

Killing Vultures, Containing Communism, and Venting Pressure : International Impacts of the Korean War

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Through most of its history, the United States has not maintained large peacetime military establishments. This has created a pattern of quick and drastic reductions in military forces after wars end, and a lack of preparedness when new ones begin. These trends were evident after the conclusion of World War II. American forces deploying to Korea in 1950 were understrength and underequipped. American air forces in the Korean War were primarily using aircraft left over from the previous war. F-51 Mustangs went into combat displaying wing markings from the 1944 invasion of Normandy.¹ Army divisions were short whole regiments and battalions, and armored units had to be equipped with tanks found abandoned on Pacific islands or taken from museum displays.²

The Korean War speeded the development of much new American military technology, such as certain jet aircraft, but it also caused lasting effects in international relations and American national security policies. It inspired President Dwight Eisenhower to pursue his "New Look" in defense, globalized the containment of Communism, delayed direct American involvement in combat in Vietnam, shook up the order of nations while releasing building pressures between superpowers, and left lingering suspicions of biological warfare. After the Korean War, the United States began maintaining strong peacetime military establishments to meet its new security concerns, not really executing significant reductions in force until after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ironically, the last vestige of the Cold War remains on the Korean peninsula, inspired by legacies and memories of a war that ended over a half century ago.

Despite growing friction with the Soviet Union after the end of World War II, President Harry Truman hoped he could still maintain a small peacetime military es-

¹ Conrad C. Crane, American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), p. 24.

² Arthur W. Connor, Jr. "The Armor Debacle in Korea, 1950: Implications for Today." Parameters 22 (Summer 1992): pp. 66-76.

establishment by exploiting the American monopoly of the atomic bomb. That dream exploded along with the first Soviet atomic test in 1949, and Truman ordered his National Security Council to reexamine national security strategy in light of this alarming new development. That mission was given to the State Department, and fell to its Policy Planning Staff under Paul Nitze.

The result was a document that became known as NSC-68. After apocalyptic warnings about the dire threat Communist expansion posed to America and civilization itself, the study explained why a massive American and allied military build-up was necessary to be able to counter any aggressive moves by the Soviet Union and its satellites. While Communism was kept within its boundaries the strength of the U.S. economy and internal contradictions within the opposing bloc would eventually produce a Soviet collapse.

Those who have done military staff studies would recognize the methodology used by the writers of NSC-68. The way to get superiors to adopt the course of action desired is to present alternatives that are all clearly unacceptable. After stating the problem of the growing Soviet threat, four possible solutions were presented in NSC-68: the status quo, isolation, war, or containment through strength. The first three all would lead to disaster, so the obvious choice was the last. The authors of NSC-68 wanted a clear argument to convince all important decision-makers, and they also lobbied hard throughout Washington to build support for their position. But they could not persuade Harry Truman. When he received the report in April 1950, he was still unwilling to increase defense spending. Leaks from NSC-68 began to appear in the press, and political pressure began to build on the President from many directions. But he still had not committed to the new program when the North Koreans invaded the South in June 1950. Like most of those in his administration, he was convinced that Josef Stalin was testing the West and might soon invade free Europe as well. On September 30, 1950, Truman ordered that NSC-68 should be taken "as a statement of policy to be followed over the next four or five years" and that implementing programs should be put into effect "as rapidly as possible."³ The original plan had focused primarily on Europe, but the North Korean invasion energized a globalized policy of Containment that would eventually help produce the collapse of Communism envi-

³ This discussion of NSC-68 comes from Ernest May, ed., American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68 (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1993).

sioned by the authors, as well as involve the United States in another limited war in Asia.

Truman's concerns about big defense budgets were shared by his successor, Dwight Eisenhower. The new president was also convinced that his threats to use atomic bombs in Korea had been the key reason the Communists had finally accepted an armistice. Though committed to the Containment policies inspired by NSC-68, Eisenhower thought he could still limit defense spending by investing primarily in Strategic Air Command and nuclear strike forces. Eisenhower's "New Look" defense policies pushed all the military services to consider how they could best employ nuclear weapons. When a new Asian crisis arose in French Indochina in 1954, Eisenhower's initial inclination may have been to employ the overwhelming air attacks he thought he had threatened in Korea. But American policy in this case would be more heavily influenced by the airpower experience of another important leader in the Korean War, General Matthew Ridgway.

There was much anxiety in the United States in April 1951 when Ridgway replaced Douglas MacArthur as the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Far East as well as Commander, United Nations Forces in Korea. Opinion polls showed that one-third of the American public favored a general war with Communist China, and a majority advocated air attacks on Manchuria. Signs of Chinese air and ground preparation for their spring fifth-phase offensive and a corresponding buildup of Soviet forces in the Far East alarmed the President enough for him to order nuclear weapons and SAC bombers to Okinawa on 6 April. MacArthur's firing made the situation appear even more precarious, raising fears that the Communists would escalate the war to exploit the situation before Ridgway could master his role as the new UN commander. However, in May his forces stopped the Chinese offensive, and began a series of vigorous counterattacks.⁴

As Ridgway's forces in Korea drove north in a slow but inexorable advance that would only be stopped by the opening of armistice negotiations in July, another sort of battle raged in the United States. President Truman's firing of General Mac-

⁴ Mark Andrew O'Neill, "The Other Side of the Yalu: Soviet Pilots in the Korean war, Phase One, 1 November 1950-12 April 1951," Ph. D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1996, pp. 273-274; Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War," International Security 13(Winter 1988-1989): pp. 69-79; Roger M. Anders, "The Atomic Bomb and the Korean War: Gordon Dean and the Issue of Civilian Control," Military Affairs (January 1988): pp. 1-3.

Arthur had caused a storm of controversy, and from the beginning of May until mid-June the Senate Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations held joint hearings to investigate MacArthur's relief and the military situation in the Far East. One of the dominant themes of the testimony was the failure of American airpower to stem the Communist tide, whether because too much reliance, or too many limitations, were placed on it. Issues discussed in great detail included shortcomings of interdiction, tactical versus strategic airpower, the inviolability of Manchuria and the North Korean port of Rashin, and the surprising capabilities of the MiG-15. MacArthur put much of the blame for Communist success on restrictions on his use of airpower, but he admitted that too much was expected from it against determined ground troops, a position seconded by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley. As the hearings continued, more and more Senators admitted that they really didn't understand the limitations of airpower. When confronted with queries about his service's actual capabilities, USAF Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg lashed back that "the United States is operating a shoestring air force in view of its global responsibilities." The discussions about airpower, like the hearings themselves, were generally inconclusive on issues of past tactics and strategy, but they did reveal a great amount of shared uncertainty about the future.⁵

After replacing MacArthur and stopping the Communist spring offensive, Ridgway now faced the daunting task of conducting complicated negotiations with a difficult enemy. His initial instructions to his Far East Air Forces had emphasized restraint and the prevention of World War III, but once armistice talks began and battle lines stabilized he realized that air power was his best method to keep military pressure on the enemy. Ridgway informed FEAF and Naval air units on 13 July, "Desire action during this period of negotiations to exploit full capabilities of air power to reap maximum benefit of our ability to punish enemy where ever he may be in Korea." On 21 July he informed the JCS that a key part of his plan "for unrelenting pressure on Communist forces" was "an all out air strike on Pyongyang" with 140 medium and light bombers and 230 fighters, to be executed on the first clear day after the

⁵ United States Senate, 82d Congress, 1st Session, Military Situation in the Far East: Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, (Washington: USSGPO, 1951), Part 1, pp. 19-20, 309; Part 2, pp. 1010, 1379, 1453-1454, 1493; Part 4, pp. 3067, 3075, 3091.

