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*Only half the battle*

## THE CHINESE INTERVENTION IN KOREA, 1950

Eliot A. Cohen

### Introduction

The situation here might well be that of the Allied powers in the Ardennes offensive during the winter of 1944-45, where overpowering the enemy was only half of the battle.<sup>1</sup>

So G-2 (Intelligence) Far East Command (FEC), Tokyo, told anxious listeners in Washington, chiefly from the US Army General Staff, on 16 November 1950. At that moment, United Nations forces, led by the forces of the United States Eighth Army and X Corps, were gathering strength for a final push north to the Yalu River. UN troops would, officials in Washington and Tokyo hoped, thereby bring to an end the six-month-old Korean War. Those participating in the teleconference could not know just how ironically apt the analogy with the Ardennes offensive would prove. In 1950 as in 1944, bitter weather merely accompanied an enemy surprise attack that battered American forces. Less than two weeks after the 16 November teleconference, American forces would be reeling from their worst defeat since the Battle of the Bulge and probably their most serious setback in postwar history. In the aftermath of both assaults, Americans would wonder how an enemy managed to achieve surprise, despite many pieces of evidence available beforehand to those concerned with the assessment of enemy intentions and capabilities.

How did it happen? Why, given that Chinese forces had operated in the Korean peninsula since early October—showing their hand in a short but vicious offensive at the end of that month—were UN forces caught seemingly off guard? For some historians, the matter boils down to a question of individual culpability. In the dock are either Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of Far East Command (CINCFE) for his cavalier “disregard for China,”<sup>2</sup> or MacArthur’s intelligence chief, Major Genral Charles Willoughby, whom one of MacArthur’s biographers called “an arrogant, opinionated sycophant.”<sup>3</sup> What follows will suggest that attempts to pin the blame for the intelligence failure (which was only part of a larger operational failure) on one individual vastly oversimplify, and in some respects distort, the nature of the intelligence failure in Korea. So, too, do those accounts that render the events of November 1950 in terms of various popular theories of surprise. Instead, a close examination of available<sup>4</sup> intelligence assessments suggests a more complicated kind of failure, and one that has implications extending beyond this particular case study.

The paper begins by sketching the development of the Korean War from the North Korean invasion of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in June 1950 through the massive Chinese intervention in November of that year, and

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discusses intelligence sources and organization in the Far East and Washington. The bulk of the paper will look at American assessments during the less than two months that separated the crossing of the 38th Parallel from the debacle on the Yalu. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the case study for the study of intelligence and in particular intelligence failure.

**From Inchon to the Yalu**

The Korean War began on 25 June 1950 with the invasion of South Korea by some ten divisions of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). Well trained (almost all of its high-ranking officers had learned their trade in the Soviet Red Army or under the tutelage of the People's Liberation Army), well equipped, and ruthless in battle, the NKPA routed most of the ROK forces in its path. A frantically improvised American counterintervention drawing on the four understrength and peacetime-soft divisions in Japan, backed by the airplanes of the Far East Air Force (FEAF), finally stopped the NKPA on the circumference of a box barely 3,000-square miles large around the southern port of Pusan. The war became an effort by the UN, but Americans controlled its conduct, and American and South Korean forces bore the brunt of the effort.

By September 1950, heavy losses and overstretched supply lines had weakened the NKPA. On 15 September, General MacArthur launched an independent corps spearheaded by 1st Marine Division in an amphibious assault against the port of Inchon, near Seoul on Korea's western coast. A week later, after bitter battles, the main UN force, Eighth Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Walton Walker, broke out of the Pusan perimeter and scattered the NKPA forces in its path. Five days later, Eighth Army and X Corps linked up. Two days after that, on 29 September, President Syngman Rhee was restored to power in Seoul.

There had been for some time a debate over further objectives.<sup>5</sup> Should UN forces press on and reunify Korea or should they halt at the 38th Parallel? On the day that MacArthur brought Rhee to Seoul, the Secretary of Defense on his own behalf and that of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) told MacArthur, "We want you to feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of 38th Parallel."<sup>6</sup> The advance was not a swift one. The remnants of the NKPA offered a stubborn resistance, and UN forces, supplied across a battered line of communications running through Inchon, suffered chronic shortages of material. On 19 October, however, the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, fell and preparations began for a drive farther north.

This final attack northward took weeks to prepare. X Corps had been withdrawn from Inchon (a move that tied up the port for some time and thus aggravated Eighth Army's already serious supply problem). After delays in clearing mines from the North Korean east coast port of Wonsan, X Corps began landing there on 26 October and slowly moved into position for the final offensive. At precisely this time (from 25 October through 6 November), the Chinese launched their "First Phase Offensive," shaking the hitherto confident UN Command. Several ROK regiments and one American regiment suffered heavily from the attack, which ended as mysteriously as it had begun. After a pause to regroup, MacArthur gave the word to begin the advance shortly after

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Thanksgiving Day, 1950. A day later, on the night of 26/27 November, large Chinese attacks slammed into Eighth Army and X Corps as American and South Korean troops advanced to (and, in places, reached) the Yalu River, Korea's northern border. Thirty divisions of Chinese troops, rather than the 12 carried on order of battle charts, attacked the UN forces with appalling effect. Within weeks, ROK units, including whole divisions, had been destroyed. US 2nd Infantry Division was rendered combat ineffective, losing a third of its men and nearly all of its equipment. Parts of 7th Infantry Division in X Corps on the east were similarly hammered, and it looked for a time as if the Chinese would succeed in encircling and even destroying 1st Marine Division and the units attached to it, including some remnants of 7th ID and accompanying British units. Over the next two months, UN forces would retreat some 200 miles, losing not only Pyongyang but Seoul to the enemy for the second time in the war.

### **Intelligence: Structure and Sources**

We have available today many, but not all, of the surviving documents necessary to understand the debacle before the Yalu. Of particular importance here are missing documentation on communications intelligence (COMINT) which the National Security Agency will not release until the year 2000, if not later, and detailed material on espionage networks in Korea, China, and elsewhere. One may make inferences about the role COMINT, in particular, might have played in the period leading up to November 1950, but these remain no more than educated guesses.

