateful to him for sharing such important materials as the files on the 66 officers of the 88th Brigade on condition that his real name not be revealed.

11. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. The quote is from Yoo, who spent three years in the 88th Brigade with Kim Il Sung. We have provided details on these three men in the Preface.

12. Cho Man-sik, a highly respected nationalist, treated the Soviet forces in Korea as occupiers who differed little from the Japanese. His attitude was noted by Col. Gen. T. Shtykov, co-chairman of the Allied negotiations on Korean unification and one of the most influential officers in the Soviet military administration in the North. Shtykov reported to Moscow that Cho was "nationalistic," "anti-Soviet," and "not loyal to Stalin's policy." Because of this report, Stalin agreed to Cho's removal and ordered his representatives to find a new leader who would be more subservient to Soviet interests. Morosov, p. 10; interviews with Kuzmin, April–July 1991. For a detailed account of the Soviet role in the formation of the North Korean regime, see Lan'kov, pp. 104–12.

13. For important new information on the life of Kim Il Sung, see Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," passim. During the Korean war, Yoo was the director of

the Operations Bureau of the KPA. When his memoirs on the war were translated, some of the most senior Soviet military advisers who had been stationed in North Korea told us they were angered that Yoo had "sold out state secrets" but basically confirmed the validity of his information. The material on the selection of Kim is from Kang Sang Ho. Interview with Kang, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. A Soviet diplomat interviewed by John Merrill stated, "Stalin himself gave Kim the nod—saying, 'Korea is a young country. It needs a young leader.'" John Merrill, personal communication, March 2, 1992.

14. Morosov, p. 10; interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991, and with a former high-ranking Soviet military adviser to Korea, June 1991.

15. For the text of Zhu De's order to the Koreans, see *Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenjian Xuanji*, p. 121. See also Cumings, 2: Chap. 11.

16. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

17. Petukhov, pp. 93–94, 96, 107–8.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 101–12; interviews with G. Kuzmin, April-July 1991.

19. The monumental study of the unrest in the South is Cumings, especially 2: Chaps. 7, 8. See also Heo, pp. 311–12.

20. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

21. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

22. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Sladkovskii, *Znakomstvo*, p. 357.

25. Petukhov, p. 155. In July 1946, the CCP Northeast Bureau had set up an office (*banshichu*) in Pyongyang, and part of its mission was trade liaison. In March 1949, the office was upgraded and renamed the Trade Delegation of the Northeast Administrative Committee. Ding Xuesong et al., pp. 625–26.

26. See, for example, Cumings, 2: 355–69. Cumings uses no Chinese sources to substantiate his conclusion that "veterans of the China fighting, not Soviet-aligned Koreans, dominated the Korean People's Army" (p. 361). The claim rests almost entirely on contemporary U.S. intelligence reports. Cumings does highlight the largely unknown role of Koreans in the Chinese civil war and the importance of the Chinese experience to many of the soldiers in the KPA.

27. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

28. Zhang Zhenglong, p. 574; Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, pp. 39–40, 44; Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, p. 21; Yang Zhaoquan, p. 431.

29. Lim Un, p. 182. Lim obtained most of the materials for this book from Yoo Sung Chul and Lee Sang Jo. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

30. Kim Il Sung arrived in Moscow on March 4 and departed on April 7. The visit was extensively covered by *Pravda* (for example, March 4, 13, 21, and 25, and April 10 and 12), but the paper did not mention any talks with Stalin, speaking merely of an agreement on economic and cultural cooperation. For a brief discussion of the trip, see Merrill, *Korea*, pp. 143–44.

31. Morosov, p. 11. The man who acted as interpreter was Anatolii Kulikov (Shabshin), the Soviet vice-consul in Seoul in the mid-1940s. On his return to Moscow, Kulikov served as the Central Committee's specialist on Korean affairs. Another participant in the talks, Marshal Meretskov, in a later conversation with Kuz-

min, generally supported Kulikov's statement. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

32. In a Dec. 1991 interview, a former Soviet military adviser to North Korea, who claims to have had access to his country's foreign ministry and military archives, stated that Stalin disapproved of an all-out assault against the South. Yoo Sung Chul bears him out. During the talks in the spring of 1949, Yoo says, "First, they [Stalin and Kim] discussed the economic agreement. By the end of the talks, Kim Il Sung spoke about the possibility of war, but Stalin at this time did not agree with him." Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

33. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

34. Merrill, "Origins," p. 2.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

36. Heo, pp. 314–15.

37. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991.