24th. This operation would "take advantage of the accelerated buildup of supplies and personnel" in the area, "strike a devastating blow at the North Korean capital," and make up for the many recent sorties canceled by bad weather. Ridgway also planned to drop warning leaflets similar to those dropped by Curtis LeMay on Japan.⁶

Ridgway's plan caused quite a stir in Washington. The JCS immediately ordered him to defer his attack until he received further instructions, because "the specific strike and scale thereof have such serious and far reaching political implications at this time." Ridgway replied that he appreciated the "potentialities" of his proposal, and recognized that his views were "based primarily on conditions within a single theatre, and that the problem has world-wide aspects." Unlike MacArthur, or most theater commanders in any war, Ridgway was willing to admit that his area of operations was not the most important. However, he still believed his assault on Pyongyang was necessary to reduce enemy offensive capabilities in case negotiations broke down. As Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins prepared to ramrod approval for the attack through the JCS, Ridgway submitted a revision to his plan omitting advanced warnings, a change that Collins had already decided was necessary to "avoid placing undue importance" on hitting the capital. Ridgway justified this alteration because his air force had already been bombing "military installations in urban areas" for over a year with warnings, and civilians would probably be insensitive to one more. He also was concerned that prior notice would prompt the enemy to remove war material from the target areas, and any weather delays would allow even more time for the establishment of strong defenses. He admitted that he had altered his plan after receiving a copy of a JCS memorandum to the Secretary of Defense seeking presidential approval to authorize Commander in Chief, UN Command to "increase military pressure on the enemy" in case negotiations broke down, to include unrestricted air attacks throughout the Korean peninsula and even hot pursuit over the Manchurian border to take out Communist fighters and antiaircraft defenses that attacked UN aircraft. This last provision caused considerable debate in the State Department and National Security Council, but in the meantime the JCS approved Ridgway's revised

⁶ Msg, CX 60410, CINCFE to subordinate commands, 19 Apr 51, Section 45 and Msg, C 61367, 30 Apr 51, Section 46, Box 31; Msg, C 67474, 21 Jul 51, Section 54, Box 33, Geographic File 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45), Record Group 218, National Archives II, College Park, Md.; Msg, UNC-071, Ridgway to Hickey, 13 Jul 51, File K720.1622, 1950-1951, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL.

operation against Pyongyang. They told him they had been concerned that warnings singling out the enemy capital might "in the eyes of the world" appear to be an attempt to break off the armistice talks, and directed that no publicity be given to the "mass" nature of the raid. The JCS considered such tactics "effective utilization of airpower," however, and expected to see more of them.⁷

Ridgway's fears of bad weather proved well founded. When the all-out attack on Pyongyang was finally mounted on 30 July, the weather deteriorated so quickly that all light and medium bombers had to be diverted to secondary targets. 620 fighter and fighter-bomber sorties caused some damage, but smoke and cloud coverage made assessment difficult. The attack was considered "profitable but not decisive," and another full-scale effort against the capital was scheduled for 14 August. This time Bomber Command hit the target, but only because the two SAC wings were prepared to use radar assistance to aim their bombs through heavy cloud cover. They hit about sixty-five per cent of their objectives while taking some hits from enemy anti-aircraft guns. The third wing on the raid bombed in accordance with their original visual bombing instructions and wasted their load. Ridgway was disappointed in the results, instructing FEAF to wait for excellent weather for any more major raids. Ridgway believed the degradation of the Pyongyang strike because of poor visibility "had two marked disadvantages - failure to achieve best military results and the regrettable inflicting of civilian casualties outside the target areas, due to dispersion."⁸

Ridgway was encouraged enough by his success getting permission to bomb Pyongyang that he reopened the issue of attacking Rashin, less than twenty miles from the Soviet border. He cabled the JCS that his aerial reconnaissance had revealed "extensive stockpiling of materiel and supplies" at the port, and with its high-

⁷ Msgs, C 67474, CINCFE to JCS, 21 Jul 51 and JCS 96938, 21 Jul 51 and C 67520, CINCFE to JCS, 23 Jul 51, Section 54, Box 33; JCS 1776/240, "United States Course of Action in Korea," 13 Jul 51, with attachments, Section 53, Box 32; Memorandum for the JCS with attachments, SUBJECT: Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, for item 10 on agenda, 25 Jul 1951, Section 55, Box 33, Geographic File 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45), RG 218; Msgs, CX 67652, CINCFE to JCS, and JCS 97223, JCS to CINCFE, 25 Jul 51, in Pertinent Papers Concerning the Conduct of and Limitations Surrounding Operations of the Eighth Army, Vol. I, 1 Apr 53, File 381 Korea (9 May 47), Section 23 Appendix, Box 897, Records of Headquarters USAF, RG 341, NA II.

⁸ Msg, C 68064, CINCFE to JCS, 31 Jul 51, Box 1, Incoming Messages, May 29, 1950-Aug 3, 1951, RG 218; Letter, Terrill to Power, 16 Aug 51, File B-12789, Box B198, The Papers of Curtis LeMay, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Notes on Conference with General Weyland, 30 Aug 51, Folder, Special File Apr 1951-Jan 1952, Box 20, The Papers of Matthew Ridgway, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

way and rail complex funneling supplies to all areas in the south, it was "a principal focal point for intensifying the enemy supply build-up in the battle area." In reply to queries about his specific plans, Ridgway assured the JCS that because of the uncertain weather conditions for visual bombing, he would only mount one or two normal strikes against the marshaling yard, and guaranteed the border would not be violated. The Air Staff supported the request for many reasons. An attack would hamper the enemy supply build up and might pressure their negotiators out of "dilatatory tactics" at the armistice talks. It was in keeping with current JCS directives to conduct no military operations within twelve miles of USSR territory, and would show the Communists that "all of their sanctuaries are not privileged." Rashin was also considered "the last major profitable strategic target in Korea." The Air Staff discounted diplomatic concerns about a secret North Korean-USSR treaty giving the Soviets a long term lease on the port, noting that another port covered in the same agreement had been bombed repeatedly with no Soviet reaction. The JCS agreed with the Air Staff arguments, and after getting presidential approval, authorized Ridgway to attack Rashin. Since the port lay beyond the range of Fifth Air Force fighters, carrier jets provided cover for 35 B-29s who conducted the mission in good weather on 25 August. Bomber Command hit the target area with ninety-seven per cent of the more than 300 tons of bombs dropped, and no follow-up raids were necessary.⁹

Though Ridgway managed to garner support from the JCS for his attempts to increase military pressure on the Communists by ratcheting up the air war, those efforts did not bear fruit at the armistice talks. During August Admiral Turner Joy, the chief UN negotiator, tried to justify moving the armistice line northwards because the resulting cessation of UN interdiction and strategic bombing would allow the Communists new freedom of movement to build up forces to renew their offensive. Joy argued that only tactical air strikes really had anything to do with maintaining the battleline, while deeper air and naval operations were a separate advantage that the UN would have to give up in an armistice, and therefore worth trading for additional