On the other hand, almost all of the TOP SECRET and SECRET finished intelligence of the period has been published, including the relevant National Intelligence Estimates and the products of FEC and its subordinate commands. The latter are particularly important, because the SECRET Daily Intelligence Summary (DIS) of Far East Command contained the raw data for MacArthur's intelligence assessments.<sup>7</sup> The DISs, which could be 30 pages long and frequently longer, contained detailed accounts of the day's fighting in Korea, a good deal of political material on all countries in the FEC region (including Japan and China), and special appreciations and order of battle annexes. Feeding into the DISs were the Periodic Intelligence Reports (PIRs) of lower-level commands, most notably Eighth Army and X Corps. These usually concentrated on daily battlefield events, although they occasionally contained special appreciations on special subjects, usually of a tactical nature. In addition, MacArthur's G-2 in Tokyo drew on intelligence gathered by espionage, photo reconnaissance, communications intelligence, translation of captured enemy documents, interrogation of enemy prisoners, and on open sources such as Chinese broadcasts and newspapers.<sup>8</sup>

For the most part, Washington depended for its basic assessments on FEC, although other sources (most notably attache and consular reports from Taiwan and Hong Kong) came into play. Information was communicated between Tokyo and Washington through the DIS and the daily teleconference, which included a daily situation report from Tokyo, as well as responses to questions raised by either side. Washington—meaning here the Central Intelligence Agency, Army Intelligence, and the corporate effort known as the National

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Intelligence Estimate or NIE— did not simply accept FEC-2's judgments. As we shall see, for example, the Defense Department's daily Joint Intelligence Summary, prepared by the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee, provided assessments that sometimes differed considerably in tone and substance from those of FEC.

Some FEC sources—agent reports and COMINT—remain classified, or at least heavily sanitized. It has been reported that American-controlled intelligence in North Korea was skimpy throughout this period, which is not entirely surprising given the relative unimportance of Korea to American planners before June 1950. Other sources, which both FEC and Washington treated with reserve, included contacts with Chinese Nationalist forces in Taiwan. In retrospect, the best warnings of Chinese Communist intentions came from reports passed to American military and State Department personnel by KMT figures.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, both FEC and Washington analysts tended to discount Chinese Nationalist warnings for two understandable reasons: the KMT had interested motives in fostering American worries about the Chinese Communists, and some of the intelligence they provided appeared to be nothing more than FEC information passed to them earlier.<sup>10</sup>

It is, in any case, clear that FEC and Washington had some means for tracking the Chinese Communist mobilization for war during the fall of 1950. Such crude indicators of preparation for war as air raid drills and evacuation of key personnel could be monitored by Westerners still living in China, and the movement of troops could be traced fairly accurately. Although FEC consistently underestimated the number of troops actually in Korea—tripling its estimate of 70,000 men on 25 November to nearly 210,000 five days later, an estimate still about 90,000 men too low—it tracked the buildup in Manchuria far more accurately.<sup>11</sup> FEC estimated that a regular force (i.e. excluding district troops and militia) totaling 116,000 men in July had grown to 217,000 men in early August and grown to at least 415,000 and possibly 463,000 by early November.<sup>12</sup> Ironically FEC intelligence had a better grasp of the size and disposition of Chinese forces not in contact with UN troops in Korea than those who actually were.

The chief sources of intelligence in Korea itself were prisoners of war, photo-reconnaissance, and the local population.<sup>13</sup> Although the first proved remarkably forthcoming—and Eighth Army alone picked up nearly 100 Chinese prisoners before the November 1950 attack—American intelligence was hampered by a shortage of interpreters. Moreover, a postwar study suggested POWs spoke freely only to Army-level interrogators. At the corps and divisional levels, which had few competent linguists in any case, the POWs were still too terrified to be candid.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese Communists, by creating special units for their “volunteers,” succeeded in misleading FEC intelligence about the true order of battle of Chinese forces in Korea. In addition, the Chinese carefully used turned Nationalist soldiers in the first-phase offensive of late October-early November, saving the tougher and better motivated Communist forces for the later November attacks. Nonetheless, events were to prove that POWs were the best source of information.<sup>15</sup>

Photo-reconnaissance, so highly developed by American forces during World War II, had nearly vanished during the postwar period. As a result, it

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took a long time for both the Army and the Air Force to reconstitute the skilled photo-interpretation teams required for this means of intelligence gathering. Furthermore, in October and November Air Force reconnaissance focused its scarce assets on the bombing targets mandated by MacArthur's desire to cut the Yalu bridges and destroy the industrial and transportation infrastructure of the North. As a result, Eighth Army received an average of only three or four—and frequently fewer—photo-interpretation reports a day.<sup>16</sup> Compounding this problem, of course, was the superlative camouflage and road discipline of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF).

In some areas, particularly in the X Corps sector on the east coast of Korea, the local population proved extremely forthcoming and helpful in letting American forces know about the movements of the CCF. When S. L. A. Marshall, a combat historian working as a consultant for Eighth Army, interviewed officers in the 1st Marine Division he found that they believed that such information was "worth far more than what we got with our own patrols."<sup>17</sup> This is not entirely surprising, because the CCF used Korean villages for shelter during their two-month buildup in northern Korea. This source of information appears to have been cultivated far more by the Marines than by Eighth Army, whose daily intelligence reports relied heavily on POW interrogations.

Regrettably, aggressive patrolling did not produce nearly as much information about the size and dispositions of the CCF as American commanders hoped it would. When Matthew Ridgway assumed command of Eighth Army at the end of December 1950, he found to his bitter disappointment that "They (American infantry) no longer even think of operating on foot away from their transportation and heavy equipment."<sup>18</sup> Even when the enemy came to the UN forces, little was done to sift the impressions of frontline troops until the arrival of S. L. A. Marshall. His 1952 report on the subject bears quoting:

"Infantry, being the body which under the normal situation in war maintains the most persistent contact with the fighting parts of the enemy, is the antenna of the mechanism of combat intelligence . . . during field operations, infantry should be the most productive source of information pertaining to the enemy's tactics, use of weapons, combat supply system, habits, and general nature. Our G-2 processes are designed to drain dry any enemy soldier who falls into infantry hands. They take little cognizance that perhaps more is to be learned of the enemy from what has been seen, heard, and felt by our own soldier in the line. There is no steady winnowing of this field of information. There is no machinery for adding it up, analyzing it across the board, and then deducing its lessons."<sup>19</sup>

Marshall, in fact, did just this, producing reports which were subsequently disseminated throughout the theater as part of the DIS and Eighth Army intelligence reports.<sup>20</sup>

One may say, then, that the United States had a fairly broad range of intelligence assets available to it as it faced the problem of Chinese intervention in Korea in the summer and fall of 1950. To be sure, many of these could not be fully exploited because of organizational or material bottlenecks, and some

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sources (e.g. the KMT in Taiwan) were considered less than fully reliable. In some cases, open sources—Chinese radiobroadcasts—would prove as informative as any secret agent concerning Chinese aims in Korea. In any event, data was neither so voluminous and confusing as to confuse the analyst nor so skimpy as to preclude accurate assessment, which suggests that we should examine closely the quality of the analyses themselves.