38. Merrill, "Origins," p. 3. Heo, pp. 315–16, states, "Unlike what is generally supposed, the guerrillas were not annihilated. Many guerrillas survived and they continued to participate as support troops throughout the Korean War. They were not incapable of going on the attack."

39. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung San Chin, April 13, 1992. The quote is from Yoo.

40. Merrill, *Korea*, pp. 187–88. On the guerrilla activity in this period, see *ibid.*, Chaps. 4–6; and Cumings, 2: Chaps. 7–8.

41. Interview with a former high-ranking North Korean diplomat now living in the Soviet Union, June 1991. See also Bak, pp. 257–60, quoted in Heo, pp. 317–18.

42. Lim Un, p. 168; Syn Song-Kil and Sin Sam-Soon, p. 249.

43. Interview with a senior Soviet diplomat who has had extensive access to the relevant archives, Aug. 1992; Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100.

44. Interviews with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992, and V. P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992. Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, pp. 25–26, states: "We also were equipped with modern military equipment transferred to us by the Soviet forces, who withdrew in 1948. Unsatisfied with this, Kim Il-song made two trips to the Soviet Union in 1949, concluding a treaty of friendship with Stalin and receiving military aid in heavy weaponry such as tanks and field guns, further strengthening the KPA." On the February trip, see Kobayashi, pp. 22–26. Kobayashi's source, Gen. Dmitrii Volkogonov, cited documents from the Soviet archives. The March–April trip is confirmed by V. P. Tkachenko, interview, March 30, 1992; Syn Song-Kil and Sin Sam-Soon, p. 250; and Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100. From the details Syn and Sin give on this visit, it is clear that one of the authors either participated in or was briefed on it.

45. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992. See also Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, p. 26.

46. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100.

47. Khrushchev's account appears to combine information from two separate visits. As Merrill has shown, after telling about the first talks, Khrushchev says, "In my opinion, either the date of his return was set, or he was to inform us as soon as he finished preparing all of his ideas. Then, I don't remember in which month or year, Kim Il-sung came and related his plan to Stalin." Merrill, *Korea*, p. 25. Merrill's account, which is based on the Khrushchev tapes, does not appear in Khrushchev, "Korean War." There he writes (p. 27), "I want to tell those things to which I was an eyewitness. It seems to me in 1950, when I had already begun to work in Moscow, or a little bit earlier before arriving in Moscow, Kim Il Sung came with his delegation." Khrushchev became the first secretary of the Moscow Municipal Party Committee in Dec. 1949. Adzhubei, p. 29.

48. Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, p. 25.

49. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.

50. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100.

51. The Communist leaders might well have discussed Korea before Truman and Acheson gave their speeches (on Jan. 5 and Jan. 12, respectively).

52. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.

53. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. The information is from Kang.

54. Interview with V. P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992.

55. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

56. Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, pp. 642–43; Deng Lifeng, *Xin Zhongguo*, p. 60. Nie's translator uses the term "long war," but the Chinese original says "a large-scale war." Nie Rongzhen, *Nie Rongzhen Huiyilu*, p. 748. With the outbreak of war, Kim Kwang Hyop was appointed army chief of staff. Scalapino and Lee, 1: 392, and 2: 997–98. Three divisions of the 4th Field Army—the 164th, 165th, and 166th—contained some 40,000 ethnic Koreans. Virtually all of these men served in the Korean War. The Koreans in the 164th and 166th had already gone to Korea in 1949. The all-Korean 165th Division contained 13,500 officers and men plus a cadre brigade of 1,500; these are the "14,000" men referred to by Nie. This force was in Korea by the end of March 1950. Xu Yan, "Tortuous Course."

57. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. The quote is from Kang.

58. Gen. Dmitrii Volkogonov, head of the Institute of Military History in Moscow and author of the biography *I. V. Stalin: Triumf i Tragediia*, as cited in Kobayashi, pp. 22–26; and article citing interview with Dr. Gavriil Korotkov of the same institute, *Korean Herald*, Aug. 30, 1992.

