

# **China's Conflict Behavior in Korea Revisited\***

## **Implications for East Asian Security**

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### **Introduction: Orthodox, Revisionism & Beyond**

In the past decade or two, China's military operation during the Korean War (1950-1953) has been extensively documented in both English and Chinese literatures."

There is, however, little agreement regarding the lessons, if any, that China learned from the Korean War.<sup>2</sup> Part of the "non-learning" school in English language literature is that the PRC's conflict behavior in general and its operation in Korea in particular is determined by its persistent communist ideology,<sup>3</sup> or by a highly "romantic" and certainly irresponsible attitude toward the threat and use of force.<sup>4</sup> In a broader perspective, to argue that China has tangible security concerns like any other power<sup>5</sup> is politically incorrect, as recent scholarship suggests, in that it is "sympathetic" to Beijing's position.<sup>6</sup>

In China, the passage of time has also led to an emerging "revisionist" school about both the decision to intervene and China's conduct of military operations in Korea.<sup>7</sup> Some question the mainstream of China's research on the Korean War for the lack of study of the "negative cases" in the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) experience in Korea.<sup>8</sup> Others offer alternative explanations for both the decision to intervene and the operations of the war.<sup>9</sup> Still some cast doubt over the disproportionately high price China paid for certain operations in Korea.<sup>10</sup>

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The rethinking of China's conduct of the Korean War both inside and outside China has certainly shed new light on the issue. However, it has generated more questions, while still being unable to deal with questions of interpreting China's conflict behavior: how and why did China change its operational and strategic goals during the process of the war, if the ideology factor is regarded as constant throughout this period? The ideology argument simply tells us little about the operational milieu of the Chinese military during the Korean War. Nor does it provide any reliable guidance to understand PRC's policies toward the Korean Peninsula in the new century when Washington and Beijing seem to move toward a more complicated and perhaps more confrontational path with consequences that may be neither anticipated nor liked by either side.

This paper does not intend to join the debate of whether China learned anything from the Korean War, nor is it interested in defining the "right" lessons from "wrong" ones. Rather, it examines how China *adjusted itself* during the process of the war at both operational and strategic levels in an "asymmetrical" environment. The process of this adjustment, however, was not linear. It was affected by variables including the PLA's own historical experience, its ability to sustain costly warfare, civil-military relations, intra-bloc politics, etc. Whatever the case, China's experience with the world's most powerful military has significantly affected its policies toward the Korean Peninsula and outside powers through today.

To operationalize these variables, this paper first examines China's conflict behavior during the Korean War, particularly the first eight months (October 1950 to June 1951). This period covers PLA's "five campaigns" which represented significant "adjusting curves" for the PRC. PRC's initial tactics were both cautious and bold. This was followed by a rather "optimistic" phase in which China's military operations were considerably affected by allies politics, political concerns and miscalculations rather than a pragmatic grasp of the battlefield reality. A series of missteps during this period led China to revise its strategic and operational goals in mid-1951 toward a negotiated peace based on the reality and changes in the battlefield. In the second half of this study, I will assess the impact of the war on the PRC's foreign/defense behavior after the Korean War and its implications for current and future East Asian security. PRC's post-war behavior to be examined includes the PLA's post-Korean War modernization, China's prudent and pragmatic policies toward Korea, the PLA's covert military action in Vietnam and America's tacit reciprocity, the impact of China's first nuclear test, the Taiwan factor, and the crucial role of Korea in China's security calculus.

### **Military Conservatism & "Old Wine" in a "New Bottle" (October 25-December 24 1950):**

Contrary to the "revisionist" arguments in both English and Chinese literature that China's conduct of the war in Korea was romantic<sup>11</sup> and reckless,<sup>12</sup> China's leaders were perhaps overcautious at the onset. They planned a defensive rather than offensive posture. They deliberately avoided engaging the more powerful U.S. military and instead took up the Republic of Korea (ROK) units that were perceived weaker and inexperienced. Mao switched to mobile and tactically offensive operations only after sensing the rapidly changed battlefield situation in which the U.N. forces advanced unexpectedly fast and at the same time exposed themselves dangerously to the flanking operations of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV).

It was not an easy decision for top Chinese leaders to decide to intervene in Korea.<sup>13</sup> Nor was it clear exactly how to confront the U.S. military, except that they were aware of a basic strategic fact that China was to face the world's most powerful military.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the PLA's action in Korea would not be accompanied by previously promised Soviet air cover, at least not for the time being.<sup>15</sup> Without any combat experience in modern warfare and with limited knowledge about the U.S. military, Mao adopted a conservative posture, taking some defensive positions in the northernmost part of Korea while waiting for the arrival of Soviet arms and supplies. In his October 2 telegraph to Stalin, Mao stated,

Under present circumstances, we will begin to dispatch the twelve divisions already deployed in South Manchuria into appropriate areas in North Korea—not necessarily down along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel—on October 15.... In this first phase, these troops will mainly conduct defensive operations. Their goals will be to fight the enemy attacking forces north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, to annihilate small [enemy] units and to get to know various situations. Meanwhile, they [Chinese troops] will wait for Soviet weapons so as to become better equipped, and only after that will they coordinate with the Korean comrades to counterattack US invading forces.<sup>16</sup>

According to this cautious thinking, the CPV planned to construct two to three defensive lines between the Pyongyang-Wonsan line in the South and Tokchon-Yongwon line in the North. Mao also instructed the CPV to engage ROK units first in order to gain experience before fighting large U.S. units. Any major offensive operation would have to wait for at least six months until China obtained "overwhelming superiority" both in the air and on the ground.<sup>17</sup>

The unexpected rapid advance of U.N. forces quickly undid Mao's initial conservative posture. Some U.N. units had already reached CPV's anticipated defensive areas while the CPV units were still 80 to 130 kilometers away. Mao, therefore, decided to abandon the original plan and to switch to mobile operations. One of the main reasons for the change was that it was detected that the U.N. troops were unaware of the CPV's presence. The huge gap between the two U.N. advancing columns in the eastern and western parts of Korea provided a perfect opportunity for the CPV to launch surprise attacks against the U.N. units.

Mobile operation, coupled with surprise effect and numerical superiority, were perhaps the only effective tactics to allow a relatively weak military to engage a much stronger opponent such as the Nationalists troops during the Chinese Civil War (1946-49). On the eve of its 1st Campaign (October 25 to November 8, 1950), the CPV was ready to replay all of these tactics. By maneuvering at night and resting during the day, some 300,000 CPV troops deployed south of the Yalu River remained undetected for one week, ready to engage the frontline ROK units. Some U.S. intelligence officers did notice large-scale military movement and deployment to North Korea. They nonetheless failed to convince top U.S. military and civilian leaders that a major intervention by China's military was either imminent or possible.

Between October 25 and November 1, the CPV dealt heavy blows to the ROK's 1st, 6th, 7th, and 8th divisions by destroying many of their scattered regiments or sending them into hasty retreat.<sup>18</sup> CPV's 1st Campaign managed to stabilize the situation, providing valuable breathing space by pushing the front line south of the Chongchon River. The temporary halt of the U.N. advance to the north also offered the needed time for the CPV to resupply and reinforce.