⁹ JCS 1776/244 with enclosures, "Removal of Restriction Against Attacks on Najin (Rashin)," 10 Aug 1951, Section 57, Box 33, Geographic File 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45), RG 218; Memo, Joseph Smith to Gen. Vandenberg, SUBJECT: Removal of Restriction Against Attacks on Najin (Rashin), File OPD 381 Korea (9 May 47), Section 12, Box 894, RG 341; USAF Historical Study No. 72, United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 November 1950-30 June 1952 (USAF Historical Division, Air University: Maxwell AFB, AL., 1 Jul 55), p. 145.

space. The chief Communist negotiator, North Korean General Nam Il, would accept none of that logic. While decrying the "indiscriminate bombing and bombardment of your air and naval forces of our peaceful civilians and cities and villages," he admitted it had "the effectiveness of 100 percent atrocity" and was the primary reason that UN ground forces could maintain their positions. He complained in a diatribe rife with rich propaganda quotes, "You claim barbarism to be bravery, brutality to be strength, and an indiscriminate bombing and bombardment as a military superiority." The Air Staff got permission from Ridgway to declassify Nam Il's statements, and circulated excerpts widely. They especially liked, "It is owing to your strategic air effort of indiscriminate bombing of our area, rather than to your tactical air effort of direct support to the front line, that your ground forces are able to maintain barely and temporarily their present positions."¹⁰

But there were ominous signs of trouble for American airpower. After his attempts to influence negotiations in the summer, Ridgway's air priorities remained focused on battlefield support, and even the Rashin and Pyongyang attacks were primarily for interdiction, especially with the limitations imposed by the JCS. Yet that was a difficult task in Korea in 1951. The enemy's consumption of supplies was very low during the armistice negotiations, he had a large supply of labor to maintain communications, FEAF had too few aircraft for its many tasks, and the USAF lacked the technology for effective interdiction at night. Ridgway had high hopes that his air forces could prevent the enemy from building up supplies for another offensive, but that proved impossible. As a result he became somewhat disillusioned with the capabilities of airpower, and increasingly suspicious of Air Force claims. He once told his air commanders, "If all the enemy trucks you report as having destroyed during the past ten days or so were actually kills, then there would not be a truck left in all of Asia." In his postwar memoirs he gave the air force credit for saving UN forces from disaster and providing essential support for his ground operations, but he also warned against expecting "miracles of interdiction" in future conflicts.¹¹

¹⁰ Msgs, HNU 8-3, CINCUNC(ADV) to CINCFE and C 68927, CINCUNC to DEPTAR for G3 and JCS, 14 Aug 51, and C 68959, CINCUNC to DEPTAR for JCS, 15 Aug 51, Geographic File 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45), Section 58, Box 33, RG 218; Memo, R.A. Grussendorf to Col. Murphy, Aug 1951, File 3C, Box 88, The Papers of Hoyt Vandenberg, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹¹ Eduard Mark, Aerial Interdiction: Air Power and the Land Battle in Three American Wars: A

FEAF, with considerable Naval support, did try its best to meet Ridgway's high expectations. FEAF attempted three different plans during 1951 to try and interdict the communications of the Communist armies, but they were all doomed to failure. The first, dubbed Interdiction Plan No. 4 by FEAF, aimed to destroy the entire rail system of North Korea. It proved to be too ambitious. Initially Bomber Command had some success, closing twenty-seven of thirty-nine assigned marshaling yards and rendering unserviceable forty-eight of sixty targeted bridges. But the cost was heavy. When all three B-29 groups conducted a mass raid against the Yalu bridges at Sinuiju on 12 April, swarming MiGs from the Soviet 324th FAD shot down three Superfortresses and damaged seven. Heavy losses during April that reduced Bomber Command to only seventy-five operational aircraft, logistical limitations that cut down the B-29 sortie rate, and the distraction of neutralizing airfields in North Korea meant that Fifth Air Force fighter bombers had to pick up most of the interdiction load. The rail system proved too resilient to be effectively paralyzed, and the Communist spring offensives revealed the inadequacies of the campaign. When the lines stabilized in June, FEAF initiated Operation STRANGLE, focusing primarily on the road network from railheads to the front. The Navy, Marines, and Fifth Air Force were all assigned separate sectors to bomb. Roads were cratered, tetrahedral tacks were dispersed to puncture tires, and delayed action and butterfly bombs were dropped to discourage repairs. Results again were disappointing. Enemy repair crews exploded the harassing charges with rifle fire or accepted the casualties necessary to fill the craters. Sometimes they just bypassed blockages on secondary roads. And they exploited Air Force limitations at night by conducting most movements after dark. FEAF came to regret the name selected for the operation as "an unfortunate choice of words," because it created high expectations that could not be fulfilled. In August a new campaign was initiated, the Rail Interdiction Program, though press releases and many high ranking Air Force officers continued to refer to the new operation as STRANGLE. This was a more systematic effort than previous ones. The Navy took responsibility for East Coast lines, Bomber Command hit key bridge complexes, and Fifth Air Force fighter bombers, which were finally all based within Korea, cut lines all

Historical Analysis (Washington, D.C.: Center for Air Force History, 1994), pp. 289-319; Letter, M.B. Ridgway to Col. Paul Carter, 15 Dec 76, Folder C, 1964-1983, Post Retirement A-G, Box 34B, Ridgway Papers; Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War (New York: Da Capo, 1986; reprint of 1967 edition), pp. 191, 244.

over North Korea. Soon enemy repairs could not keep up with the destruction, and some rail lines were even abandoned. Fifth Air Force planners did not believe the Chinese could support their forces with their limited truck resources, and began to think they might force the Communist armies to withdraw from the 38th Parallel.¹²

But enemy countermeasures soon turned the tide. The Communists built duplicate highway bridges across key waterways, and cached whole bridge sections near important crossings so repairs could be completed quickly. Fifth Air Force intelligence officers estimated that as many as 500,000 soldiers and civilians were working to maintain enemy transportation routes. Increased anti-aircraft defenses of key targets took a heavy toll of attacking aircraft and affected their accuracy. Operations were also hindered by the increasing aggressiveness of enemy MiGs, now equipped with drop tanks to extend their range. Air Force planners projected the MiGs' operating radius 285 nautical miles from Antung, well down the peninsula. Chinese pilots, trained by accompanying Russian units, began to engage in large scale air battles for the first time in the fall. The Soviets coordinated the Chinese efforts and always sent an equal number of planes for major engagements. By September 1951, the Communists had more than 500 MiGs in their order of battle, while FEAF only had about 90 F-86s in theater. The Sabres were limited by operating distances from their bases to only about fifteen to twenty minutes combat time near the Yalu, and could not effectively screen so many MiGs. The enemy interceptors soon forced the less capable F-80 and F-84 fighter-bombers to stay south of the Chongchon River, and often pounced on them even there, forcing the UN jets to jettison their bombs and run for their lives. In late October the MiGs went after the B-29s of Bomber Command, and inflicted such heavy losses that the Superfortresses never again challenged enemy defenses in daytime. This further reduced the effectiveness of UN efforts to maintain pressure on enemy forces and supply lines to influence negotiations.¹³

¹² Mark; O'Neill, pp. 281-285; Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Interim Third Evaluation Report, 1 May-31 December 1951, pp. 10-45 to 10-46, U.S. Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.; HQ FEAF, FEAF Report on the Korean War, 25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953, Book I, p. 77, File K720.04D, AFHRA; "The Aerial War During Operation Strangle," Vol. I, pp. 12-17 and "Notes on Use of the Term 'Operation Strangle,'" Vol. III, Appendix 2, in History of the Fifth Air Force, 1 July - 31 December 1951, File K730.01, AFHRA.