American intelligence had to deal with two questions in the fall of 1950. First, would China intervene on a large scale in the Korean War, and with what motives? Second, if China did intervene, what sort of strategy might it use, and what operational capabilities would its forces manifest? The historiography of the Korean War has focused much more on the first of these questions than the second. As we shall see, however, the two are equally important.

**The Real Story**

Let us begin by reconstructing, insofar as we can, the manner in which the Chinese intervened in Korea.<sup>21</sup> It appears from Khrushchev's memoirs that the initiative for the North Korean invasion of the south in the summer of 1950 came from Kim il-Sung; Stalin approved it but is said to have consulted with Mao Zedong before giving it full support.<sup>22</sup> There is no evidence that any of the Communist leaders, at least until August 1950, expected a large-scale American intervention or that they thought that such an intervention would succeed. At the time, the most senior members of the Chinese and Soviet militaries began consultations on a possible Chinese counterintervention in the war.<sup>23</sup> The final decision to enter the war as an all-out belligerent was not taken until a Chinese Politburo meeting on 4 October at which, despite some resistance, Mao convinced his colleagues to accede to war with the United States.<sup>24</sup>

One may assume that Chinese observers and advisers had been in Korea for some time. It was not until 13 or 14 October, however, that large units began crossing the Yalu, followed by their overall commander, Peng Dehuai, on the 18th.<sup>25</sup> By 20 October, four Chinese armies (some 30,000 men each, the equivalent of Western corps-sized units) had crossed the Yalu, three opposite 8th Army in the west and one opposite X Corps in the east. At the end of October, two more armies crossed to confront Eighth Army, for a total of 180,000 CCF.

At this point, the Chinese launched what they would call their First Phase Offensive, an attack directed chiefly against ROK II Corps, but which also smashed 8th Cavalry Regiment of the American 1st Cavalry Division. The attack, which was at its most intense from 25 October to 2 November, broke off as suddenly as it began. Peng Dehuai later explained Chinese strategy: "We employed the tactics of purposely showing ourselves to be weak, increasing the arrogance of the enemy, letting him run amuck, and luring him deep into our areas."<sup>26</sup> It is sometimes suggested that the First Phase Offensive was nothing more than a diplomatic signal to American forces—an 11th-hour warning not to approach the Yalu.<sup>27</sup> Given the testimony of Peng's memoirs and the other evidence—the large-scale mobilization of the Chinese populace for war, for instance—this seems questionable. It is more likely that the First Phase Offensive reflected a traditional Chinese approach to war, as adapted by Mao from Sun Tzu.<sup>28</sup>

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All warfare is based on deception.

Therefore, when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near.

Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him.

When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him.

Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance.

Keep him under a strain and wear him down.

When he is united, divide him.

Attack where he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you.

The First Phase Offensive served many purposes: it enabled the Chinese to gauge American strengths and weaknesses,<sup>29</sup> it shook the morale of the ROK forces, slowed the advance and bewildered the minds of UN commanders, and probably built the confidence of Chinese commanders in their own capacity to deal with UN forces.

During and following the First Phase Offensive, the Chinese poured a third wave of troops over the Yalu, dispatching three more armies, each with four divisions, into North Korea. By mid-November, 30 divisions, or a total of 300,000 men, had entered North Korea. Three fifths of this force was poised opposite Eighth Army in the west and two fifths opposite X Corps in the east. When this force would attack was simply a matter of time.

The Chinese counterattacked the day after Eighth Army and X Corps launched what was supposed to be the final offensive of the war. Insofar as we can determine Chinese intentions from captured documents and memoirs, the intent was to annihilate UN forces on the Korean peninsula and restore Communist control. It was not until early February 1951 that Peng confessed to Mao that a quick win was not in sight.<sup>30</sup> This is not as indication of military blindness on his part, however, because throughout December many American military leaders did not expect to be able to hold on to Korea. "It appears," the JCS told MacArthur on 29 December 1950, "that the Chinese Communists possess the capability of forcing United Nations forces out of Korea if they choose to exercise it."<sup>31</sup>

The CCF attacked at night, seeking to envelop UN positions and then crush them through steady pressure.<sup>32</sup> On the larger scale, they were particularly anxious to surround and destroy UN divisions, using guerrilla operations in rear areas to supplement conventional encircling operations. The CCF operational style—which we will discuss below—was different in a number of interesting respects from that of the NKPA, which was a much more conventionally armed and trained force.

**American Estimates: To the 38th Parallel**

In late September 1950 there was no doubt in any American policymaker's mind that the North Korean attack in June 1950 had had the full sanction of the

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Soviets and the Chinese, who were usually (though not always) seen as a monolithic bloc. The general belief, however, was that Chinese and Soviet forces would not intervene on a large scale unless they were prepared to ignite World War III by so doing.<sup>33</sup> As that did not appear likely, the JCS were willing to recommend that MacArthur be allowed to cross the 38th Parallel, provided that the Soviets or Chinese did not send major forces into North Korea or clearly threaten to do so. This rather equivocal instruction was further muddled by a message from Secretary of Defense George Marshall which told MacArthur that he should feel "unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of 38th Parallel."<sup>34</sup> By this point, there had already been several signs that the Chinese were considering intervention in Korea. Chinese Nationalists, for example, had suggested that Chinese troops on the Yalu were preparing to move south.<sup>35</sup> But the first of a subsequently famous set of warnings by the Indian Ambassador to China, M.M. Panikkar, received on 21 September, was surprisingly muted. The Indian Government's paraphrase of Panikkar's report included the observation that the Chinese were both well aware of the ability of American air power to destroy Chinese cities and yet reluctant to undertake civil defense preparations. Panikkar also emphasized the distance between the Chinese and the Soviets over Korea and many other subjects.<sup>36</sup>