The impact of the CPV's 1st Campaign was apparently not strong enough to alarm MacArthur, who continued to see China's intervention as insignificant. In anticipation of the next operation, Peng suggested to Mao that U.N. forces be lured into pre-set "traps" as far north as possible so that individual U.N. units would be extended with longer supply lines and thus be more easily isolated and destroyed. Mao quickly approved the plan. Peng instructed that each CPV army would withdraw its main force farther north, but leave one division "to conduct mobile and guerrilla warfare ... to wipe out small enemy units while engaging and luring larger enemy units to the trap." The CPV tried to create the false perception of a disorderly retreat from the advancing U.N. forces. Some CPV units even reduced the duration of each rear-protecting effort so that U.N. forces would assume that the CPV's combat capability was diminishing. As a last effort to keep

MacArthur from suspecting China's motivation and strength, the CPV also released some 100 POWs (including 27 Americans), who were deliberately told that they had to be released because the CPV had to go back to China due to supply difficulties.<sup>19</sup>

On November 24, MacArthur launched his "home-by-Christmas" offensive, again leaving a huge gap between his 8<sup>th</sup> Army on the western front and X Corps on the eastern front. The CPV launched its counterattack (2<sup>nd</sup> Campaign) the following day, when all of the major U.N. units were in the anticipated areas. While four CPV armies (39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup>) launched a frontal attack on the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, the CPV's 38<sup>th</sup> Army made a flanking move through the gap between the ROK's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions in Tokehon, threatening to trap part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army through this encirclement from the south. Although most of the IX US Corps was able to escape the trap, it lost 3,000 POWs, the largest such group ever captured by the CPV.<sup>20</sup> On the whole, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Campaign was a major victory for the CPV, thanks to careful planning, deception and execution, not just the result of "sheer good luck."<sup>21</sup> In only nine days, the CPV dealt heavy blows to U.N. forces, pushed the battle line to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and retook Pyongyang.

The first two campaigns, though successful, also revealed many shortcomings of the Chinese military. On the eastern front, the 150,000-strong 9<sup>th</sup> Army Group (20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Armies) was not adequately prepared for the sub-zero Korean winter. It was hastily thrown into combat against the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Although the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Group scored the only major victory of the CPV in Korea when it wiped out an entire regiment of the U.S. military (the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division), it suffered a terrible toll from the Korean winter. More than 30,000 officers and men, some 22 percent of the entire 9<sup>th</sup> Army Group, were disabled by severe frostbite, and some 1,000 died. The 9<sup>th</sup> Army Group, therefore, was incapable of annihilating a much smaller enemy force than originally planned.<sup>22</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Campaign was also affected considerably by the CPV's logistical constraints imposed by U.N. air power, as well as by the lack of transportation assets and bad road conditions. CPV units had supplies for one week at best. Originally, CPV headquarters planned a double-encirclement by two armies and two divisions. However, food shortages forced the CPV to forego the extra two divisions. Otherwise, the CPV would have been more successful.<sup>23</sup>

Despite these problems, the CPV made good use of its limited resources and fully utilized the opportunities whenever they arose. Both political and military leaders were conservative in the planning and execution of their operations. Mao and others were more willing to cater to the battlefield need, while keeping their operational goals

within the realms of reality. This, however, did not prevent the CPV from taking bold and flexible actions when situations changed and conditions permitted. The switch from a defensive posture to mobile operations during the first two campaigns was the single most important factor that ensured the CPV's operational success.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Campaign represented the peak of CPV performance. As the CPV began to strike south, the tactics that it had successfully used began to lose effectiveness. U.N. forces rapidly adjusted to CPV tactics. And, as the CPV's supply line became extended, U.N. air power began to cause heavier damage to CPV's primitive logistical efforts. Finally, the CPV's operations began to be complicated by bloc politics as well as by excessive optimism among some civilian and military officers. As a result, the CPV began to pursue goals beyond its capabilities.

### **Politics in Command & Military Unrealism (December 1950 to June 1951)**

The end of the CPV's first two campaigns, though successful, also led to growing disputes between top civilian and military leaders, between the Chinese and their Soviet/Korean allies over a range of issues including the scope, speed, and strategies for the next phase of the war. Around the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign (31 December 1950 to 8 January 1951), optimism among top Soviet, Korean and Chinese leaders pressed the CPV to operate well beyond its capabilities. Meanwhile, field commanders also became overconfident from time to time regarding the CPV's capabilities. As a result, the CPV suffered considerably heavier casualties than in the initial phase of the war and had to adjust its operational and strategic goals.<sup>24</sup>

*Intra-bloc Politics: PreSrd Campaign:* The first two campaigns were operated largely on the CPV's terms and terrain. Even so, the CPV was exhausted due to its primitive logistic systems. CPV units on the western front had fewer than 300 trucks for almost 300,000 troops. Because the U.N. air forces had destroyed much of the CPV's winter clothing supply, many men had no adequate protection for winter. The fact that the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Group was virtually disabled due to frostbite was a chilly reminder of the CPV's severe supply disability. For these reasons, Peng requested on December 8, 1950, a pause of a few months until the next spring and wanted to confine the forthcoming campaign to areas north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Peng's plan was also supported by Nie Rongzhen, the PLA's acting Chief of Staff in Beijing.<sup>25</sup> Peng's request was based on his assessment that the CPV was not ready to deal with a more fortified enemy along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. If his troops could not deliver heavy blows to the U.N. forces, it did not make much sense for the CPV to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and capture Seoul. Besides, an

immediate crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel would make the supply of his troops even more difficult.<sup>26</sup>

Intra-bloc politics, however, placed pressure on the CPV to launch the next operation as soon as possible. On the same day Peng Dehuai requested a pause for a few months, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung issued a call to the Korean people for "an all-out drive for the victorious war for national liberation."<sup>27</sup> The Soviets, too, believed that the CPV should maintain pressure on U.N. forces by resuming its offensive operations.<sup>28</sup> Recently available Russian archives show that Stalin tried to delay China's move for a possible cease-fire after the first two campaigns when China was approached by some U.N. members (India, Britain and Sweden). Specifically, Stalin suggested to Zhou Enlai not to respond to U.N. inquiries, not to cease military operation before all of China's conditions were met, and not to submit these conditions for a cease-fire before the U.S. responded to a U.N. cease-fire plan.<sup>29</sup>

Between political pressures from allies and a difficult battlefield reality, Mao seemed more concerned about the political implications of an entire winter without any military operation by the CPV and a possible stalemate at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. For Mao, an immediate cease-fire at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was a "trick" to halt the CPV's advance. Moreover, Mao was also aware of the "skepticism among friendly countries." He therefore demanded on December 13 that the next campaign be launched in early January (a month and half ahead of Peng's request) in order to boost the morale of the socialist countries.<sup>30</sup>

Peng, however, tried to scale down Mao's ambitious plans and demanded greater flexibility should such an operation be executed ahead of his requested schedule. In his December 19 cable to Mao, Peng noted "a rise of unrealistic optimism for quicker victory from various parts," and suggested a more prudent advance. He warned that although the CPV would not suffer a defeat in the coming campaign, there was a possibility that the CPV's advance would be blocked or that success would be modest.<sup>31</sup> Mao eventually agreed (December 21) to Peng's more conservative plan and granted him the tactical flexibility to disengage and stop the operation whenever necessary.<sup>32</sup> Mao even agreed with Peng that the CPV would pull back dozens of kilometers after crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel for rest and regrouping.<sup>33</sup>