¹³ MAJ. Gen. William F. Dean, General Dean's Story (New York: Viking Press, 1954), pp. 272-273; J. Lawton Collins, War in Peacetime: The History and Lessons of Korea (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 313; Mark, pp. 312-314; Shu Guang Zhang, Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp.

Ridgway's initial determination to influence negotiations with air power had been tempered by his disappointment in the results of the interdiction campaign and early battles with the JCS about bombing Rashin and Pyongyang. He also appeared hesitant to risk anything that might cause the Communists to break off the peace talks. They had already used air attacks on the negotiating site as an excuse to do that twice, once with apparently faked evidence and another time because of an actual UN bombing error. When he left the Far East to become Supreme Commander in Europe in May 1952, Ridgway took along a strong skepticism about the utility of airpower.¹⁴

When he became Chief of Staff of the Army in 1954, Ridgway's disillusionment with the capabilities of airpower in limited war heavily influenced his actions. In his book on the Korean conflict he disagreed strongly with Air Force claims of decisiveness, noting that the Army and Marines accounted for 97% of battle casualties, and asserting, "it was the performance of the ground forces that determined the success or failure of the United Nations effort, which in turn determined the course of United States and United Nations policy." When he heard that the Eisenhower administration was considering testing the "New Look" with air intervention alone to save the beleaguered French garrison at Dienbienphu, he feared the United States had already forgotten the "bitter lesson" from Korea "that air and naval power alone cannot win a war and that inadequate ground forces cannot win one either." He was determined to avoid "making that same tragic error" in Indochina.¹⁵

Planning for Operation VULTURE (VAUTOUR) really began in earnest in mid-April 1954, and had much in common with strategic bombing operations in Korea. The FEAF commander was now General Earle Partridge, and on a routine liaison visit to Vietnam he was informed by the French that the aerial operation to save Dienbienphu "had been cleared through diplomatic channels." Though he had heard nothing about it, Partridge did notify the chief of FEAF Bomber Command, Brig. Gen. Joseph Caldera, to prepare a contingency plan. Bomber Command still had its wartime contingent of B-29s for a mass strike, but Caldera foresaw many problems with the

176-181; Letters, BG Joe Kelly to LeMay, 29 Oct 51 and 7 Nov 51, File FEAF 1, Box 65, LeMay Papers.

¹⁴ The Korean War, pp. 200, 202, 244.

¹⁵ The Korean War, viii; Ridgway with Harold H. Martin, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 277.

operation when he flew to Vietnam to confer with the French. Among them were the fact that there were "no true B-29 targets" in the area, and bad monsoon weather necessitated the use of radar guidance systems that the French did not have.¹⁶

However, by that time opposition to VULTURE had rendered such planning moot. Ridgway led the effort against it in the JCS, galvanized by the fact that the Chairman, Admiral Arthur Radford, supported the mission. The Army Chief of Staff made his position very clear at a gathering at Radford's home for the visiting French chief of the armed forces staff, General Paul Ely, on 20 March. When Radford asked if Ely just needed more air power for success in Indochina, Ridgway challenged the assertion before the Frenchman could even reply, noting "The experience of Korea, where we had complete domination of the air and a far more powerful air force, afforded no basis for thinking that some additional air power was going to bring decisive results on the ground." Ridgway had his staff conduct detailed studies on the difficulties involved with intervention in Indochina, presented briefings on their findings to the Secretary of Defense and President Eisenhower, and rallied the other service chiefs, including the Air Force's General Nathan Twining, to support his position and isolate Radford. Ridgway's prescient study of a possible war, that was well covered in the press, predicted that after the failure of air and sea power it would take 10 American divisions to clear Indochina, jungle warfare would nullify many U.S. advantages, neither allies nor natives could be depended upon for support, and draft rates and defense budgets would soar. Key congressmen in early April also showed little confidence in the air option, warning, "Once the flag is committed, the use of land forces would surely follow," and demanding that Great Britain and other Allies participate as well in a collective intervention. Democratic Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia led the congressional opposition to VULTURE. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee he had chaired the MacArthur Hearings in 1951, and certainly remembered the acrimonious debates then about the inflated expectations of airpower. Great Britain's refusal to be drawn into "Radford's war against China" ended any chance for VULTURE. Though American and French talks on intervention continued after the fall of

¹⁶ Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960* (New York: Free Press, 1985), pp. 205-206. In late March, Eisenhower had mused about a single American strike in unmarked planes, but he was not convinced it would be decisive, and knew "we'd have to deny it forever." George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975*, Second Edition, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), p. 31.

Dienbienphu, no serious plans resulted. While there is still some disagreement over whether Eisenhower really intended to intervene in Indochina, the memories of the lessons of the Korean air war were fresh enough in 1954 to help inspire a vocal opposition that either reinforced the President's inclination to avoid direct military involvement in Vietnam or changed his mind by demonstrating just how perilous and divisive even a limited aerial intervention would be. Ridgway wrote of his role:

...when the day comes for me to face my Maker and account for my actions, the thing I would be most humbly proud of was the fact that I fought against, and perhaps contributed to preventing, the carrying out of some harebrained tactical schemes which would have cost the lives of thousands of men. To that list of tragic incidents that fortunately never happened I would add the Indo-China intervention.¹⁷

Unfortunately Ridgway's independence and outspoken ways as Army Chief of Staff, especially battling over proposed cuts in conventional ground forces, contributed to his early retirement in 1955, and he was not in a position of responsibility when problems in Indochina again tempted American involvement. All he could do was warn belatedly in his 1967 book, *The Korean War*, about the problems that he faced using his air force for interdiction and influencing negotiations, and caution that "air power does have its limitations, and even some in high position still fail to acknowledge them."¹⁸

Ridgway was not the only American leader looking at Vietnam through a prism shaped by Korea. President Lyndon Johnson felt obligated to continue the

¹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation by Ridgway, 22 Mar 1954; Memoranda for the Secretary of Defense by Radford, 31 Mar and 22 Apr 54; Memoranda for JCS by Ridgway, 2 and 6 Apr 54; Memoranda for Record by Ridgway, 28 Apr and 17 May 54, Folder, Historical Record Jan-June 1954, Box 30, Ridgway Papers, USAMHI; "What Ridgway Told Ike - War in Indo-China Would Be Tougher Than Korea," *U.S. News & World Report*, (June 25, 1954): pp. 30-32; George C. Herring and Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: 'The Day We Didn't Go To War' Revisited," *The Journal of American History*, LXXI, 2 (September 1984): pp. 346-363; *Soldier*, p. 278. Herring and Immerman believe that Eisenhower was more willing to intervene than he later admitted in his memoirs, *Mandate for Change 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963). However, Melanie Billings-Yun argues in *Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) that Eisenhower never wanted to intervene militarily but could not afford to take that position openly without threatening French motivation to win the war and bringing into question America's commitment to the security of Southeast Asia.