59. Interview with V. P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992.

60. Khrushchev, "Korean War," p. 28. Khrushchev uses the verb *zaprosit'*, which normally means to request information in written form.

61. Shi Zhe, *Zai Lishi*, pp. 466, 472. The article on Korotkov (n. 58) gives the date as Feb. 27.

62. The information in this and the next paragraph is from the interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. On the South Korean Workers' Party and its reorganization in 1948, see Merrill, *Korea*, pp. 87–90. For a discussion of the Chirisan guerrillas, see *ibid.*, pp. 119–22, 145–46, 154–55.

63. Lim Un, p. 181.

64. Scholars continue to debate both the intent of Truman's and Acheson's remarks and how they were perceived in other capitals. The historian Bruce Cumings, for example, argues that Acheson included South Korea in the defense perimeter and was so understood by both prominent U.S. journalists and leaders in Moscow and Pyongyang. But according to Michael Schaller, it was clear as early as Sept.

1947 that the Joint Chiefs of Staff "had little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea." Moreover, even the Far Eastern commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, "gave very little public indication [before June 1950] that he considered Korea especially vital to the United States." Schaller accepts the view that Acheson had excluded Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter, though in his speech he promised Korea aid and, if attacked, military support through the United Nations. The political scientist John Merrill adds that when the Acheson speech was "widely interpreted as a sign that the United States had decided to distance itself from the Rhee government," U.S. spokesmen attempted to downplay its significance. Merrill cites a report that Kim Il Sung was "greatly excited to learn of the speech." Cumings, 2: 423–28; Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur*, pp. 161, 163, 172; Merrill, *Korea*, pp. 166–67. For balanced assessments of some of the issues involved, see Bernstein, pp. 417–18; and George and Smoke, pp. 146–49.

65. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.

66. Khrushchev, "Korean War," p. 28.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Interview with V. P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992.

69. Interview with Generals Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

70. Syn Song-Kil (pseud.) in Syn and Sin Sam-Soon, pp. 250–51. Yoo Sung Chul has identified Syn as a former vice-minister in the North Korean government who was heavily involved in the decision-making on the war. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

71. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. According to Yoo, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, p. 28, "our southern invasion plan ended with the occupation of Seoul after four days."

72. Syn Song-Kil and Sin Sam-Soon, p. 250.

73. Lim Un, p. 168. Though Lim's dating of this visit to early March is almost certainly wrong, we consider his information on the whole reliable.

74. On the purge of Pak Hon Yong in Dec. 1955, see Scalapino and Lee, 1: 447–52.

75. Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, p. 26. We attribute this account to Kim's April visit based on Yoo's statements that the invasion was approved shortly after Kim returned home, and that Kim handed the approved battle plan to his chief of staff in May.

76. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.

77. Interview with He Di, June 23, 1992. He Di had interviewed Shi Zhe in 1990. Both M. S. Kapitsa and the former North Korean generals we interviewed doubt that such a visit ever took place. The latter believe the poor relations between Kim and Mao argue against it. Yoo Sung Chul notes, "I personally think that Kim did not visit Beijing after meeting with Stalin. It is improbable because until 1951 relations between Kim and Mao were not so good. . . . At the beginning of 1950, Korean officers who had served in the PLA—in the 8th Route Army—arrived in Korea. They did not respect Kim Il Sung too much. They always said, 'Mao Zedong, Mao Zedong.' Because of that, I heard, Kim Il Sung was so jealous that at almost every Supreme Officers' Meeting, he would say, 'Mao Zedong is Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung is Kim Il Sung.' He was implying that it was his country, and he was the boss there." Interview with Kapitsa, April 3, 1992; interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

78. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100. One entry in the chronological notes V. P. Tkachenko kept for reference reads: "April 7–26—[Kim Il Sung's] visit to the USSR (China)." Interview with Tkachenko, March 30, 1992.

79. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100; interview with Tkachenko, March 30, 1992. See the fn., p. 136, which summarizes a document from the Soviet archives; this and other documents date the visit from May 13 to 16.

80. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this paragraph is from an interview with a well-informed Chinese specialist, Oct. 1991; and a senior Soviet diplomat, Aug. 1992.

81. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100.

82. Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992.

83. Information from a well-informed Chinese specialist, Oct. 1991, based on interviews with Shi Zhe and Lei Yingfu.

84. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. The quote is from Chung. Cumings, 2: 447–48, argues on the basis of a contemporary CIA report that the supply of Soviet weapons had not been "geared to an invasion in June 1950" or any other specific time. Chung's statement appears to contradict Cumings. Interview with a former Soviet military adviser to Korea, Dec. 1991.

85. Interviews with G. Kuzmin, April–July 1991; Plotnikov, p. 41.

86. An example of the Soviet thinking on the superiority needed for offensive operations is *Istoriia Velikoi*, 5: 57, cited in Werth, p. 953. The example is for the offensive drive from Warsaw to Berlin. See also Evangelista, p. 120, n. 33.

87. This paragraph is based on Mao [20], pp. 256, 257, 259, 271, 282. On Mao's plan to attack Taiwan, see Zhou Jun, p. 72; Zhao Wei, pp. 32–35; and *Gongfei Gongtai*.

88. The PLA totaled 5,300,000 men before April 1950, when the Politburo decided on a cut of 1,400,000. Tang Qun and Li Bing, p. 673. A total cut of 1,500,000 was ordered on June 30. Academy of Military Science, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Liushi Nian Dashiji*, pp. 488–89. On the three reasons for Mao's demobilization decision, see Xu Yan, *Jinmen*, p. 124.

89. Unless otherwise cited, this paragraph is based on Mao [20], pp. 310, 319, 322, 336, 357.

90. N. B. Tucker, pp. 56–58.

91. The 32nd Corps was originally under the jurisdiction of the Shandong Military District Command. As part of the military buildup opposite Taiwan in 1950, the Central Military Commission moved the corps to Nanping County, Fujian Province, and put it under the 10th Army. See Academy of Military Science, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Liushi Nian Dashiji*, p. 453.

92. The details on Zhou Enlai's cable and the Central Committee's instruction discussed in the next paragraph are from Zhou Jun, p. 70. On Zhou's role in the Central Ordnance Commission and the creation of China's defense industry, see Lewis and Xue, *China's Strategic Seapower*, Chaps. 2, 4.

93. The information in this and the following five paragraphs is from Lim Un, pp. 171–72; Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," p. 26, Dec. 27, 1990, and interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992 (the long quotation is from Yoo).

94. Interview with a high-ranking Soviet diplomat who formerly held one of the leading positions in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, Feb. 1991.

95. Connally. For State Department comments on this statement, see Rusk to Webb, May 2, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 64–65.

96. Quoted in G.-D. Kim, "Legacy," p. 285.

97. Acheson, "United States Policy," pp. 467–72. The quote is on p. 468.

98. Rusk to Acheson, April 17, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 6: 330. On the strongly pessimistic reactions to the invasion of Hainan Island as a portent of the fate of Taiwan, see Strong to Acheson, April 27, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 6: 335–39.

99. G. Chang, p. 70. Our analysis here closely follows Chang, pp. 69–76. The text of NSC 68 is in FRUS 1950, 1: 234–92.

100. See, for example, "U.S. China Policy Called Confusing"; and Reston, "Asia." At the beginning of the war, Chinese leaders appear to have concluded that given a choice between losing Korea and losing Taiwan, the American administration would become vastly more exercised over the loss of Korea. See, for example, Ye Mang.

101. Xu Yan, *Jinmen*, p. 124; Zhou Jun, p. 72. On Mao's resolve to proceed against Taiwan, see his report to the 3rd plenum of the 7th Party Congress (June 6, 1950). Mao [15], pp. 391, 394. This report is also in Mao, *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* (Beijing, 1977), 5: 26–32.

102. Mao [35], pp. 410–11. On Mao's plan for a sweeping demobilization of the PLA, see Mao [4], p. 310.

103. Zhou Jun, p. 69; He Di, "Last Campaign"; interview with a well-informed Chinese specialist, Oct. 1991.

104. Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, p. 100; interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. See also Lim Un, p. 186: "To our knowledge they [the Chinese] did not have any prior consultation nor did they consent to starting a war."

105. Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, p. 26.

106. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

107. Interview with V. P. Tkachenko, March 30, 1992.

108. Interview with He Di, April 9, 1992.

109. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992.

110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*

112. *Ibid.*; interview with former KPA major Ju Young Bok, April 13, 1992. Yoo Sung Chul seems to waver on whether the first stage of the Korean operations plan allowed for three days or four in his published article. See Yoo Sung Chul, "My Testimony," Dec. 27, 1990, pp. 26, 28, and Dec. 28, 1990, p. 13. In our interview with him, he insisted the total plan was for three days, but a former Soviet adviser states the first stage of the month-long plan was to end after three days with the seizure of Seoul. Interview, Dec. 1991.

113. Interview with Kang Sang Ho, Yoo Sung Chul, and Chung Sang Chin, April 13, 1992. The quotation is from Yoo.

114. U.S., Dept. of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Estimates Group, "Korea," June 25, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 150.

115. For details on high-level Department of State thinking at this time, see Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, Chaps. 44–45.

116. U.S., Dept. of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Estimates Group, "Korea," in FRUS 1950, 7: 153. For an illuminating history of the policy of weakening the Sino-Soviet alliance, see G. Chang.

117. Annex to Jessup memo, June 25, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 161.

118. Editorial note, in *ibid.*, p. 143.

119. MacArthur memo, June 14, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 161.

120. Nolting to Matthews, June 30, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 258.

121. Jessup memo, Nov. 28, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 1243. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's statement agreeing with Marshall's assessment is in *ibid.*, p. 1246.

122. According to a report of the Chinese military attaché in Pyongyang, the North Koreans suffered 40% casualties (that is, more than 50,000 killed and wounded) in their drive to the Naktong River, at the Pusan perimeter. The report was circulated at a meeting of the Central Military Commission on Aug. 6. Spurr, p. 61.

123. U.S. analysts, of course, monitored the spate of Chinese articles denouncing the war. These are reviewed in Whiting, Chap. 4.

124. For an early, lucid examination of all the evidence then available, see *ibid.*, especially Chap. 4.

125. "Victorious Future."

126. Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, July 6, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 310. See also the Army Dept. memo of that date on p. 311.

127. App., Doc. 55.

128. See Wu Xiuquan, "Wu Xiuquan's Speech," p. 208; and Guo Binwei and Tan Zongji, p. 35.

129. At the National Conference on Finance on Feb. 24, 1950, PLA commander Zhu De proposed that the PLA reduce its personnel by 2,000,000 men. It was partly on the basis of this report that the Politburo decided to sharply reduce the number of PLA troops. Xu Xiaolin, p. 12.

130. The Central Military Commission reported directly to the Politburo and was responsible for all military affairs. Chen Ping, p. 28. For short but authoritative histories of that body, see Lei Yuanshen, pp. 218–35; Zhi Shaozeng, pp. 50–54; Yan Jingtang, pp. 50–59; and Song Ke, pp. 62–64. Ultimately, this scheduled scaling back of the PLA from some 5,500,000 men to 4,000,000 did not take place because of the outbreak of the Korean War. By the end of 1950, only 935,000 old, weak, sick, and disabled soldiers had been demobilized. But in June of the next year, when the situation in Korea had become relatively stable, the Politburo was ready to go forward with an even more substantial cut, of 2,000,000 men. Jiang Naiwen, p. 12. The Central Demobilization Commission was eventually renamed the Central Commission for Military-Civilian Transfers. Deng Lifeng, *Xin Zhongguo*, p. 110.

131. He Di, "Last Campaign," p. 19.

132. Zhou Jun, p. 72.

133. Xiao Jingguang, *Xiao Jingguang Huiyilu*, 2: 26. As commander of the navy, Xiao Jingguang was charged with transporting the combat units of the 3rd Field Army for the landing on Taiwan. Zhou Jun, p. 67.

134. At that time, the commission formally notified Su Yu, deputy commander of the 3rd Field Army, that the liberation of Taiwan was being postponed against the possibility of reversals in the Korean War. Yang Guoyu, p. 41.

135. The delay to 1952 was proposed in the first instance by Chen Yi, commander of the 3rd Field Army. Zhou Jun, p. 72. For Mao's order on the slogans, see Mao [21], p. 536.