On New Year's Eve in 1950, while still under-supplied, the CPV launched its 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel against U.N. forces entrenched across the entire peninsula. In a matter of eight days, CPV forces crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, recaptured Seoul and pushed the front line down to the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel. Though surprised by the CPV offense, U.N. forces managed to have an orderly retreat, and most American forces suffered few casualties. In contrast, CPV units were exhausted

after days of continuous operation.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the CPV at this point only had 280,000 poorly supplied and very exhausted troops facing 230,000 well-equipped U.N. and ROK forces. A more cautious strategy was therefore necessary after the 3rd Campaign.<sup>35</sup>

***Intra-bloc Politics: Post-3rd Campaign:*** Despite these problems, intra-bloc politics once again put pressure on the CPV to strive for a quicker and bigger victory. Shortly after the CPV stopped pursuing the retreating U.N. forces, the Soviet ambassador to Pyongyang once again urged Peng to pursue the enemy. "No commander would stop pursuing the fleeing enemy," he said while also complaining to Stalin and North Korean leader Kim II Sung about the CPV's decision. Peng rejected the Soviet request and reported it to Mao, who later sent Peng's cable to Stalin. Sensing the tension between the Soviet ambassador and Peng, Stalin ordered the ambassador to keep quiet and later transferred him back home.<sup>36</sup>

Likewise, North Korean leader Kim II Sung questioned the sudden end of the CPV's 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign. Shortly after Peng's argument with Soviet ambassador, Kim and his Foreign Minister Park Hon Yong came to see Peng and insisted that the CPV resume its pursuit. They cited opinions of the "Soviet comrades" that called for an immediate drive south to force U.N. forces out of the peninsula. Peng disagreed, explaining that the enemy was not really defeated, but had deliberately evacuated Seoul in order to lure the CPV farther south and to strike back with another amphibious attack. The CPV had suffered considerable losses and was worn out after three months of almost nonstop operations, and a pause of a few months was necessary. Indeed, the CPV conducted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign with considerable difficulty and for "political considerations" only. After some hard bargaining, Peng compromised on a two-month pause.<sup>37</sup>

With the pressure from allies and a bleaker battlefield situation, Mao played a rather "invisible" role. On the one hand, Mao let his field commanders take the heat from the Soviets and North Koreans. He would simply forward these "unresolved" cases to Stalin who usually made the final decisions. Meanwhile, Mao reminded Stalin that in order to avoid the previous mistakes by the North Koreans who overexposed themselves by rapidly striving south, the CPV needed a pause of two to three months for rest and resupply after its takeover of Seoul.<sup>38</sup> With the memories still fresh of the North Koreans' terrible defeat after MacArthur's Inchon Landing just a few months before, Stalin this time sided with Mao and Peng not to advance too soon and too far down south.<sup>39</sup> The CPV thus went ahead to take a two-month pause to rest and resupply before taking on the next operation in March.<sup>40</sup> The battlefield reality, however, was changing fast. The CPV was unable to

proceed with its planned pause due to the U.N.'s sudden counterattack.

**Military Unrealism:** Political leaders were not the only ones to miscalculate. CPV commanders also contributed to their own share of the problem. Following the first three relatively successful campaigns, many CPV rank-and-file became more confident and questioned Peng's decision not to pursue the retreating U.N. forces following the capture of Seoul. They believed that an early victory would bring the troops back home faster. Peng had a hard time convincing CPV "adventurists" that, despite initial successes, they could not ignore the U.N.'s superior firepower. Besides, the CPV also faced mounting problems, including poor supply, extreme fatigue, lack of a coastal defense and rear security, and delayed reinforcements. A more cautious strategy was necessary after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign.<sup>41</sup>

The sudden counteroffensive by U.N. forces in January 25, 1951, terminated the CPV's planned two-month pause as well as the internal debate. Although the CPV managed to organize some delaying actions, it was forced to abandon Seoul on March 14, 1951, and withdraw its forces north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The CPV managed to hold its position south of the Han River in the first 20 days after the U.N.'s counterattack (January 25 to February 16, 1951). It nonetheless suffered heavy losses.<sup>42</sup> For 87 days (January 25 to April 21, the CPV's phase of the 4<sup>th</sup> Campaign), the CPV was largely in a passive situation, while the U.N. forces were able to control the pace and scope of operations. The front line at the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel established at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign was the southernmost line the CPV ever reached during the Korean War. As the battlefield situation continued to worsen, Peng hurried back to Beijing in late February 1951 and convinced Mao that the war in Korea could not be won quickly.<sup>43</sup>

Contrary to the revisionist argument that Mao always expected a quick win, the Chinese leader at this point was actually preparing for a much protracted war in Korea, a major change in the operational goals for the CPV, even if Mao's strategic goals of driving the U.N. forces out of Korea remained unchanged. On February 7, 1951, two weeks before Peng returned to brief him, Mao instructed the CPV to rotate its main forces starting from March 1951. Mao explained this move as part of the plan to have a longer-than-expected war in Korea. Such a protracted period was needed to annihilate more enemy forces in order to force the U.N. forces out of Korea.<sup>44</sup> The CPV's difficulties, as conveyed by Peng in person in late February, reinforced Mao's belief. In his telegraph to Stalin during the height of the CPV's 4<sup>th</sup> Campaign, Mao explained to the Soviet leader the necessity and desirability of a rather long draw in Korea with the U.N. forces.

Mao's cautious approach, however, was ironically offset by a

number of miscalculations made by his field commanders, particularly Peng, regarding the next move. One of Peng's main reasons for launching the 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign (April 21 to June 10, 1951) was his belief that U.N. forces would attempt another amphibious landing in the rear. Peng calculated that an earlier launch of the next campaign would prevent U.N. forces from proceeding with the landing.<sup>45</sup>

The CPV's top commanders, however, disagreed considerably about how to execute the campaign. In fact, most disagreed with Peng's idea of striking south. They preferred an "in-house" operation, engaging U.N. forces after luring them into CPV occupied areas. This would shorten the CPV's supply line and allow it to engage the enemy by using mobile operations in terrain familiar to the unseasoned CPV units. Peng, however, was determined to strike south and seize the initiative after months of being pressed by the U.N. forces.<sup>46</sup>

The CPV's 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign was its largest of the war. The CPV and the North Koreans deployed some 700,000 troops against 340,000 U.N. forces, and the two sides fought for approximately 40 days. But the results were disappointing for the CPV. In fact, the campaign failed to achieve its goal of destroying five enemy divisions (including three American ones). At the same time, CPV units suffered heavy losses. The CPV's 180<sup>th</sup> Division was completely destroyed by quick U.N. counterattacks. Additionally, U.N. forces took 17,000 POWs, representing 80 percent of the total CPV POWs during the entire war. More important, the front line was pushed farther north. In retrospect, official Chinese history summarized the 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign as "executed too hastily with too large a scope and striking too far down south."<sup>47</sup> Peng later admitted that the 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign was one of only four mistakes he made during his entire military career.<sup>48</sup>