¹⁸ *The Korean War*, p. 244.

policies of containment in Southeast Asia, but was also constrained by memories of Chinese Communist intervention in 1950. His practice of controlled escalation sought to effectively coerce the North Vietnamese without risking active involvement from their more powerful allies. The results of the Korean War had considerably changed the international landscape, particularly with the emergence of the People's Republic of China. William Stueck, in his seminal work *The Korean War: An International History*, rates the PRC as probably the biggest winner in the Korean War. Others who profited in his evaluation, at least to some extent, were the Americans, who successfully contained the Communist thrust while they and their allies rearmed, and the United Nations, which also played a role in preserving South Korea while showing it could even restrain the United States to some degree. Japan could also be counted as a nation that benefited from the conflict, as it was now seen by the U.S. as an important bulwark to maintain against Communism in Asia, and the war provided a badly needed stimulus to help the economy recover from the devastation of World War II. In Stueck's view the biggest losers from the war were North and South Korea, both with societies and cities shattered by the conflict. The Soviet Union also lost prestige and now had to deal with a more independent China and a stronger West. For Stueck, one of the biggest benefits for the world of the Korean War was that it allowed the West and Communist blocs to have a military confrontation where it could be easily limited. The Americans, Soviets, and Chinese each learned the dangers of direct conflict without it spilling into a wider war. Stueck believes that without the releasing of escalating superpower tensions in Korea, the Cold War would have become hot over a miscalculation by one of the superpowers, or because of a Soviet attack to counter the independent course of Yugoslavia, and that conflagration could have engulfed much of Europe. Instead the Soviet Union especially became much less likely to initiate or encourage the use of force across international boundaries outside its area of influence.¹⁹

Though the United States had been successful in saving South Korea, the armistice was very unsatisfactory for many Americans. This was not the clear-cut win of previous wars. Supporters of Douglas MacArthur argued "There is no substitute for victory," and that more force should have been used against Communist foes.

¹⁹ William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 350-370.

But others in the international community, encouraged by a skillful Communist propaganda campaign, criticized the United States for employing force beyond the bounds of civilized behavior. These accusations involved not only the air campaign in Korea, but also claims that the U.S. had used biological warfare. I was just interviewed last month by the BBC for a radio broadcast dealing with that issue, which has never quite faded away.

During the Korean War, a common Communist tactic to blunt the impact of superior American technology was to direct propaganda against it. Bombing in general, and the threat of atomic weapons in particular, were portrayed as immoral attacks on civilians in violation of the laws of warfare. One additional aspect of communist propaganda that caused special concern for American leaders involved accusations of biological warfare, and even today some still wonder about the truth of the allegations. Chinese historians especially still argue that their government had valid evidence of germ warfare, and that relevant U.S. documents concealing the truth about biological warfare in Korea still need to be declassified.²⁰ While most files dealing with nuclear issues during that period are, in fact, still classified, that is not the case with biological records. An examination of the pertinent documents is very revealing, not only about the sensitivity of the United States to charges of employing BW, but also about its early efforts to develop non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Though the American military services, and especially the Air Force, tried to increase their abilities in the field of biological warfare during the Korean conflict, they made little progress. While skillful communist propaganda kept American diplomats on the defensive, American military forces possessed neither the ability, nor the will, to apply BW in the offensive fashion described in that propaganda.

Even at the time of the Korean War, communist bloc allegations about U.S. bacteriological warfare research and employment were nothing new, dating back at least to 1949. The first outright charges of BW use were made in 1950. The UN countered somewhat in November by telling the United Press about a "super-secret bacteriological laboratory" operated in Pyongyang under a Russian woman scientist since 1947 that had been overrun by advancing UN troops. Though only about 400 starved rats were found in the facility, a North Korean doctor revealed that over 5000

²⁰ Zhang, p. 186.

had been inoculated there with deadly diseases and then sprayed with a chemical that encouraged the multiplication of fleas. The Russian supervisor disappeared, supposedly leaving with other fleeing communist officials.²¹

The enemy propaganda campaign expanded in 1951. In February North Korea claimed that retreating US troops had spread smallpox there in December 1950, and its foreign minister filed a protest about UN BW with the General Assembly in May. During the summer North Korean radio announced the undertaking of anti-epidemic measures because of the BW attacks.²²

This was all just a prelude to the most vehement, and effective, BW propaganda campaign that began in early 1952. On 22 February the North Korean Foreign Minister announced that the United States was carrying on biological warfare against his country. During the same time period the Chinese press and radio made repeated references to the fact that the United States had granted immunity to Lieutenant General Shiro Ishii and his captured subordinates of the notorious Unit 731 that had conducted BW experiments in China. This morally questionable decision in exchange for information derived from the Japanese program provided some benefit for American researchers working on biological agents and vaccines, but it also enhanced the credibility of future BW allegations. On 6 March Chinese newspapers reported that 448 American aircraft had flown BW missions over Manchuria during the preceding week. Two days later, the Department of State Monitoring Service and the Foreign Broadcasting Intelligence Survey picked up a radio broadcast by Chou En Lai, the Chinese Communist Foreign Minister, decrying the BW campaign as an attempt to wreck the armistice talks, and making it known "that members of the U.S. Air Force who invade Chinese territorial air and use biological weapons will be dealt with as war criminals." At the same time the Central Intelligence Agency received an unconfirmed report that the communists were preparing fallacious documentation to justify punitive action against the next captured pilot. The Chinese and Soviet press followed by publishing pictures of insects and germ bombs supposedly dropped by American planes over North Korea, though scientists asked to examine the images by

²¹ Summary of Communist Bacteriological and Chemical Warfare Charges, in Fifth Air Force Intelligence Summary, 16-30 June 1952, p. 65, File K730.607, AFHRA; "Germ-Carrying Rats Bred in North Korea," The New York Times, 6 Nov 50, p. 3.

²² Summary of Communist Bacteriological and Chemical Warfare Charges, in Fifth Air Force Intelligence Summary, 16-30 June 1952, pp. 65-66, File K730.607, AFHRA.

The New York Times easily refuted their credibility.²³

Chou En Lai's statement caused a furor in Washington. The JCS and State Department advised Ridgway to make a strong denial of the charges, and to warn the Communists about their responsibility for the fair treatment of prisoners of war. After preparing a statement, Ridgway decided not to deliver it, since he believed he had already issued enough vigorous denials. In addition to this action, the State Department got the International Committee of the Red Cross to agree to conduct an investigation of the allegations, and accepted a similar offer from the World Health Organization. While Soviet representatives in the UN repeated the accusations and emphasized that the United States had not ratified the 1925 Geneva protocols against biological and chemical warfare, they also vetoed U.S. resolutions that would have permitted the ICRC and WHO inspections. The Chinese refused independent offers from those organizations, claiming they were only interested in securing military intelligence for the Americans. The Chinese asserted that proper investigations were already being conducted by "friendly governments." Soviet newspapers also expanded their accusations to blame the U.S. for hoof and mouth disease in Canada and a plague of locusts in the Near East. Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Finletter told the Secretary of Defense that his service believed the propaganda was designed either to discourage U.S. exploitation of the "great military potentialities of BW-CW weapons," or to set the stage so the communists could use their own BW-CW capability in a "Pearl Harbor" surprise attack. Though the first assumption was most likely, the second was most dangerous, and Finletter had his Surgeon General inventory supplies of vaccines and antibiotics. U.S. Far East Command in Korea shared the USAF concerns, and expanded its BW detection and prevention programs while requesting biological munitions for retaliation. The response of authorities in Washington to these requests, which continued to the end of the war, was always the same, that such capa-