The first direct and serious warning of a Chinese threat to intervene came on 3 October—the day before the Chinese Politburo apparently made its final decision to enter the war on a large scale. In it, Panikkar related a conversation with Chou En-lai in which Chou informed the Indian ambassador that the Chinese had decided to intervene if American forces entered North Korea.<sup>37</sup> This story, of which perhaps too much has been made, did not appear to American decisionmakers as a sharp break with the past. The question was not "whether" the Chinese intended to intervene but only one of the "degree of their intervention."<sup>38</sup>

FEC intelligence noted Panikkar's warnings in the DIS, and in the days that followed raised repeatedly the possibility of large-scale Chinese intervention in the war. A number of incidents sparked this concern, including the account of an escaped American POW who reported an interrogation by a Soviet colonel which concluded with a warning about a "Soviet Alliance" intervention in the war.<sup>39</sup> Also of concern was the growth of regular Chinese forces estimated to be in Manchuria; in July the DIS confirmed the presence of 116,000 troops in Manchuria, a month later 217,000, and in late September 246,000 with a possible strength as high as 450,000 men. As UN forces probed across the 38th Parallel, however, the assessments in the Pentagon and FEC remained cautiously optimistic. The view of the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee (JIIC) on 6 October was that although the Chinese had increased their ability to intervene in Korea, their threat to do so was possibly a hollow one. The JIIC advised FEC that local commanders should prepare for a protracted struggle, possibly involving the use of guerrilla warfare.<sup>40</sup>

**American Estimates: From the 38th Parallel to the First Phase Offensive**

Once American forces crossed the 38th Parallel and nothing happened, American estimates of the likelihood of massive Chinese intervention became considerably more confident. The sources of this optimism differed. The CIA

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prepared a paper for President Truman before he met with General MacArthur on Guam on 15 October. In it, CIA analysts concluded that the Chinese could intervene "effectively, but not necessarily decisively, in the Korean conflict."<sup>41</sup> Believing that the time for successful intervention had passed, and that such an intervention would only occur in the context of a global war unleashed by the Soviet Union, the CIA concluded that the Chinese would continue to give only covert aid to the North Koreans.

A rather different line of reasoning led to qualified confidence in FEC. Beginning in early October, FEC analysts published in the DIS post-mortems on the campaigns against the NKPA. These retrospective analyses suggested that a massive air interdiction campaign, coupled with close air support of American troops during the preceding summer, had played a critical role in the destruction of the NKPA.<sup>42</sup> The day before the Wake Island conference, for example, FEC analysts published their finding that where the average NKPA division needed over 200 tons of supplies daily to fight, by early fall NKPA divisions got as little as a tenth that amount—largely because of air interdiction of NKPA supply lines.<sup>43</sup> A third or more of all personnel casualties and more than half of the enemy's losses of equipment were attributed to the operations of air power.<sup>44</sup> These findings—based largely on interrogation of NKPA prisoners—would pave the way for MacArthur's blithe remark to President Truman at Wake Island: "If the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang, there would be the greatest slaughter."<sup>45</sup>

This growing—and, one must say, solidly based—faith in the efficacy of close air support and air interdiction of enemy lines of communication colored not only MacArthur's command decisions, but also the nature of supporting intelligence assessments. To be sure, FEC Intelligence conceded, the problem would get easier for the Chinese the closer the battleline came to their bases along the Yalu. It noted, moreover, that the Chinese could make do with less logistic support than American forces and perhaps even North Korean troops.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, this overconfidence in the efficacy of air power would color FEC's estimates of Chinese military effectiveness and the Chinese strategic calculus until after the launching of the second Chinese attack in November.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, in October and early November American intelligence officers in Tokyo and Washington agreed on three core propositions: the Chinese were increasing the size of their forces in Manchuria; although the Chinese had aided the NKPA with both supplies and men, they probably would refrain from a massive effort; the Chinese were unlikely to intervene, in part because the optimum time to do so—when the NKPA was still an effective fighting force—had passed.<sup>48</sup> FEC and Washington analysts differed, however, in their most important reason for thinking the Chinese would avoid a large-scale war in Korea—the former concentrating on Chinese military capabilities, the latter on the hypothesis that large-scale conflict in Korea meant global war between East and West.

For the time being, these differences were ones of nuance and had little practical importance. Interestingly enough, neither Washington- nor Tokyo-based analysts examined at length the possibility that the Chinese had been caught off guard by the North Korean defeat, and they were forced to postpone

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their decision to intervene in Korea. In retrospect, this is what seems to have happened. The PLA subsequently found itself confronting several pressing tasks simultaneously: the invasion of Tibet in November, the consolidation of the Communist position in China itself, and a linkup with Viet Minh forces along the border with French Indochina. Under such circumstances, it is not entirely suprising that intervention in Korea took time to prepare. The Chinese had wrested Hainan Island from the Nationalists in May 1950, and they were preparing to invade Taiwan itself when the Korean War diverted their attention. Even for the lightly equipped PLA, a redeployment of forces from the southern coast of Manchuria was a matter of weeks, if not months.

On 25 October the first large-scale Chinese attack began with the destruction of several regiments in ROK II Corps. Two days later, Eighth Army picked up several Chinese POWs, but concluded that these were merely fillers for North Korean units.<sup>49</sup> This complacency changed when, on 1-2 November, the Chinese attacked a regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, nearly annihilating one battalion and capturing a large quantity of American equipment, including half a dozen artillery pieces.

At this point, divergences in American intelligence interpretation opened up. State Department analysts, particularly the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Edmund O. Clubb, concluded that a large-scale Chinese intervention was likely. For the next three weeks, Clubb would argue persistently that the Chinese had large objectives, adducing as evidence Chinese propaganda campaigns at home and the nature of Chinese Communist ideology more broadly.<sup>50</sup> The Defense Department was more sanguine, acknowledging that a limited intervention was under way but denying evidence of "indications of psychological preparation for war in Korea."<sup>51</sup> The CIA had begun to articulate its pet theory about Chinese intervention, namely, that the Chinese were concerned chiefly about the security of their border with Korea and with the hydroelectric plants on the Yalu.<sup>52</sup> This view, to which Secretary of Defense Marshall also stubbornly adhered, had little evidence to support it, beyond one or two Chinese broadcasts referring to the raising of volunteer units to defend these plants. Chinese goals, as we have seen, were nowhere near so modest.