It was at this point that Mao realized the goal of driving the U.N. forces out of Korea was unattainable. A negotiated peace was perhaps the most achievable goal for the PRC. From the conclusion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign until the end of the war, the CPV adopted more cautious and realistic strategies, including maintaining a relatively stable front line, increasing CPV air force, artillery, and tank units, improving logistics capabilities, and seeking a negotiated and realistic end to the war. These revised strategic and operational goals were similar to those of the U.S. The terms of peace China eventually obtained, however, were far less favorable than the ones made available briefly for Mao and China's allies in mid-January 1950 after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign.<sup>49</sup>

***Lost Opportunity for a U.N. Cease-Fire?*** On January 13, 1951, five days after the CPV's 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign, a U.N.-sponsored cease-fire proposal was made to the belligerents. The proposal suggested an immediate cease-fire and a phased withdrawal of foreign forces from

Korea. Four days later, Zhou Enlai rejected the U.N. cease-fire proposal by seeing it as a U.S.-backed means to gain "breathing time" for the next U.N. operation. Instead, Zhou proposed that foreign troops withdraw first before any cease-fire.

China's rejection of the bill led to several major consequences. One was a diplomatic setback because China's suggestion was seen by many as un-operational and insincere, and as a result, sympathy to China in the U.N. was weakened. Second, China's rejection of the U.N. cease-fire proposal actually helped the U.S., which was considerably constrained by the same bill. If the U.S. supported the bill, it would anger the ROK and lose public support at home. If the U.S. rejected the bill, it would certainly lose support in the U.N. The U.S.' eventual support of the bill was actually out of the expectation that China would reject it, which was exactly what China did. Finally, China's diplomatic setback was quickly translated into a U.S. gain in the U.N. on February 1, 1951, when the U.N. passed a U.S.-sponsored move to condemn China as the aggressor.<sup>50</sup>

Years later, some CPV veterans and historians also echoed these views. Had the CPV tried to consolidate along this line and translate its military gains into a political compromise instead of planning a more ambitious operation, the war might have ended much more favorably for China and its allies.<sup>51</sup>

These arguments in hindsight may make some sense, and China's acceptance of the U.N. cease-fire certainly would have helped China diplomatically in the world body. These "ifs," however, have their own limits. At the time the U.N. cease-fire bill was proposed, neither China nor the U.S. was interested in it, though for different reasons.<sup>52</sup> Tactically, the immediate U.N. counterattacks, which surprised many CPV officers, were almost unavoidable because the U.N. retreat to the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel was deliberate and organized in order to exhaust the CPV's initial drive. It was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the U.N. commanders and U.S. politicians not to launch an offense when the U.N. enjoyed every operational advantage, including firepower, logistics, and maneuverability, as well as adaptation to the CPV tactics. The CPV was, for its part, already in a more difficult situation. Indeed, it was high time for the U.N. forces to regain battlefield initiative and, if possible, retake territories between the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> parallels.

In between the need to satisfy domestic demands (Congress and the media) and allies (South Koreans) on one hand, and winning support in the U.N. on the other, the Truman administration would certainly choose the former even at the expense of losing support in the world body. U.S. dealing with the world body in the past 50 years repeatedly

shows that domestic concern has always been above that of the international community.

Finally, Mao would have to have a sense of Stalin's mood, which was less willing to take the U.N.'s cease-fire proposal for its face value, at least for the time being.<sup>53</sup> In his cable to Mao on June 6, 1951, Stalin pointed to the "need" for a "protracted war," which "first, would give the Chinese troops an opportunity to learn modern battle tactics and, second, could shatter Truman's regime and undermine the Anglo-American military prestige."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, pursuing a unilateral cease-fire at the expense of relations with Moscow would also affect relations with Pyongyang. In the final analysis, Mao and his colleagues were not entirely independent and alone in making policies for war and peace in Korea.

### **Implications for East Asian Security**

The course of the Korean War changed forever once China intervened. Although it paid a tremendous price economically, diplomatically, and strategically, China fought the war into a stalemate against the world's most powerful military. Such a stalemate, however, was by no means the fixation of major power relations but only the beginning of a series of strategic realignments in East Asia. Although the Korean War was followed by the most intimate relations between Moscow and Beijing, this "honeymoon," however, was soon to be replaced first by an unprecedented ideological polemic between Moscow and Beijing in the 1960s and then military clashes at the decade's end. Such a turnaround also ushered in a breakthrough in relations with the U.S. in the early 1970s. In this respect, the war tested the limits of China's best relationship with both Moscow and Pyongyang as well as its worst relationship with Washington.

Despite these strategic realignments and "blowbacks" for Beijing, China's war effort in Korea has yielded some significant policy consistencies for PRC's foreign/defense policies with far-reaching implications for East Asian security. The impact of the three-year Korean War on China, therefore, can never be underestimated.

*Military Modernization and "China Threat":* At the operational level, the CPV underwent several cycles of learning during the first eight months of the war: from cautious pessimism and conservative tactics (1<sup>st</sup> Campaign) to sweeping and surprise actions (2<sup>nd</sup> Campaign); from being overconfident (before and after 3<sup>rd</sup> Campaign) to overwhelmed by U.N. actions (4<sup>th</sup> Campaign); and from military "unrealism" (5<sup>th</sup> Campaign) to pragmatism (post 5<sup>th</sup> Campaign). Much of this adjustment was made due to a harsh reality that the CPV was a much weaker force than its counterpart (U.N./U.S. forces).

Accordingly, the most immediate impact of the Korean War on China was to continue the PLA's modernization, which already had begun during the course of the Korean War. Between 1953 and 1959, the PLA underwent the most extensive process of professionalization and modernization under the tutelage of Peng Dehuai as defense minister. That process was interrupted for more than 20 years with the replacement of Peng by Ling Biao, who championed a "people's war" instead of a professionalized "soldiers' war" within a more limited context like Korea. In that perspective, modernization, professionalization, and restructuring of the PLA, starting from the 1980s, were a belated recognition of the lessons of the Korean War. The 1991 Gulf War, the rather "chilly" post-Cold War, the 1999 Kosovo bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and the deteriorating Taiwan Strait situation in the past few years simply added to the urgency of the PLA's drive toward a more efficient and more professional military.

The PLA's modernization since the 1980s was therefore largely derived from its "unlearned" lessons from the Korean War as a result of Mao's domestic politicization. The PLA's move has nonetheless caused anxiety and alarm outside China and, hence, the "China threat" argument particularly in Japan and the U.S. From a historical perspective, however, much of the ongoing "China threat" debate misses the point. While the "threat" school<sup>55</sup> points to an upcoming or present threat from China, more cautious assessments insist that China will be a threat only in the future when the PLA is substantially modernized.<sup>56</sup> China's intervention in the Korean War, however, demonstrates that a much weaker China would resort to the use of force if it views a sharply deteriorating security environment.<sup>57</sup> The key to understanding China's behavior, therefore, lies in its strategic calculus regarding its underlying interest.