²³ Summary of Communist Bacteriological and Chemical Warfare Charges; Psychological Strategy Board Staff Study D-25b, "Preliminary Analysis of the Communist BW Propaganda Campaign, with Recommendations," 7 Aug 52 and Memo, MG Robert Lee to GEN Vandenberg, SUBJECT: Chinese Communist Threat, 14 Mar 52, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Sec. 3, Box 903, Record Group 341, Records of Headquarters, USAF, NA II; Milton Leitenberg, The Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations Resolved, Occasional Paper 36, (Stockholm: Center for Pacific Asia Studies at Stockholm University, May 1998), pp. 5-6, 27-28; Ed Regis, The Biology of Doom: The History of America's Secret Germ Warfare Project (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), pp. 98-111, 126-130, 143-150; Rosenthal, A.M., "Reds' Photographs on Germ Warfare Exposed as Fakes," The New York Times, April 3, 1952, pp. 1, 18.

bilities could not be provided because they did not yet exist in the American arsenal.²⁴

The U.S. Psychological Strategy Board, with representatives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, CIA, State and Defense Departments, considered the BW propaganda to be the keystone of a detailed "Soviet hate campaign against the United States" that had been going on since January 1951. For them propaganda of this type was a "horror-weapon," directed "not only against the United States, but against the very structure of human civilization." They realized that it presented special problems for the future. The accusations "might acquire a kind of retrospective credibility" if circumstances ever required the actual American employment of biological or chemical agents. The BW campaign "provided the Soviet Union with a means of harnessing the forces of nature to their propaganda advantage," since they could now blame any epidemic or insect infestation anywhere on the United States. Also American attempts to help fight such problems could be turned against us. Doctors sent to fight a disease could be accused of spreading it, and planes spraying insecticides could be blamed for plagues. But the board also saw an opportunity to "indict the rulers of the USSR before the bar of world opinion for one of the most serious crimes against humanity they have yet committed." In the process, the United States could gather on its side "the moral and cultural leaders of the whole world," including those "most easily duped by communist peace-propaganda." If properly handled, countering the "hate-America" campaign would provide a chance to achieve "more adequate recognition" from friendly nations and international organizations for disinterested U.S. efforts "to utilize our technological resources for the relief of human want and suffering throughout the world."²⁵

²⁴ Psychological Strategy Board Staff Study D-25b; JCS 1776/282 and JCS 1776/283, 12 Mar 52, both with enclosures, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341; JCS 1776/293, 12 Jun 52, with enclosures, File 383.21 Korea, Geographic Files 1951-53, Sec. 103, Box 39; Msgs, JCS 903457, JCS to CINCFE, 14 Mar 52 and JCS 903780, 17 Mar 52, Outgoing Messages, Mar 2, 1952 - July 21, 1953, Box 10; Msg, C 69794, CINCFE to DEPTAR, 7 Jun 52, Incoming Messages, Apr 26, 1952 - Jun 30, 1952, Box 5, Record Group 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, NA II; "U.S. Proposes Investigation of Bacteriological Warfare Charges," Department of State Bulletin, vol. 27, (July 7, 1952), pp. 32-37, and (July 28, 1952), p. 159; Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense from the Secretary of the Air Force, 23 Apr 52, BW-CW General Decimal Files, 1952, Box 2, RG 341.

²⁵ Memo, George Morgan to David K.E. Bruce, et al, SUBJECT: Staff Study - Preliminary Analysis of the Communist BW Propaganda Campaign with Recommendations, 25 Jul 52, with attached Psychological Strategy Board Staff Study D-25b, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Sec.

The Psychological Strategy Board members were not the only ones considering active measures to counter the propaganda campaign. American actions in the UN were actually part of a carefully planned strategy developed by Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs John Hickerson to discredit the communist BW charges. He knew that Soviet representative Jacob Malik would assume the Security Council Presidency in June 1952, when the first report of the UN Disarmament Commission was due to come before the Council. Hickerson was also aware that Malik wanted to debate the question of bacteriological warfare, and expected the Soviet delegate to take advantage of the disarmament report to repeat the charges of BW use in Korea. Hickerson prepared two draft resolutions to introduce when Malik brought up the issue. The first proposed the creation of an impartial commission of inquiry. Hickerson expected that to be vetoed by the Russians, so his second subsequent resolution condemned them for frustrating the investigation. He knew that proposal would meet the same fate as its predecessor, but believed the vetoes would expose communist insincerity to all but the most biased observers and provide much positive publicity for the American position. The State Department liked the plan, and when Malik repeated the accusations on 18 June and submitted a draft resolution calling for all states to ratify the 1925 Geneva Convention prohibiting biological warfare, Deputy U.S. Representative to the UN Ernest Gross was ready to reply. He gave a lengthy explanation of American motives and innocence, condemned the Soviets for their own work on bacteriological warfare, and circulated a draft resolution to permit the ICRC to have free rein to conduct an impartial investigation of all the communist accusations. The Security Council rejected Malik's resolution and his attempts to bring North Korea and Communist China into the debate, and instead focused on the American proposal. When a vote was scheduled, Malik cast the lone dissent, as expected. Gross then introduced the second resolution recognizing the ICRC and WHO offers to help, condemning the Soviet veto, and concluding from their refusal to allow the impartial investigation that the communist charges "must be presumed to be without substance

3, Box 903, RG 341. The Psychological Strategy Board had been established by Presidential directive on 4 April 51 "to accomplish nationally consistent and cumulative results from coordinated psychological operations." Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, SUBJECT: Establishment of the Psychological Strategy Board, 9 Apr 51, in microfilm, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2: 1946-53, Meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1980), Reel 2.

and false." The Security Council vote on that resolution was 9-1-1, with Pakistan abstaining and the Soviet Union casting its 50th veto. Though the resolutions were defeated, the United States did gain in public relations. Press coverage emphasized the Soviet intransigence, and Gross was featured in newsreels condemning the "false and malicious" BW charges of the Red campaign.²⁶

The accusations of germ warfare were echoed in the Eastern European press and had some impact in Asia, especially in India and Pakistan. There the charges reinforced suspicions about American treatment of the "colored peoples of Asia" and the belief that the United States "by its actions and failure to act" was prolonging a war that might develop into World War III. Whether major communist leaders really believed that China and North Korea were the target of a bacteriological warfare campaign or not, they had little incentive to thoroughly investigate the accusations coming from field commanders while the propaganda campaign seemed to be garnering support at home and abroad. New revelations from Russian archives strongly support the argument, however, that mid-level Chinese and Russian operatives cooperating with the North Korean government had faked evidence. Their actions included creating false infestation maps, gathering cholera and plague bacillus from infected people in North Korea and China, injecting condemned prisoners with the diseases, and burying infected bodies that could be found to support the epidemic claims. The effort was used in mid-1952 to convince two carefully chosen groups of observers, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacteriological Warfare in Korea and China, that the United States was indeed using germ warfare. However, by April 1953 the post-Stalin government in Moscow found out about the fabrication of evidence, and determined that the claims concerning the use of chemical and biological weapons by US forces were false. Fearing that revelations of the deception could be embarrassing and cause "political damage," Soviet representatives "recommended" to

²⁶ Memorandum by the Asst Scty of State for UN Affairs to the Deputy Under Scty of State, 20 May 52, pp. 210-212 and Editorial Note, pp. 343-344, in US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume XV, Korea (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1984), Part 1; "U.S. Proposes Investigation of Bacteriological Warfare Charges," Department of State Bulletin, vol. 27 (July 7, 1952), pp. 32-37, and "Security Council Statement of July 3," (July 28, 1952), p. 159; Thomas J. Hamilton, "Malik Blocks U.N. Vote on Inquiry Into Red Charges of Germ Warfare," The New York Times, 24 Jun 52, p. 1; Lead story, Universal International Newsreels, Vol. 25, No. 571, 19 Jun 52, Record Group 200, NA II.