136. For a discussion of the impact of the Korean War on Mao's plan to attack Taiwan, see, among others, Zhou Jun, pp. 67–74.

137. Wu Xiuquan, "Wu Xiuquan's Speech," pp. 205–6; Hu Guangzheng, p. 35; "Background," pp. 94–95, 108.

138. Xiao Jianning, p. 170. This is a scholar's assessment; we have no direct evidence on the two questions.

139. From then on, according to Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, p. 643, "the traffic there continued to flow almost uninterruptedly despite innumerable U.S. bombing raids."

140. One official Chinese source justifies the North's initiation of the war: "The Korean Workers' Party was determined to lead the Korean people to wage a revolutionary war of liberation in order to achieve the unification of Korea and build it into a socialist country of independence, freedom, and democracy." Hu Guangzheng, p. 34.

141. There is evidence of Mao's worry about the possible consequences of the Korean War as early as July 6, when an official editorial declared that the military involvement of the United States, Britain, Australia, and other countries in Korea "would certainly postpone the victory of the Korean people. The Korean people have to get ready for longer and fiercer battles." See "Victorious Future." Nie Rongzhen in his capacity as acting chief of the General Staff frequently handled minor military affairs without notifying the Chairman. Mao became angry and ordered Nie to keep in daily contact with him. Li Yinqiao and Quan Yanchi, pp. 92–93.

142. Shen Zonghong and Meng Zhaohui, p. 7; Huang Yi, "Zhou Enlai," 1: 9; Chen Yan et al., p. 12.

143. Most of the soldiers of the 4th Field Army had been conscripted from the Northeast and had fought there during the civil war. Hong Xuezhi, *KangMei*, pp. 1–2.

144. The resolution is summarized in a footnote to Mao's cover letter (see App., Doc. 56) to the acting chief of the General Staff, Nie Rongzhen.

145. Resolution S/1588, passed at the Security Council's 476th meeting. For the text, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1950 (New York, 1951), p. 230. Yao Xu, *Cong Yalujiang*, p. 14, connects the Chinese and UN resolutions.

146. "The Soviet absence from the UN Security Council was a grave mistake, one of the biggest in Soviet diplomacy. It was motivated by a quite different reason, the absence of China from the UN." Interview with M. S. Kapitsa, April 3, 1992. For Chinese and Korean comment, see Yao Xu, *Cong Yalujiang*, p. 11; Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 11; and Syn Song-Kil and Sin Sam-Soon, p. 251. The information on the level of the decision is from a veteran Soviet diplomat stationed in the UN at this time, Dec. 1991.

147. Gromyko (1990), pp. 249–50. The quotation is on p. 250. A former Soviet military adviser to Korea (interviewed, Dec. 1991) likewise maintains that Stalin knew that the lack of Soviet representation on the Security Council would ensure both North Korea's being branded the aggressor and the UN's endorsement of U.S. actions in Korea.

148. Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 13.

149. Yao Xu, "Wise Decision," pp. 7–8; Chen Mingxian et al., p. 30; Zhang Hui, p. 36. As noted, this unit had till then been stationed in Henan Province. The 38th Corps had been based in Xinyang, the 39th in Luohe, and the 40th in Luoyang. Du Ping, *Zai Zhiyuanjun Zongbu*, pp. 7, 11; Hong Xuezhi, *KangMei*, p. 2; Zhang Hui, p. 36; Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, p. 16.

150. The 42nd, the newest of the 4th Field Army's corps, was scheduled for demobilization before the outbreak of the Korean War. Huang Yi, "Zhou Enlai," 1: 10; Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, pp. 16, 17.

151. Liao Guoliang et al., p. 355.

152. Because the headquarters of the NFF was never formally established, the 13th Army ultimately assumed the actual command of the units assigned to the force. The 1st, 2nd, and 8th were among China's finest artillery divisions. Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, p. 17; "Frontier Force"; Hong Xuezhi, *KangMei*, p. 2; Shen Zonghong and Meng Zhaohui, pp. 7–8; Chen Yan et al., p. 12.

153. The 42nd Corps was stationed right on the border, the other NFF units in the nearby locales. These deployments took place over the three-day period July 24–26. Du Ping, *Zai Zhiyuanjun Zongbu*, p. 17; Du Ping, "Wise Decision," p. 9; Shen Zonghong and Meng Zhaohui, p. 8; Han Huaizhi and Tan Jingqiao, 1: 450; Huang Yi, "Zhou Enlai," 1: 9; Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, pp. 633–34; Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 33.

154. Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, pp. 18, 19; Du Ping, *Zai Zhiyuanjun Zongbu*, pp. 28–29.

155. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this paragraph is from Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, pp. 33, 67.

156. On Sept. 27, 1949, the First Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) adopted a transitional constitution (the Common Program of the CPPCC) and a series of laws establishing the basic organs of the Central People's Government. For the relevant documents, see *Important Documents*. Under regulations promulgated in Dec. 1949, seven administrative regions were created, in four cases with military and administrative committees. The exceptions were North China, the Northeast, and Inner Mongolia, where "People's Governments" had been established. In the Northeast, a separate "People's Government" had been created on Aug. 27, 1949. The regional system was changed in 1952; on the revised system, see Zhou Fang; Xu Yuandong et al., p. 8; and Wu Lanfu. Theoretically, the Northeast Administrative Committee, which was established in 1946, was abolished with the creation of the Northeast People's Government, but in Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 33, the reference is to the committee.

157. Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, p. 634.

158. Interview with a well-informed Chinese specialist, Oct. 1991.

159. Lim Un, p. 198. According to Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, pp. 101–2, instead of heeding Mao's warning, Stalin "approved Kim's tactic of 'hot pursuit,' leaving his rear unguarded and empty." They cite Yao Xu, *Cong Yalujiang*, p. 22, as their source, but there is no mention of this on p. 22 or anywhere else in the Yao book.

160. On July 22, Zhou Enlai and Nie Rongzhen proposed that Gao Gang take command of all forces assembled in the Northeast, and Mao agreed. Huang Yi, "Zhou Enlai," 1: 10. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this and the next paragraph is from App., Doc. 57.

161. On the Force's original mission of frontier defense, see Academy of Mili-

tary Science, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Liushi Nian Dashiji*, p. 489; and Hong Xuezhi, *KangMei*, pp. 1–2. On the Chinese government's initial attitude toward intervening in the war, see Chen Hanbo, p. 21.

162. Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, p. 634.

163. Army Dept. memo, Aug. 30, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 659. The report put the Chinese troop strength near Andong (Antung) at 80,000 and the total regular forces in the Northeast (Manchuria) at "246,000 comprising nine armies of 37 div[ision]s." A U.S. military intelligence estimate of Jan. 1950 set the PLA total at 2,570,000 men, organized into 62 armies and 214 divisions. The bulk of these forces were in the South, Southwest, East, and Northwest, "destroying the remaining Nationalist forces on the mainland." The (North) Korean People's Army had 56,000 men, organized into three infantry divisions plus several smaller units (including a tank regiment), and "15,000 Korean troops of the Chinese Communist forces." U.S., Joint Intelligence Committee, pp. 9, 11.

164. For the American side of the story, see, for example, Dingman, pp. 50–91; and Calingaert, pp. 176–202. Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes*, deals with some aspects of the U.S. decision-making in this respect but concentrates mainly on what has been available from Chinese sources. He concludes (p. 29), "there is only scattered evidence specifically relating to how the possibility of a U.S. nuclear response may have been factored into the Chinese decision to enter the war." Most of the evidence deals with the Chinese decision to end the war. In addition to Ryan, Chap. 7, see Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, pp. 13–16; and Foot, "Nuclear Coercion."

165. See, for example, Shi Xiaochong, p. 10; and Bin Fu, p. 18.

166. On the Chinese Communists' judgment that the United States was unlikely to use the atomic bomb, see, for example, Wang Hanming, pp. 12–13.

167. "Great Political Significance," p. 2; this article is discussed in Ryan, p. 27.

168. Zhu Guangya, pp. 24–25; Xing Shi, p. 177.

169. Du Ping, *Zai Zhiyuanjun Zongbu*, pp. 23–24.

170. In the latter half of 1950, the Chinese press published numerous articles belittling the role of atomic bombs in a large-scale war. For information on these articles, see, for example, *KangMei YuanChao Ziliao Mulu*, pp. 292–96.