***Strategic Prudence:*** At the strategic level, the Korean War was the first, if not the last, war "not to be won"<sup>58</sup> on China's own terms. Instead, a negotiated settlement became acceptable as the final goal for China's military action in Korea. Such an adjustment was made, however, only after several months of intensive fighting with a much superior military.

Perhaps the most important lesson that China learned from its engagement in the Korean War is to avoid and/or prevent such a war in the future. Accordingly, the PRC's policies in the post-Korean War decades have always been to maintain the delicate stability in the peninsula with political and diplomatic means at any cost. This was true even during Mao's time.<sup>59</sup>

During the reform decades, China's approach to the Korean issue

was further adjusted to a more balanced posture by normalizing relations with Seoul and supporting "dual entry" of the two Koreas into the U.N. Ever since the early 1980s, China has made clear that it only supports "peaceful" and "reasonable" means for the issue of Korean reunification,<sup>60</sup> and that it opposes disturbances to the stability of the peninsula from any direction. Meanwhile, China cooperates with other powers in the resolution of the North Korean nuclear weapons issue, participates in quadripartite talks for a peace treaty in Korea, and supplies food to the North.

In regard to relations with the North, China works for medium- and long-term goals so that the North will eventually find its own way to have normal relations with the outside world. For these purposes, North Korean leaders have not been pressured but carefully provided with opportunities to get acquainted with China's economic reform and other domestic changes.

During the height of the Korean nuclear and missile crises, Beijing acted as a "constructive broker" between the Koreas and other major powers. Unlike the U.S.-attempted surgical strike against North Korea's nuclear sites in 1994 and Japan's subsequent temptation,<sup>61</sup> Beijing urged for patience and prudence, insisting that the Korean problem is more political and less military. Major powers, therefore, should aim at long-term goals but not short-term returns.

At the onset of the new millennium, these policies of the PRC, together with efforts by other powers as well as the two Korean governments,<sup>62</sup> provided conditions to the historical summit between North and South Korea in June 2000. For the first time in history, the warring Koreans seem to embark on the path toward national reconciliation and eventual unification.

Beijing's cautious approach toward the Korean Peninsula, however, should not be interpreted as one in which China would refrain from taking any actions no matter what happens on the peninsula in the future. Although Chinese leaders later may have regretted China's hasty entrance into the conflict, Mao's fateful decision in 1950 indicates that the Korean Peninsula constitutes a vital part of China's security. Such a concern goes far beyond the Cold War setting, communist ideology, cultural traits, and certain leaders' idiosyncrasies, but rather is based on China's concern of major power balance. This concern of China is reinforced by a historical fact that the peninsula has served as a major springboard for the conquest of continental Asia, particularly by Japan. Any major disturbance to the peninsula's delicate stability will therefore lead to serious concern, regardless of the nature of China's domestic political system.

*China's Covert War and Indirect Conflict with the U.S. in*

**Vietnam:** Another and perhaps less known but far-reaching impact of the Korean War was China's covert operation during the so-called "2<sup>nd</sup> Vietnam War" (1965-75).<sup>63</sup> China's involvement in Vietnam, though massive,<sup>64</sup> was measured and restrained. At the strategic level, both China and the U.S. managed to separate themselves across the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel during the 10-year period, a remarkable contrast to the direct Sino-U.S. confrontation during the Korean War.

There was no question that the Korean War was a constant reminder for both China and the U.S. that a similar showdown in Vietnam, no matter how undesirable, still might be possible. To manage the conflict in Vietnam and avoid another direct engagement quickly became the PRC's top priority. In June 1964, two months before the Tonkin Gulf Incident, Mao and his colleagues made clear, publicly and privately, that the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel was the bottom line for China's military intervention in Vietnam and that any U.S. step to escalate the war in Vietnam would invite a corresponding move from China. In other words, if the U.S. would not cross the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel, Beijing would refrain from direct intervention.<sup>65</sup>

To communicate its goals and intentions more effectively to Washington, Beijing chose more direct and more credible channels. In January 1965, Mao told the visiting American journalist Edger Snow that "we won't fight outside China. We will strike only if the U.S. comes in. ... Vietnam does not need us at all and they can handle the situation themselves." Mao's message through Snow was followed by a series of public statements in 1965 to draw the line on the sand (February, March 12 & 20, April 10 & 27, June 8). Meanwhile, Beijing stepped up its private effort to send to the U.S. China's clear signals to avoid direct conflict in Vietnam. This time, China worked through U.S. friends and allies, not through a neutral party such as India as was the case prior to China's intervention in Korea. These "go-betweens" included the Philippines (February 27, 1965), Pakistan (April 2, 1965) and Britain (May 31, 1965).

Meanwhile, Beijing and Washington actively and fully explored each other's bottom line at ambassadorial meetings in Warsaw. On March 16, 1965, U.S. Secretary of State Rusk made clear U.S. willingness to continue diplomatic talks with China in Warsaw. The same day happened to be the 129<sup>th</sup> Sino-U.S. ambassadorial meeting, and the U.S. side emphasized that Washington had no intention to expand war to China. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai quickly made public in early April 1965 that China would not initiate a war against the U.S.

Thus, the timely and effective communication between China and the U.S. at the early stage of the Vietnam War enabled the two sides to avoid another direct conflict despite repeated U.S. escalations in

Vietnam and Beijing's public denunciation of U.S. moves. Even if the U.S. knew of China's massive involvement in the North, it chose not to publicize and politicize it. Beijing, for its part, refrained from "officially" sending its "volunteers" to Vietnam. The tacit coordination between China and the U.S. during this time was in sharp contrast to the Korean War in which China failed to deter the U.S. from crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel while the U.S. failed, too, to deter China from crossing the Yalu River a few months later.

Ultimately, the type of confrontation in which Beijing and Washington were engaged in Korea should be avoided by all necessary means. For both sides, one of the basic lessons from the Korean War seems to be: if conflict cannot be avoided entirely, it should be kept from escalating to a full-blown war, even in a limited context. The scope, timing, and consequences of such an indirect war can, and should, be managed for the sake of national interests of both sides.

With the Bush administration, Sino-U.S. relations seem to be getting into a more complex mode in which low-level conflicts and crises are not entirely avoidable. To deal with, live with, and manage such a new strategic environment requires both strategic statesmanship and willingness to communicate, even between strategic adversaries as in the case of the Vietnam Wars.

***Nukes, Johnson's "New Thinking" and China's New Confidence:*** Perhaps the ultimate cause for moderation on both sides during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vietnam War was China's acquisition of nuclear weapons. On October 16, 1964, and just a few months after the August Tonkin Gulf Incident, China announced the detonation of its first atomic device, which was closely monitored by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. The latter, however, pursued a very different approach to dealing with a giant communist state armed with nuclear weapons.

Up to the point of his assassination, Kennedy was convinced that a nuclear-armed Chinese communist state would be an "intolerable menace" to the U.S. As a result, he and his top advisers remained committed to depriving China of its nuclear capabilities by all necessary means, including coordination with Nationalist Chinese officials, seeking Soviet collaboration, making contingency plans for attacks by "anonymous" planes, and authorizing the CIA to take covert and paramilitary actions to raid Chinese nuclear facilities by employing Nationalist commandos. More recent case studies<sup>66</sup> indicate that the Kennedy administration's commitment to the use of force was decided without complete information on the Chinese nuclear plan and without a thorough analysis of the likely impact of China's nuclear progress. These policy intentions and actions remained alive with support from some top officials of the Johnson administration even after Kennedy's

death in 1963, even after the Soviets declined to consider a joint action with Washington against Beijing, and even after a thorough analysis by a State Department official, Robert Johnson, concluded that a Chinese nuclear capability would not pose a major threat to U.S. interests, much less change the balance of power in East Asia.