FEC, although not as gloomy as the State Department, now began to produce more pessimistic assessments of the situation. It reported that the problem of Chinese intervention had been removed

from the realm of the academic and turn(ed) into a serious proximate threat . . . it is important not to lose sight of the maximum potential that is available to the Chinese Communists. Should the high-level decision for full intervention be made, the Chinese Communists could promptly commit 29 of their 44 divisions presently deployed along the Yalu River and support a major attack with up to 150 aircraft.<sup>53</sup>

FEC's concerns were augmented by warnings from generally reliable Chinese Nationalist sources in Taiwan that the Communists were getting ready to "throw the book" at UN forces in Korea.<sup>54</sup>

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MacArthur did not agree with the CIA and DoD assessments of Chinese objectives, views strongly put to him in a personal cable from Secretary of Defense Marshall.<sup>55</sup> In particular, he rejected two uneasily coexisting Washington views concerning the limited nature of Chinese concerns and their relationship with the Soviet Union.

I do not believe that the hydroelectric system is the dominant consideration animating the Communist intervention in Korea . . . they (the Chinese) now make first-class soldiers and are gradually developing competent staffs and commanders. This has produced a new and dominant power in Asia which for its own purposes is allied with Soviet Russia, but which in its own concepts and methods has become aggressively imperialistic with a lust for expansion and increased power normal to this type of imperialism.<sup>56</sup>

FEC now pressed for a number of changes in the conduct of the war, particularly an even more aggressive air campaign (including attacks on the Yalu bridges) and a suspension of plans then being implemented to wind down the American presence in Korea. The DoD, including the JCS, reluctantly went along with these measures. After reversing an earlier decision, the JCS permitted the bombing of the southern ends of the Yalu bridges and, on 17 November, resumed the shipment of infantry replacements to American forces in Korea.

#### **American Estimates: The Offensive Resumed**

By mid-November, a consensus had emerged that some kind of large Chinese intervention was under way in Korea, although there was considerable disagreement among American intelligence officials' about its scope and purposes. From this point until the second Chinese offensive on 26 November, CIA and the JCS would hew to their original view that a full-scale Chinese offensive would mean the initiation of global war by the Soviet bloc. At the same time, both groups made lower estimates of Chinese strength than did FEC.<sup>57</sup> National Intelligence Estimate 2/1, "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," concluded on 24 November that although the Chinese had increased their capability for large-scale offensive operations, there were no definitive indications that they had decided to embark on them.<sup>58</sup> Washington authorities, most notably the JCS, seemed to believe that as long as direct clashes along the Yalu could be avoided, so too could war with China—hence proposals by Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins that MacArthur stop five miles from the border.

The mood in FEC also became one of cautious optimism but for quite different reasons. For one thing, the end of the first Chinese offensive during the first week of November had the effect Peng Dehuai claimed for it in his memoirs—it encouraged American commanders to think that the enemy had been beaten and decided to retreat. Furthermore, although FEC understood that Chinese divisions were less vulnerable to air interdiction than their NKPA counterparts, MacArthur's faith in air power grew and was accompanied by further studies confirming that belief. Once the bridges over the Yalu could be attacked, the prospects for success seemed good, if only UN forces could reach

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the river before it froze. This was supposed to occur in mid-December; in fact, it would begin in late November 1950.<sup>59</sup>

FEC now (late November 1950) estimated that Eighth Army and X Corps would have to fight their way through between nine and 12 Chinese divisions to the Yalu—a force of between 70,000 and 100,000 men.<sup>60</sup> G-2 expected hard fighting, but thought that the Chinese would yield in the end, even though FEC Intelligence freely admitted that the enemy had the potential to reinforce his forces in North Korea swiftly and massively. What accounted for this optimism?

Unlike the CIA and JCS assessments, FEC's views had less to do with assumptions about Chinese or Soviet intentions than with a picture of the enemy it had to fight. Basically, FEC viewed the PLA as a more numerous but less well-equipped version of the NKPA, which had succumbed to the air power of the UN command and hard fighting on the ground. The FEC view was that

The quality of the Chinese Communist fighting man is probably similar to that of the well-trained Korean soldier in mid-campaign. However, it is to be recognized that most of the CCF troops have had no significant experience in combat operations against a major combat power. In addition, their training, like that of the original North Korean forces, had been greatly handicapped by the lack of uniform equipment and assured stocks of munitions . . .

FEC concluded that "Chinese Communist troops would probably be forced to campaign under the same psychological and physical handicaps as those borne by the North Koreans."<sup>61</sup> When intelligence analysts compared the CCF and the NKPA, they saw that the average North Korean infantry division had as much animal transport as the Chinese, plus 200 trucks that were absent in the Chinese order of battle. NKPA divisions had a full suite of artillery—40 pieces plus half a dozen heavy mortars—versus a bar battery (nine light howitzers) for the Chinese. Even the NKPA infantry seemed better equipped, having three times as many heavy machine guns as in the CCF.<sup>62</sup>

While these comparisons were valid, they overlooked some fundamental differences between the NKPA and the CCF. NKPA units were organized, equipped, and trained along Soviet lines.<sup>63</sup> The Chinese were different not simply by virtue of their inferior equipment (which included large quantities of American materiel captured in the Chinese civil war), but by virtue of a different approach to warfare.<sup>64</sup> Chinese units preferred infiltration and envelopment to the more conventional artillery-supported assaults of the North Koreans. Short of artillery, the Chinese attacked close in and at night, crushing enemy positions by repeated attacks rather than a single "human wave," as reported in the newspapers. They relied more on psychological warfare stratagems, and placed greater emphasis on the political dimension of the struggle than did their allies.<sup>65</sup>

FEC estimated that the CCF would suffer the same logistic handicaps that the North Koreans had earlier in the war. The news that CCF prisoners had been issued less than two weeks' rations before crossing the Yalu, coupled with

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the renewed air offensive, impending cold weather, and the UN forces' own logistic difficulties, made FEC G-2 considerably more optimistic in late November than it had been only a few weeks earlier.<sup>66</sup> Intelligence officers throughout the command still expected a tough battle, but through 27 November continued to believe that the Chinese would stubbornly defend and then withdraw from defensive positions in North Korea.<sup>67</sup>

Because of its inability fully to grasp the differences between the NKPA and PLA as military organizations, FEC was unprepared for the scope and effectiveness of the second Chinese offensive. First to crumble was FEC's confidence in air power.<sup>68</sup> Although FEC order of battle analysts had always allowed that the Chinese could reinforce their armies in North Korea rapidly, the magnitude of the Chinese achievement in concealing over two thirds of their force in Korea from detection by UN forces was another stunning blow. Only extraordinary march and camouflage discipline enabled the Chinese to achieve surprise of this kind—plus immunity from American tactical signal intelligence detection enforced by the Chinese lack of radios below the regimental level.