China and North Korea that they curtail their campaign, and the accusations promptly ceased.²⁷

The most significant effect of the germ warfare propaganda was on the North Korean and Chinese home fronts. The common people and soldiers took the BW charges very seriously, and were motivated to fight harder and support public health programs. Allegations that American aircraft were releasing smallpox and typhus germs could also cause Chinese troops to panic, however. The situation was worsened by outbreaks of cholera, plague, and meningitis which the men also assumed had been caused by the enemy, but were really just a part of the normal spring epidemic season. In March the Chinese government launched a "patriotic health and epidemic prevention campaign," and asked citizens to kill insects and clean cities and roads. Millions of civilians were vaccinated, as were over 90% of front line troops. Some American POWs also got some of the "monster shots," and reported that "all of North Korea had fever and sore arms." The result of the sanitation and health drives was a significant decrease in infectious diseases that allowed communist officials to declare victory over American BW technology while propaganda continued to keep the UN on the defensive in treaty negotiations. The campaign also inflamed the civil population in North Korea so much that they went out of their way to hunt downed airmen, insuring that they had virtually no chance to evade immediate capture. Attempts to "propagandize" American POWs about BW sometimes backfired. One group of enterprising non-commissioned officers gathered up a number of dead beetles and spiders around their prison camp and painted "U.S. Mark 7" on their backs! Reportedly "this counter activity threw the Commies into a spin."²⁸

²⁷ State Department Intelligence Reports, "The Effect of the Bacteriological Warfare Campaign," 7 Oct and 7 Nov 52, on Reel 5 of microfilm collection, OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports, Vol. VIII, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, and the Far East Generally: 1950-1961 Supplement (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1979); Zhang, pp. 182-183, 186. The new revelations are covered in Kathryn Weathersby, "Deceiving the Deceivers: Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, and the Allegations of Bacteriological Weapons Use in Korea" and Milton Leitenberg, "New Russian Evidence on the Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations: Background and Analysis," The Cold War International History Project Bulletin (Winter 1998), pp. 176-199. Not surprisingly, the most dedicated proponents of the accusations such as Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman dispute the importance of these documents. But even in their research they admit they have never found a "smoking gun" to prove BW was ever used. For more on the communist manipulation of the BW investigations, see Regis, pp. 147-151.

²⁸ Zhang, pp. 181-186; Maj. Gen. William F. Dean, General Dean's Story (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), pp. 275-278; Entry for 28 Apr 53, Weyland Memoranda for Record, Vol. IV, 53/01/01 - 53/07/31, File 168.7104-7, AFHRA.

Besides additional accusations of the American use of gas bombs, a new ingredient was added to the "hate campaign" in early May 1952. Radio Peking and Pravda provided excerpts from the confessions of two American airmen, First Lieutenants John S. Quinn, a B-26 pilot, and Kenneth L. Enoch, his navigator, who admitted that they had been forced to drop "germ bombs" by the "warmongers of Wall Street" as part of an extensive BW effort against China and Korea. Chinese interrogators, with Soviet help, developed a comprehensive program of threats of death or prison along with psychological and physical assaults to break down carefully selected subjects. One former prisoner told me that he was young, scared, and naïve, and that while his confession did alleviate his suffering, he thought that his claims were so wild that no one would believe them. Other airmen confessed to BW usage to divert their interrogators from attempting to extract nuclear knowledge. Eventually thirty-eight flyers would confess to participation in biological warfare, though the American government was most concerned with eight of them who had been featured most in communist propaganda films and broadcasts. Besides Quinn and Enoch, these included four more Air Force officers, along with two Marines. The State Department denied their claims, asserting the statements had been induced by torture and brainwashing, while the Air Force painstakingly investigated every aspect of the confessions. They found enough inconsistencies to believe that the officers concerned had not caved in completely, though the discrepancies could not be released immediately to discredit the statements because of fears the communists would then harm the officers or the information might help the enemy refine interrogation techniques. In March 1953 the Air Force and Marine Corps did furnish declassified information to the American UN delegation for use in "an aggressive countercharge" there.²⁹

²⁹ Msg, 59755, HQ USAF to CG FEAF, 16 May 52 and JCS 1776/293, 12 Jun 52, p. 1562 and Memo, BG Charles Banfill to Chief of Staff, USAF, SUBJECT: Investigation of Allegations Regarding a Use of Bacteriological Warfare by UN, 26 Jun 52, Sec. 2; Memo, Psychological Warfare Division to Directorate of Intelligence, USAF, SUBJECT: Bacteriological Warfare Charges by Communists, 5 Nov 52, with 6 Nov 52 indorsement from Directorate of Intelligence, Sec. 3; Memo from HQ USAF, SUBJECT: Investigation into Communist Allegations of USAF Participation in Biological Warfare in Korea, 27 Mar 1953, Sec. 5; Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense by the Secretary of the Air Force, 18 Mar 53, Sec. 4; Memo, Secretary of Defense to Secretary of the Air Force and Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, SUBJECT: Statements Regarding Biological Warfare by Members of the US Air Force and the US Marine Corps, 15 Sep 53, Sec. 7, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341; Army Security Center, "U.S. Prisoners of War in the Korean Operation: A Study of Their Treatment and Handling by the North Korean Army and the Chinese Communist Forces," November 1954, copy furnished by Prof.

Quinn and Enoch were suspected of being the most serious collaborators. Another pilot accused them of flying off course on purpose to defect. There were reports that Quinn went around to POW compounds lecturing on the evils of USAF germ warfare. Non-commissioned officers in one camp who came into possession of two pistols and ten rounds of ammunition reserved one bullet to use on him if he ever showed up to talk there. He also conducted interviews with foreign correspondents. The first visual evidence of their collaboration was Enoch's appearance in a film confiscated on its way to South America in late 1952. By early the next year a second, better quality, film had been seized by US Customs from a woman returning from a "peace conference" abroad. This one featured confessions by Quinn, Enoch and two fighter pilots. The USAF Psychological Operations Division dispatched a chaplain with a copy of the film to Los Angeles to view it with Quinn's wife. She noted that he looked haggard and aged, and showed the chaplain letters revealing her husband's "ultra-patriotic spirit." She asked if he would be court-martialed upon his return, but the chaplain assured her that the Air Force planned only to rehabilitate those subjected to brainwashing.³⁰

The Air Force had some public relations plans, as well, to supplement the theme of "forced false confessions" being promulgated by the State Department through their Voice of America and International Press facilities. When an American lawyer who had been interned in Shanghai for sixteen months returned with stories that he had been drugged with "truth medicine" to extract damaging statements, "it raised immediate speculation" that the airmen's confessions had been obtained the same way. As the possibility for an armistice grew, so did Air Force hopes they could recover the airmen to recant their confessions, though until the last minute there were fears that the communists would not return them for that very reason. General Mark Clark, who succeeded Ridgway as UN commander in Korea, received special instruc-

Allan Millett, Ohio State University; Millett, *Their War for Korea* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002), pp. 252-253.