Although Johnson was troubled by the implications of a nuclear China, he nonetheless rejected unilateral actions, partially due to the upcoming presidential race. Instead of the use of force, covert or not, against China's nuclear facilities, Johnson preserved his freedom of action.

The Chinese nuclear test of October 1964 did not bring the worst-case scenario that President Kennedy had feared. In the months that followed China's first nuclear test, which startled the U.S. intelligence community as a more sophisticated uranium-235 device was used rather than one based on plutonium, the PRC announced on the same day of its first nuclear test China's three basic principles regarding nuclear weapons: (1) China's purpose in developing nuclear weapons was to break the superpower monopoly; (2) China would never be the first to use nuclear weapons; and (3) China would be dedicated to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Despite the passage of time, these principles of Chinese nuclear policy have not changed, and China remains the only major nuclear power to date with declared policies of non-first use and non-use of nuclear weapons against countries without nuclear weapons. If anything, a China with nuclear weapons actually accelerated Sino-American rapprochement, and President Nixon believed that a nuclear-capable China made a fresh approach, not preventive action, mandatory. The nuclear factor, among others, may have served as ultimate restraints on both sides of the Pacific during the 10-year Vietnam War during which the two militaries remained separated by the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel.

If the moderation of bilateral relations during the Johnson era partially resulted from China's possession of nuclear weapons, and if Beijing's nuclear capability actually led to a more confident and presumably more secure China, then the proposed U.S. missile defense systems perhaps would have the potential to alter this strategic equation. The immediate, no matter how unintended, effect of any U.S. missile defense system would compromise and neutralize the PRC's minimalist-deterrent posture consisting of two dozen old-fashioned silo-based, liquid-propelled ICBMs. Any effort of the PRC to restore the strategic balance and confidence would have uncertain and even dire consequences for cross-strait and/or cross-Pacific relations.

***Korea, Taiwan & China:*** For China, the fate of Korea and Taiwan seem perpetually tied with one another in the East Asian geopolitical

game. In the age of imperialism, the two provided the first taste of spoils for the Empire of the Sun before it released its full energy to Mother Russia (1904-5 Russo-Japanese War) and Uncle Sam (Pearl Harbor 1941).

In 1950, Mao was genuinely disturbed and then enraged by Truman's authorization for the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait immediately after the outbreak of the Korean War and four months before the CPV entered Korea. For Mao, this meant a de facto U.S. re-entry into the Chinese civil war. It was not only a betrayal of Acheson's "hands-off policy toward China, which was pronounced 10 months before (August 1949), but it was also an effective challenge to Mao's historical mission of unifying China. A direct confrontation with the United States, therefore, might not be avoidable. If that eventuality could not be ruled out entirely, as Mao perceived, it should be kept out of China and at a place where Chinese military might have a chance to withstand the most powerful military in the world. And the rest was history.

At the outset of the new millennium, the fate of Korea, Taiwan, and China are again bound with remarkably similar linkages, though for very different reasons. For Beijing, the alleged "rogue state" of North Korea is a convenient excuse, while the real target of the U.S. missile defense systems is China. Indeed, Bush's redefining of North Korea as a "rogue state" from Clinton's "state of concern" for the U.S. missile defense system does not seem to fit the fast-evolving situation in Korea. While the South has so far preferred its moderate "sunshine" policy toward the North to supporting the U.S. missile defense plan, the North has gone so far as to express its willingness for continuous U.S. military presence in the Korean Peninsula even after the unification. At the same time, Washington has never stated that the U.S. missile defense systems would not cover Taiwan. China has been the "forgotten" nuclear power in the missile defense debate in the U.S.<sup>67</sup> For Beijing, Washington's "detour" through Korea to separating Taiwan from China is quite a familiar move, similar to that after the outbreak of the Korean War half a century ago. The Korean "setting" this time, however, is so unconvincing and deceptive that it seems whether the Koreans make war or make love, the U.S. follows a predetermined course to get to Taiwan and China.

In both 1950 and 2001, the communication pattern seems to be one-way traffic in that China's effort to reach Washington<sup>68</sup> is either ignored or subsided, unlike the willingness and actual moves by both sides to communicate during the height of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vietnam War. The Bush administration—which seems to care more about "political correctness" than strategic soundness despite its pronounced "realist" foreign

policy—went so far as to have a largely symbolic meeting with an impotent, outgoing Japanese Prime Minister Mori ahead of a prescheduled meeting with China's "foreign policy czar" Qian Qichen, who represented a country that the new administration would try hard to redefine as the real strategic adversary in the next few months. Such a strategy of not talking to the Chinese naturally leads to the Pentagon's policy to minimize contact with the PLA after the EP-3E incident<sup>69</sup> and to rid itself of any institutional "sympathy" to Beijing.<sup>70</sup> Despite the passage of time, what China obtained from its outreach to the U.S. was quite similar: MacArthur's crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in 1950 and the massive arms sales to Taiwan in 2001.

The Taiwan issue, however, was treated quite differently. In 1950, the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet's patrol of the Taiwan Strait was sold to the public as a way to prevent both sides from escalating hostilities. The Truman administration actually tried to minimize the impact of the move on relations with Beijing. In 2001, the Bush administration was eager to poke the Taiwan issue even if the majority of the island's public opinion preferred maintaining the status quo to a sliding toward symbolic independence and confrontation with the mainland. Indeed, Bush's "humble" realism is so obsessed with China that almost all of his major foreign and defense policies revolve around dealing with Beijing. This includes expanding arms sales to Taiwan, enlarging the commitment to defend the island, elevating political relations with Taiwan's pro-independent president, shifting defense strategy from Europe to Asia, courting India, and promoting missile defense.<sup>71</sup>

Washington's policy, coupled with the 1999 embassy bombing and the recent EP-3E incident, has led to rising Chinese nationalism. Unlike 50 years ago, when Mao had to persuade most of his colleagues to intervene in Korea, in the new millennium most Chinese, including the pro-West, liberal-minded intellectual elite, would become staunch nationalists (or patriots) over the issues of Taiwan and/or Tibet.<sup>72</sup> The impact of such a societal-based nationalism on China's cross-strait and cross-Pacific policies should never be underestimated.

***Back to the Future: Ghosts & Aspirations of Versailles:*** Indeed, the situation today seems similar to that of 80 years ago when the impact of the Treaty of Versailles inadvertently gave rise to the nationalist tide in both Korea and China. In Korea, the March 1, 1919, demonstration for independence from Japan was brutally suppressed with thousands killed by the Japanese occupation forces. Korean nationalism, however, never ceased its quest for unity and independence, which was, in essence, the root cause of the North-South conflict in Korea.