The subsequent defeat of Eighth Army had many causes, not least among them undermanning, fragile logistics, and poor tactical leadership.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, a failure of intelligence played an important role in the setbacks to UN forces and the prolongation of the war. The CIA and DoD intelligence organizations misgauged Chinese motivations for war and built their analysis on erroneous assumptions about the possibility of war. FEC, though more realistic in its appraisal of the Chinese buildup in Manchuria, failed in a more profound way to assess accurately Chinese military capabilities. It did not dismiss them, but neither did it adequately inform UN forces about the nature of the opposing forces.

**Conclusion: Korea as a Case Study in Intelligence Failure**

One may take away from this case study two lessons concerning intelligence failure. First, intelligence failure can result from flawed analysis. The point is obvious, but it has been obscured by recent writing on the subject, which has tended to ascribe intelligence failure to consumers' unwillingness to accept bad news, the prevalence of "noise" over accurate information, and the sheer difficulty of making accurate judgments no matter how well intentioned and objective the analyst.<sup>70</sup> FEC G-2 failed in two key respects: first, it did not impress upon consumers the range of uncertainty in its order of battle estimates of Chinese strength in North Korea; second, and more important, it rated Chinese military effectiveness far too low. It failed to understand that the Chinese military threat was a substantially different one than that faced heretofore by UN forces at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

Intelligence organizations generally shy away from net assessment—the weighing of opposing military forces—arguing that such a function would contaminate their analyses. It is certainly the case that operational staffs tend to guard the net assessment function jealously, and they take a dim view of poaching by intelligence organizations in this domain. Yet inevitably FEC G-2 found itself compelled to make such net assessments. It could not judge Chinese

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military effectiveness, for example, without taking into account the operations of UN air power. When it did so, it erred in its assessment of the impact of such operations on the Chinese forces in North Korea. By making the half-explicit, half-implicit assumption that the CCF resembled the NKPA, FEC G-2 led intelligence consumers to think that the methods that broke the one would break—or at least cripple—the other.

The task of estimating military effectiveness is exceedingly complicated and difficult.<sup>71</sup> It must be a problem of making relative judgments, for no absolute standards of military capability can exist. Given this, it is particularly imperative that intelligence organizations look not merely to an enemy's possible intentions and inventory of men and machines, but to the ways in which he operates, his "way of war." Overemphasis of order of battle intelligence, the staple of most defense intelligence organizations, can actually mislead analysts, who fail to see the "advantages of backwardness"<sup>72</sup> in a materially poor but doctrinally sophisticated opponent. In the Chinese case, lack of heavy equipment enforced infiltration tactics that UN forces at first found difficult to counter, and lack of signal gear forced reliance on older means of communication (runners, musical instruments, fire) not susceptible to useful interception by a Western army. Yet when assessing military effectiveness today, many analysts are often no more prone to probe the enemy's "way of war" than they were 40 years ago.<sup>73</sup>

The second lesson of this case concerns the way in which scholars attempt to unravel intelligence failures related to war. This case study suggests, in particular, the need of examining more than so-called "strategic intelligence," a term often inappropriately used to describe intelligence assessments made in a nation's capital. Rather, scholars must examine the intelligence product of theater and subordinate commands, which often take quite a different approach to a problem. Furthermore, without a good grip on tactical and operational realities, scholars, like the analysts themselves, run the risk of misunderstanding strategic problems.

The failure of American intelligence in November 1950 was a complicated one. It involved not the making of a "go/no-go" assessment about a Chinese intervention, but the far trickier problem of gauging the likely contours of that intervention and its probable effects. Intelligence analysts in Tokyo and Washington suffered from their own preconceptions, to be sure, but also from data distorted and concealed by an ingenious and well-disciplined foe.<sup>74</sup> The problem of intelligence does not resemble that of building an even better telescope with which to peer into the heavens and thus unlock the secrets of nature. It is, rather, more akin to a game of chess, in which all capabilities are relative and all judgments and predictions are conditioned by the interaction of two opposing sides.<sup>75</sup> Thus, students of intelligence must remember that one side's failure is the other's success.

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## NOTES

This paper is based on work done for a book co-authored with Professor John Gooch of the University of Lancaster, *Military Misfortunes*, to be published by The Free Press. I am grateful to Professor Arthur Waldron for several research suggestions and to other friends and colleagues for their comments on a related manuscript. The text expresses my views alone and not those of the US Naval War College or any other government agency.