171. Chiang's statement appears in Carlyle, pp. 657–58. For official, classified comment on MacArthur's statements in Taiwan, see Acheson to Sebald, Aug. 1, 1950, and Strong to Acheson, Aug. 3 and 4, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 6: 405, 411, 417–18.

172. Spurr, pp. 53–65. The quotation appears on p. 62.

173. The Politburo's conclusion was reaffirmed in a directive of Oct. 26, 1950. See Central Committee, Chinese Communist Party, *Guanyu Shishi*. For the text of the directive, see *Zhonggong Dangshi Jiaoxue*, 19: 211–13. Unless otherwise cited, the information in this and the following four paragraphs is from Wang Hanming, pp. 12–13; and a Chinese specialist, 1990. Chinese official publications later reflected the Politburo's point of view on the question of whether the United States would use nuclear weapons against the Chinese. See, for example, "Introduction to the 'Paper Tiger,'" pp. 29–30; "Why Can't the Atomic Bomb Decide the Outcome of War?," pp. 54–66; and "How to Recognize the United States," p. 684.

174. When the war began, Mao pronounced the Soviet possession of atomic bombs sufficient to deter a U.S. nuclear strike. In addition to the sources in the preceding note, see Lin Yunhui et al., p. 180. However, after assessing the results of the war, Mao held that the Soviet nuclear umbrella was unreliable. See Quan Yanchi, *Mao Zedong*, pp. 97, 119.

175. Du Ping, *Zai Zhiyuanjun Zongbu*, pp. 19–20.

176. Zhang Xi, "On the Eve," pp. 125–26.

177. Lin's statement is from the memoirs of Lei Yingfu, deputy head of the Operations Department of the General Staff, who attended the meeting of the military commission. Quan Yanchi, "Profound Reminiscences," p. 111; Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, pp. 23–24.

Chapter Six

1. For an analysis of Soviet policy during the first months of the war, see Ulam, pp. 517–34; and Shulman, Chap. 6. A general analysis of the period is found in Whiting, Chap. 5.

2. Zhang Hui, p. 36; Tan Jingqiao, p. 18; Han Huaizhi and Tan Jingqiao, 1: 450.

3. Joint Chiefs of Staff to MacArthur, June 29, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 240–41.

4. CIA memo, Aug. 18, 1950, in *ibid.*, pp. 600–603.

5. See *ibid.*, pp. 574, 593, 599–600, 613–14, 721–22. Here the town of Najin (spelled Rajin in North Korea) is referred to as Rashin.

6. Lay memo, Sept. 1, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 685–93 passim. The quotation is on p. 687.

7. Acheson to Embassy, Seoul, Sept. 11, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 723. For the Secretary of State's reply, see U.S., Dept. of State, *Bulletin*, Sept. 18, 1950, p. 460. For details on the Inchon landing and subsequent offensives, see Appleman, pp. 488ff.

8. The relevant documents are in FRUS 1950, 7: 731ff.

9. Matthews to Burns, Sept. 16, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 731.

10. Henderson to Acheson, Sept. 20, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 742.

11. See, for example, documents in *ibid.*, pp. 756, 760, 765, 768.

12. Kirk to Acheson, Sept. 26, 1950, in *ibid.*, pp. 779–80. As late as July, as we have noted, economic reconstruction was still the PRC's priority over the Korean War. Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 33.

13. Henderson to Acheson, Sept. 27, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 7: 791.

14. Merchant memo, Marshall to Truman, both Sept. 27, 1950, in *ibid.*, pp. 792–95.

15. Merchant memo, Sept. 27, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 794.

16. See documents in *ibid.*, pp. 795–832.

17. See footnote to Marshall to MacArthur, Sept. 29, 1950, in *ibid.*, p. 826.

18. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 271–730 passim; and Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 540–52. See also Panikkar.

19. Xu Yan, *Diyi Ci*, pp. 18–19; Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, 1989, p. 67. Following Mao's order of early August, Zhou interviewed Nationalist generals who had fought alongside U.S. units in Burma against the Japanese. These generals noted the heavy American dependence on logistical support. Zheng Dongguo, pp. 22–23.

20. App., Doc. 59; Nie Rongzhen, *Inside*, p. 634. Luo Ronghuan, director of the PLA General Political Department, had recommended Deng Hua's appoint-