In China, the impact of Versailles is equally strong and deep. The

type of Chinese nationalism triggered by Versailles in May 1919 soon gave rise to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. In Paris, the victorious European allies ignored both China's territorial integrity and Wilsonism (self-determination and open diplomacy). Instead, the Chinese province of Shandong was transferred from Germany to Japan, even if China contributed to the victories of the allies. The triumph of West's realpolitik in Versailles over the West's idealism, which was wonderfully packaged and presented by U.S. President Wilson, abruptly ended China's quest for modernization through Westernization ("Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy" in Chinese languages). And most of the young and pro-West Chinese intellectual elite, including many of the first generation of Chinese communist leaders such as Chen Duxiu, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, eventually embraced Marxism. Their switch to Bolshevism was largely triggered by Lenin's call for the universal ending of colonialism and imperialism, which was more appealing to the young and aspiring Chinese elite for their national salvation. The continuation of communism in China today perhaps has more to do with Chinese nationalism than with orthodox Marxism.

For many in East Asia today, therefore, the aspiration (self-determination and unification) and ghosts (realpolitik) of Versailles remain. In Korea, the pace of the historical North-South reconciliation is finally in the hands of the Koreans. The Nobel Peace Prize winner Kim Dae Jung, however, was told not to make peace but to rely on missiles. The current status quo of their civil war, therefore, is allowed to continue. Between Taiwan and the mainland, the "one-China" status quo of the past 20 years, which has benefited all parties—Taiwan, China and the U.S.—is disappearing in the name of democracy. The irony is that Taiwan is perceived to be drifting away either by desire (Taiwanization) or by design (U.S. arms sales and Bush's strategic tilt toward the island's defense). And this is despite China's contribution to the end of the Cold War, despite Deng's peaceful unification with Taiwan over Mao's liberation, despite the fact that the Chinese today are more willing and ready than at any time in China's history to join and stay with the West and U.S.-dominated world system, and despite China's steady and historical rise as a major power in the region and the world. The fate and future of Korea and China, which were first dictated in Versailles last century, are still beyond their own control.

History seldom mechanically repeats itself, and historical analogies, therefore, should be treated with caution. Nonetheless, history is also a stream that carries with it all the burdens, glory, wisdom, and consequences into the present and toward the future. In East Asia, history looms much larger in the past two centuries with Korea as the center for the geopolitical games of great powers. In both historical and

strategic perspectives, Korea has been a place where the U.S. and China reciprocate their resolves, power, and wisdom. Despite the enduring debate between orthodox and revisionist views of China's conduct of the war, the conflict half a century ago, though not initiated by China and the U.S., should never be "forgotten,"<sup>73</sup> but should serve as a historical benchmark against which future statesmen and their policies will be judged with regard to their mutual interests as well as regional and world security.

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3. Chen argues that PRC's communist ideology dictates an expansionist diplomacy to alter Asia's existing international system, hence the decision to intervene. Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 6-15 and 53-61.

4. Such a "military Romanticism" is said to be based on a "cultural" paradigm consisting of communist ideology and Chinese traditional and political culture. As a result, China "chose to act aggressively, regardless of the calculated high risk and cost." Zhang, 9-10.
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13. See Yu, in Xiaobing Li, et al., eds.
14. For PLA's debate regarding the capability of the U.S. military, see Yu, 5-6.
15. Stalin, however, quickly sent 13 Soviet air force divisions to China during the period of August and December 1950, once China decided to intervene without Soviet air cover. Soviet airplanes' first entrance into Korea occurred on November 1, 1950, and soon pushed its operations area to the Taedong Gang River area. See Shen Zhihua, "Kangmei Yuanchao Zhanzheng Zhong de Sulian Kongjun [Soviet air force during the Korean war]," part I, <http://lundian.com>, May 7, 2001: 2.
16. Mao's telegraph to Stalin, "On Our Decision to Dispatch Troops to Fight in Korea," October 2, 1950, *Jianguo Yilai Mao Zedong Wengao* [Mao Zedong's manuscripts since the foundation of the PRC], vol. 1 (Beijing: Central Archives and Manuscripts Press, 1987-1990) 540.
17. *Military Academy*, 13; Mao's telegraph to Zhou Enlai, "Yuanyu Zhiyuanjun Ruchao Zuozhan de Fangzhen he Bushu Gai Zhou Enlai de Dianbao [On the Operational Guidelines and Deployment for the Chinese Volunteers in Korea], October 14, 1950, *Mao's Manuscript*, vol. 1, 560.
18. Xu, 45. While the CPV's operational guideline was to avoid U.S. troops, and some CPV units deliberately did so, the CPV accidentally encountered a U.S. unit when the CPV's 39<sup>th</sup> Army attacked Unsan on the night of November 1. Only after sighting a much taller and heavier enemy did the CPV realize that it was engaging the Americans (the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, which was taking over the defense of Unsan from the ROK's 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment). The 39<sup>th</sup> Army overran one battalion and defeated another two of the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment. See Xie, 212 and 229-30; Du, 68-70.
19. Xie, 243-56; Xu, 49-52.
20. Xie, 267-82; Yang and Wang, 166-80; *Military Academy*, 52-67; Xu, 55-57; Zhao, 297-319.
21. Zhang, 119.
22. Yang and Wang, 185-87; Xie, 282-92; Du, 120-26; *Military Academy*, 63-66; Xu, 46-60.
23. *Military Academy*, 71.
24. Shen, 2000.

25. Nie, 780.
26. Yang and Wang, 200-201; Du, 140-42; Xu, 61-62.
27. *RMRB*, 10 December 1950, cited from Shen, 2000, Part II: 2 & note 52.
28. Gromyko to Chinese ambassador Wang Jiaxiang in Moscow that "Under present conditions in Korea I would like to remind an old proverb 'strike while the iron is hot' (chen re da tie)." Cited from Col. Victor A. Gavrilov's comment on this paper, June 2001 and Gromyko's diary on his talk on December 5, 1950 with Wang Jiaxiang, cited from Shen, 2000, Part II: 2 & note 53.
29. Russian diplomatic cables, December 7, 1950, cited from Shen, 2000, Part II: 2 & notes 54 & 55.
30. Xie, 353; Xu, 63 and 338.
31. Peng's persistence for tactical feasibility and flexibility differs from Zhang's account that CPV officers, including Peng, never doubted that Mao's military thought would work in Korea. Zhang, 255.
32. Du, 143-53; Xu, 62; Military Academy, 77-8 and 88-9.
33. Shen, 2000, Part II: 2, note 58.
34. Xu, 64; Xie, 399-403; Military Academy, 88.
35. Du, 186-91; Xu, 71; Yang and Wang, 221-22.
36. Xie, 399-401.
37. Xie, 402-3.
38. Mao's cable to the Soviets on January 15, 1951, cited from Shen, 2000, Part II, 2 and note 59.
39. Cited from Col. Victor A. Gavrilov's comment on this paper, June 2001.
40. Military Academy, 92-93; Du, 192.
41. *DM Ping Memoirs*, 186-91; Xu, 71; Yang and Wang, 221-22.
42. Xu, 72-74; Military Academy, 120-21; Du, 204.
43. Mao's directive was "Neng susheiw ze susheng, buneng susheng ze huansheng" (win quickly if possible; if not, win with a delay), Xu, 81.
44. Military Academy, 94; See Mar's telegraph to Stalin on March 1, 1951, cited in Xie, 453-6.
45. This appeared likely, when the U.N. forces increased their harassment, intelligence, and redeployment activities along the Korean coastal areas. Military Academy, 126-27; Du, 218-19.
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47. Military Academy, 152-54.
48. Peng's other three "mistakes" were the 1932 attack on Nationalist forces in the Ganzhou city, Jiangxi Province; the 1940 "Hundred-regiment Battle" against the Japanese; and the 1948 Xifu Campaign against the Nationalists. Xie, 456-58; Yang and Wang, 252-6.1; Du, 218-22.
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54. Cited from Col. Victor A. Gavrilov's comment on this paper, June 2001.
55. Steven W. Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000); Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2000); Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett, Jr., *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1999); Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, "The Coming Conflict with America," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1997): 18-32;

Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "A National Humiliation," *The Weekly Standard* (April 16-23, 2001): 11-16. The entire issue *Issues and Studies* (January/February 2000) is devoted to the "China threat" issue.

56. Robert Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1997): 33<sup>^</sup>14; Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997); John Schulz, "China As A Strategic Threat: Myths and Verities"; Stephen Aubin, "China: Yes, Worry About the Future," in *Strategic Review* (winter 1998): 5-16 and 17-20; Taeho Kim, "A Reality Check: The 'Rise of China' and Its Military Capability Toward 2010," *Journal of East Asian Affairs* (Summer/Fall 1998): 321-63; David Shambaugh, "Chinese Hegemony over East Asia by 2015?" *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* (Summer 1997): 7-28; Denny Roy, "The Foreign Policy of Great-Power China," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (September 1997): 121—35.

57. One recent study touches on the real issue. Thomas Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for US Security Policy," *International Security* 25.4 (Spring 2001): 5<sup>^</sup>10.

58. This was converted from Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second War* (Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press, 2000).

59. In his 1975 visit to China, Kim II Sung sounded like he was ready to use force to unify the country, like what North Vietnam had just done. In his speech at the welcoming dinner, Kim said that "If revolution takes place in South Korea, we, as one and the same nation, will not just look at it with folded arms but will strongly support the South Korean people. If the enemy ignites war recklessly, we shall resolutely answer it with war and completely destroy the aggressors. In this war we will only lose the Military Demarcation Line and will gain the country's reunification." Mao apparently persuaded Kim not to do so. The militant rhetoric was dropped in Kim's farewell speech, and he instead stressed "peaceful" effort to unify the country. See *Be King Review*, April 25 and May 2, 1975.

60. See *RMRB*, July 12, 1996.

61. Liang Ming and Guo Hongjun, "Military Confrontation in the Korean Peninsula Expected to Relax," in *Liao Wang* [Outlook], May 12, 2000.

62. In 1999, both Koreas adopted more pragmatic and flexible policies toward each other and other countries. The South's "sun-shine" policy by Kim Dae-Jung and its decision not to join the U.S.-led Theater Missile Defense (TMD) were reciprocated by Kim Jung II, who has so far pursued an active and omnidirectional foreign policy which has been seldom seen in its history. In his June 1999 visit to China, North Korean No. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam publicly expressed his support for China's reform and open-up policy. Such a move to embrace China's market-oriented reform was publicly endorsed by Kim Jung II himself during his secret visit to Beijing on May 29-31, 2000. *RMRB*, 1 June 2000. Also see Howard French, "North Korea Shyly Courts Capitalism," *New York Times*, April 30, 2000.

63. The 1st Vietnam War is Vietnam's war against the French in the 1950s when China provided massive assistance to Vietnam upon the latter's request. See Qian Jiang, *Zai Shenmin de Zhanzheng Zhong: Zhongguo Junshi Guwentuan Fu Yuenan Zhengzhan Ji* [The mysterious war: the experience of China's military advisors group in Vietnam] (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press), 1992). Between 1950 and 1954, China provided Vietnam with 116,000 rifles, 420 pieces of armillary, large quantity of munition and communication and engineering equipment. See Wang Xiangen, *Yuan Yue Kangmei Shilu* [True history of assisting Vietnam and resisting America] (Chengde: International Culture Press, 1990) 42-43.

64. At the height of the Chinese involvement in Vietnam, 170,000 PLA were in North Vietnam for air defense, logistic and transportation maintenance. A total of 320,000 person/time was accumulated for the three-year period of 1965 and 1968, and over

1,000 of them were killed there. Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) ix-x.

65. This and the following account on the Sino-U.S. communication during the Vietnam War (1965-75) are based on Li Changjiu and Shi Lujia, *Zhongmei Guanxi Erbai Nian* [200-year Sino-U.S. relations] (Beijing: New China Press, 1984); Li Danhui "Sanshibaduxian yu Shiqiduxian: Chaozhan he Yuezhan Qijian Zhongmei Xixi Goutong Bijiao Yanjou [38<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Parallels: a comparison of Sino-U.S. communication during the Korean and Vietnam wars]," [www.chinesenewsnet.com](http://www.chinesenewsnet.com), November 23, 2000.

66. The discussion of the case is largely based on William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in the Cradle': The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960-64," *International Security* 25.3 (Winter 2000/01): 54-99.

67. Brad Roberts, Robert A. Manning, and Ronald N. Montaperto, "China: The Forgotten Nuclear Power," *Foreign Affairs*, 79. 4 (July/August 2000): 53-63.

68. In the first two months of the Bush administration, Beijing sent three high-level diplomatic envoys to the U.S., including a group of senior diplomats, Mr. Zhou Mingwei, deputy director of PRC's Taiwan Affairs Council, and vice premier Qian Qichen. Meanwhile, a new ambassador to Washington arrived.

69. Michael R. Gordon, "Rumsfeld Limiting Military Contacts With the Chinese," *New York Times*, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), June 4, 2001.

70. In July 2001, a 12-member commission of outside experts concluded that CIA's classified intelligence analyses on China were biased, flawed, and slanted toward a benign view of Beijing. Bill Gertz, "Panel finds CIA soft on China," *The Washington Times*, July 6, 2001. Meanwhile, the Congress tried to cut funding for the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, the U.S. Pacific Command's think tank in Honolulu, for its inviting a Chinese scholar to a seminar in May 2001. *The Washington Times*, June 15, 2001.

71. See John W. Lewis, "The contradictions of Bush's China Policy," *New York Times*, June 2, 2001.

72. This view of Chinese nationalism differs from the prevalent depiction to divide the Chinese into hardliners and moderates. See John Lewis, 2001. The Chinese have long passed the phase (Mao's time) when the Americans were judged by who they were rather than what they do. Recent anti-Americanism in China should not be interpreted as universal or permanent. The same college students who threw stones at the U.S. embassy in Beijing following the 1999 U.S. bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade would line up the following week for visas to study in America.

73. To a certain degree, the Korean War was "forgotten" by both the U.S. and China. While the much earlier and shorter "police action" in Korea was recognized long after the more protracted Vietnam War in the U.S., Mao's politicization of the PRC politics and the PLA's role during the 1960s and 1970s also delayed the learning effort of the real lessons of the Korean War.