1. Telecon #214, 16 November 1986. Record Group 9, "Collection of Messages." MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia (henceforth this archive cited as MMA). The telecons occurred on a daily basis, and involved a conference by teletype between senior staffs in Tokyo and Washington; those present frequently included FEC G-2, Major General Charles Willoughby, and the head of Army Intelligence, as well as various other department heads on either side of the world, including Navy, Air Force, State Department, and CIA officials.
2. Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War* (New York: Longman, 1986), p. 201.
3. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Volume 3, *Triumph and Disaster, 1945-1964* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1985), p. 391. These are strong words from the normally reserved biographer of MacArthur, whose three volumes are a definitive work.
4. I stress the word "available." Although large quantities of material bearing on Korea have been declassified, important portions—most notably, those dealing directly with agent reports and with signal intelligence—have not. The scholar sensitive to the importance of these kinds of materials in recent World War II historiography must feel some anxiety about discussing later periods without access to similar information.
5. For example, on 30 August 1950, when conversations between American, French, and British officials in preparation for a September meeting of foreign ministers revealed European concerns that UN forces not cross the 38th Parallel. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950*, Volume 7, *Korea* (Washington, D.C., United States Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 667. Henceforth, this volume will be cited as *FRUS*.
6. JCS to CINCFE, 29 September 1950, *Ibid.*, p. 826.
7. Three copies of the DIS were sent every day to Washington by courier from Tokyo, taking three to five days to arrive there. Another 54 copies went by registered mail. Telecon #194, 3 November 1950, RG9,MMA.
8. It would appear that FEC strove, with some success, to limit severely CIA agent operations in Korea, as indicated by a plaintive cable from the Defense Department which begins by renouncing any intention to "question your command authority over operations of any branch of CIA within your theater . . ." DEPTAR (OSD) to CINCFE, 28 October 1950, RG 9, MMA. On the other hand, one may infer from orders concerning the potential relocation of a British Hong Kong station (presumably a listening post) that FEC did not control strategic-level COMINT assets. DEPTAR (G-2) to CINCFE, 2 December 1950, RG 9, MMA.
9. See, for example, DEPTAR (G-2) to CINCFE, 5 November 1950, RG9,MMA. The same warning is discussed in *FRUS*, pp. 1069-1070.
10. Telecon #208, 12 November 1950, RG9,MMA.
11. See Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington Department of the Army, 1961), pp. 759-776 on the question of pre-intervention intelligence assessments.
12. Numbers taken from "Research Data of the Chinese Communist Potential for Intervention in the Korean War," Volume 3, "Order of Battle Annex," Tab 2. Record Group 23, "Papers of Charles A. Willoughby," MMA. This is a source that must be used carefully. It was compiled, apparently in 1951, by the Military Intelligence Section of FEC General Headquarters, and contains a brief (10-page) tendentious defense of FEC intelligence. The bulk of the three volumes, however, consists of an orderly historical array of contemporary intelligence assessments, reproduced for the volumes in fairly complete form. The omissions (as checked against the DIS holdings in the National Archives) are surprisingly few, even when they tend to undercut FEC's own case.
13. See "Intelligence and Counterintelligence During the Korean Conflict," ms. (U.S. Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), *passim*.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

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15. Eighth Army, "A Summation of Miscellaneous Lessons Learned by the 8th Army Staff in Korea," n.d. (1953-1955?), pp. 15-17. U.S. Army Military History Institute Library, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. (Henceforth, this collection, which includes both a library and an archive, is cited as USAMHI). This study also comments on the acute lack of linguistically competent interrogators early in the war.
16. On photo-reconnaissance overall, see Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), pp. 72, 228-9, 273. One may track Eighth Army's supply of photo-intelligence by examining the Daily Staff Reports of G-2, Eighth Army, for October and November of 1950. See "Eighth US Army War Diaries," October and November 1950, Record Group 407, "Army-AG Command Reports, 1949-1954," Modern Military Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland (henceforth referred to as MMR/WNRC). The DSR reports the number of missions flown, the number of requests for missions made, and the number of reports actually received. S.L.A. Marshall found that it took Eighth Army an average of ten days to get air photographs for ground forces. Folder "Basic Journal, Marshall's Notes, 2d Division," S.L.A. Marshall Papers, USAMHI Archives.
17. Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Lee Ridge, 3/1 Marines, 8 January 1951. Folder "1st Marine Division at Chosin Reservoir; Interviews," S. L. A. Marshall Papers, USAMHI Archives. See also interview with G-2 section, 1st Marine Division, 4 December (January?) 1951.
18. Lettér to General J. Lawton Collins, 8 January 1951, Folder, "Special File—12/1950-03/1951," Box, "Korean War—Special File, December 1950-May 1952 (plus July 1950), Matthew B. Ridgway Papers, USAMHI Archives.
19. S. L. A. Marshall, "Commentary on Infantry Operations and Weapons Usage in Korea, Winter of 1950-1951," Report ORO-R-13 (Chevy Chase, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University, 1952), pp. 120-121.
20. These reports (completed in 1951 for the Operations Research Office at Johns Hopkins University, and entitled "CCF in the Attack") have been reproduced in William B. Hopkins, *One Bugle No Drums: The Marines at Chosin Reservoir* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1986), pp. 233-265. See as well Marshall's masterly account, *The River and the Gauntlet, Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November 1950 in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea* (1953; New York: Time, Inc., 1962).
21. The most up-to-date account is Mineo Nakajima, "Foreign Relations from the Korean War to the Bandung Line," in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 14, The People's Republic, Part I: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 270-9.
22. Strobe Talbott, trans. and ed., *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston, Little Brown, 1970), pp. 368-370.
23. Juergen Domes, *Peng Te-huai, The Man and the Image* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 60.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 56. Domes believes that Stalin prodded the Chinese into making this decision. See Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu. The Decision to Enter the Korean War*, R-356 (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1960), passim. Opposition is discussed in the account of the commander of Chinese forces, Peng Dehuai, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal*, Zheng Longpu, trans. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1984), pp. 472-4.
25. Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 766ff, reconstructs Chinese movements. See also Peng, *Memoirs*, p. 475.
26. Peng, *Memoirs*, p. 476.
27. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, pp. 160-2 discusses this possibility, but is considerably more tentative on the subject than others who have written about it.
28. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 66-69. See Griffith's excellent, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), pp. 127-139.
29. Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 719-720 has an interesting summary of one Chinese set of "lessons learned" from these battles.
30. Peng, *Memoirs*, p. 479. Mao replied "Win a quick victory if you can; if you can't, win a slow one." Peng notes that this was "a clear and flexible principle" (p. 480). Khrushchev recalls that Peng insisted that his objective was the annihilation of American forces. *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 372.
31. JCS to CINCFE, 29 December 1950, *FRUS*, p. 1625.

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32. CCF tactics are best captured in S. L. A. Marshall's reports, earlier mentioned, and Griffith's *The Chinese People's Liberation Army*, pp. 143-9.
33. See, for example, Joint Strategic Plans Committee, "Courses of Action in Korea," 23 August 1950, Folder "CCS383.21 Korea (3-19-45)," Record Group 218, "Joint Chiefs of Staff, Geographic File 1948-1950," Modern Military Records, National Archives (henceforth referred to as MMR/NA). "It is not probable that the attempts will include overt Soviet or Chinese Communist aggression until the Kremlin is ready to precipitate global war."
34. Secretary of Defense to CINCFE, 29 September 1950, *FRUS*, p. 826.
35. Far East Command, Daily Intelligence Summary #2937, 24 September 1950. Reproduced in "Research Data," RG23, MMA. Henceforth, this publication will be cited as DIS. Unless otherwise noted, copies consulted have been those from Record Group 338, "Far East Command G-2 Records," MMR/WNRC. There are holdings of the DIS in a number of different archives, however.
36. Ambassador in India to the Secretary of State, 20 September 1950, *FRUS*, pp. 742-3.
37. Ambassador in India to the Secretary of State, 3 October 1950, *FRUS*, p. 850. On 25 September Panikkar had an informal conversation with a Chinese general who said that China would not "sit back with folded hands." Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, pp. 106-8.
38. Acting Secretary of State to Embassy in India, 4 October 1950, *FRUS*, p. 874.
39. DIS #2950, 7 October 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC. FEC G-2 speculated, however, that the warning had been an effort to break the prisoner's will to resist rather than a serious threat.
40. DA to CINCFE, 6 October 1950; RG9, MMA.
41. Memorandum, "Threat of Full-Scale Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," 12 October 1950, *FRUS*, p. 933.
42. A view warmly endorsed by American ground commanders at the time, and not entirely surprising, given that 8th Army had proportionately more tactical air power in support than did American forces under the command of Omar Bradley in France in 1944. See Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, p. 256, also pp. 260, 376, 477.
43. DIS #2957, 14 October 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC. See also DIS #2949, 6 October 1950, and later on DIS #2975, 1 November 1950.
44. DIS #2988, 14 November 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC.
45. "Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference on 15 October 1950," *FRUS*, p. 953.
46. DIS #2971, 28 October 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC says that CCF requirements could be "as low as 50 tons per division per day." In fact, FEC's *lower* bound was the Chinese *upper* bound; the CCF fought on between 40 and 50 tons a day. Griffith, *Chinese People's Liberation Army*, p. 157.
47. DIS #3003, 29 November 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC.
48. "Continuing events indicate a rapidly disintegrating enemy force," Eighth Army Periodic Intelligence Report, #103, 23 October 1950, Eighth US Army Command Report, October 1950, RG407, MMR/WNRC. (Daily reports of this title henceforth referred to as PIR).
49. Eighth Army PIR #107, 27 October 1950, Eighth Army Command Report, October 1950, RG407, MMR/WNRC. See as well the PIRs for the subsequent week, in which Eighth Army G-2 interpreted the presence of CCF as a small-scale conventional presence to bolster the NKPA.
50. Memorandum to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, 1 November 1950, *FRUS*, pp. 1023-4. This was Clubb's first systematic reappraisal of the situation since a similar memo nearly a month earlier.
51. DEPTAR to CINCFE, 4 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
52. Memorandum by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency to the President, "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," 1 November 1950, *FRUS*, pp. 1025-6.
53. Telecon #192, 2 November 1950, RG9, MMA. For a further grim assessment see DIS #2981, 7 November 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC.
54. Charge in China to the Secretary to State, 6 November 1950, *FRUS*, p. 1069.
55. Personal from SECDEF Marshall to GEN MacArthur, 7 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
56. CINCFE to DA, 8 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
57. See, for example, Telecon #231, 25 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
58. *FRUS*, pp. 1220-2.

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59. See Eighth Army PIR #124, 13 November 1950, Eighth Army Command Report, November 1950, RG407, MMR/WNRC.
60. Telecon #233, 27 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
61. DIS #2971, 28 October 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC.
62. See DIS #2976, 2 November 1950, and #2897, 13 November 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC.
63. See, for example, DIS #2935, 22 September 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC, on North Korean artillery and its Soviet counterparts.
64. This was noted—in passing—on only one or two occasions. See the comments on North Korean and Chinese styles in guerrilla warfare, DIS #2946, 3 October 1950, RG338, MMR/WNRC. There were only two short discussions of Chinese tactics in the intelligence literature before 27 November 1950—one in a IX Corps PIR, another in Eighth Army's Combat Information Bulletin No. 4.
65. On Chinese tactics see Headquarters, Eighth US Army Korea, "Enemy Tactics," 26 December 1951, ms., USAMHI Library, as well as Marshall, "CCF in the Attack" and Griffith, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army*.
66. See Telecon #229, 23 November 1950, RG9, MMA.
67. See, for example, X Corps PIR #62, 27 November 1950, X Corps Command Report, November 1950, USAMHI Library.
68. DIS #3003, 29 November 1950, sharply reversed FEC's previous position on the impact of air operations on Chinese logistics, albeit in a somewhat disingenuous manner. See too MacArthur's "we face an entirely new war" telegram in CINCFE to JCS, 28 November 1950, FRUS, pp. 1237-8.
69. I discuss this at length in a chapter of my forthcoming book written with John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, The Free Press.
70. For various versions of this "no-fault" view of intelligence failure, see Mark Lowenthal, "The Burdensome Concept of Failure," in Alfred C. Maurer, et al., eds., *Intelligence: Policy and Process* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985), pp. 43-56; Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision. Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Power, Strategy, and Security: A World Politics Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 211-239.
71. See A. W. Marshall, "Problems of Estimating Military Power," RAND-P3417 (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1966); Allan Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, 3 vols. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1988).
72. The phrase is William Fuller's. He has argued that the Tsarist (and even the Soviet) military successfully used its technological underdevelopment for strategic advantage.
73. This has long been true of many analyses of the NATO/Warsaw Pact conventional balance in Europe, for example. See Eliot A. Cohen, "Toward Better Net Assessment: Rethinking the Conventional Balance in Europe," *International Security* 13.1 (Summer 1988).
74. It is conceivable that the Chinese—perhaps with Soviet aid—supported their intervention with a deception program. Otherwise, it is hard to explain, *inter alia*, the wave of rumors of heavy Chinese casualties and offers of peace negotiations that swept Tokyo and Seoul a few days before the second Chinese offensive. See, for example, Telecon #250, 24 November 1950, RG 9, MMA.
75. I am indebted to Dr. Abram Shulsky for suggesting this analogy.