³⁰ Entry for 28 Apr 53, Weyland Memoranda for Record, Vol. IV, 53/01/01 - 53/07/31, File 168.7104-7; FBIB GRNC W171847, Transmission from Peking, 17 Jun 52, in HQ FEAF, *History of the Far East Air Forces, 1 January - 30 June 1952*, Vol. II, File K720.01, AFHRA; Memo, Directorate of Intelligence to Directorate of Plans, SUBJECT: Affidavit of 1st Lt V.E. Tharp - SPECIAL INQUIRY, 30 Jan 53 and Memo, Col. John Hutchison to MG Lee, SUBJECT: Germ Warfare Charges, 26 Jan 53 and Memo, Chaplain (Major) Harry McKnight, Jr. to COL. J.W. Anderson, SUBJECT: Report of Chaplain's Visit with Mrs. John S. Quinn, 20 Apr 53, Sec. 4, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341.

tions to demand accountability for the Marine and Air Force officers involved in the BW confessions if they were not repatriated, since "Recovery of a single individual would be of inestimable value for National propaganda purposes, and have a salutary effect upon conduct of American military personnel in contact with communist forces in future hostilities." He was even authorized to initiate "clandestine and covert activities" to find them and get them back.³¹

However, none of that was necessary. Five of the airmen arrived back in San Francisco in September 1953, and a representative from the USAF Psychological Warfare Division gathered written statements and made film and tape recordings. All the returnees claimed they had been coerced by mental and physical torture including threats of death, and Quinn claimed to have been brainwashed so effectively as to have become one of the "living dead men, controlled human robots" who did the Communists' bidding. Copies of the statements were given to the American UN delegation, while some film footage was provided to newsreels. Their coverage juxtaposed clips from the "so-called confessions" of the Communist movies with Air Force footage of the repatriated POWs talking about torture and threats, to show how the "big lie technique spawned by Hitler was brought up to date by the Reds."³²

At the United Nations in late October, the American delegation presented the sworn statements and mounted a spirited attack on the communist abuse of POWs while denying all the BW accusations. The New York Times even published the statement from Col. Walker Mahurin. He explained that Chinese interrogators began to maltreat him in October 1952 to force him to confess to BW crimes. He spent over a month sitting at attention on a stool for fifteen hours a day, and once did that for

³¹ Henry R. Lieberman, "Freed American Tells of Drugging With 'Truth Medicine' in China," The New York Times, 12 Jul 52, p. 1; Memo, MG Lee to LTG White, SUBJECT: Air Force Council Showing of Psychological Warfare Movie, 5 Nov 52, Sec. 3; Memo, Col. Hutchison to MG Lee, SUBJECT: Germ Warfare Charges, 26 Jan 53, Sec. 4; Msg, DA 945519, DA G2 to CINCFE J2, 6 Aug 53, Sec. 5, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341.

³² Memorandum for Record by LTC Floyd Robinson, with attached memorandum from Gen. (ret) G.B. Erskine and statements of POWs, 12 Oct 1953, Sec. 7, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341; Universal International Newsreels, Vol. 26, No. 513, 29 Oct 53, Record Group 200, NA II. The actual film footage of the September POW interviews is available in Record Group 342 at the National Archives II, entries NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-34921 and NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-35833. Endicott and Hagerman argue that since, in their opinion, the airmen were not really subjected to much abuse in the POW camps, but were pressured strongly to deny the BW allegations when they were repatriated, the recantations are actually less believable than the original confessions!

thirty-eight hours straight. After months of death threats and solitary confinement, he finally agreed to cooperate in May 1953. After two months of creating stories based on the suggestions of his interrogators, he signed and wire-recorded an acceptable confession on 8 August. He was then told the war had ended on 27 July and he would soon be repatriated. However, the Supreme Command still did not like his statement, and he had to repeat his performance on 2 September with a new confession mostly written by his captors before he was allowed to head south for freedom.³³

As another part of the effort to refute the communist charges in 1952, General O.P. Weyland, commander of Far East Air Forces in Korea, offered to let UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge reveal that FEAF had no BW capability, though Weyland emphasized the security implications of the release of that sensitive information.³⁴ Ed Regis in his book *The Biology of Doom* has shown that the maximum capability of American biological warfare combat-readiness at that time was making "a mock attack with an incapacitating bacterium (*Brucella Suis*, the agent of undulant fever) against 3,000 boxed guinea pigs" on a practice bombing range.³⁵ The Communist BW allegations had actually inspired increased American investment in such programs since the accusations could be interpreted as setting the stage for Communist use of such agents, but little progress had been made by the end of the Korean War. An anthrax plant had been built in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, but it did not become operational until 1954. The only deployable BW agent in the U.S. inventory in 1953 consisted of 2,500 units of anti-crop rust. In addition, the Air Force had 5,000 tons of anti-crop chemicals. One of the new delivery means under development by General Mills Inc. was a balloon bomb similar to those launched against the United States by Japan in World War II. It was considered an especially effective way to dispense anti-crop agents over Russia. By the time it reached field testing in 1954, neither the balloons nor any other BW system were needed in Korea. Conventional weapons had been good enough to achieve an armistice to end the fighting on the battlefield.³⁶

³³ Sworn Statement by Col. Walker M. Mahurin, USAF, "Communist Way: Case History of a Confession," *The New York Times*, 1 Nov 53, p. E3.

³⁴ Msg, V0222 CG, Weyland to White, 26 Mar 53, Sec. 4, File OPD 383.6 Korea (12 Jul 51), Box 903, RG 341.

³⁵ Regis, pp. 138-143.

³⁶ Memo, MG Howard Bunker to LTG T.D. White, SUBJECT: Air Force Program for Biological and Chemical Warfare, 22 Apr 53, BW-CW General Decimal Files, 1953, Box 1; Memo, Col. Frank Seiler to MG Bunker, SUBJECT: Briefing for LTG Partridge, 24 Jun 53, with inclosure,

Ironically, while the Korean War was the catalyst for the implementations of the strategy of containment that would contribute so heavily to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the last major vestiges of the Cold War are still evident on the Korean peninsula. Since the armistice was signed in 1953, there have been, according to the best statistics I have found, 1,435 major provocations and violations of the demilitarized zone. At least 889 North Korean, 388 South Korean, and 90 American soldiers have died in these incidents.³⁷ Even more than Americans living half a world away, the Japanese, among other East Asians, are aware of the continuing regional tensions caused by the Communist regime in Pyongyang, particularly by their efforts to build an atomic arsenal of their own. Some American analysts trace the motivation for the North Korean nuclear program directly to the devastating Korean War air campaign conducted by the Americans. In their view, the North Koreans have not forgotten that experience, and are seeking a deterrent to prevent the United States from inflicting such punishment again.³⁸ Just as Dwight Eisenhower believed that his nuclear threats ended a war in Korea in 1953, the North Koreans appear to believe that their nuclear weapons will somehow limit the next one.

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BW-CW General Decimal Files, 1953, Box 2; Memo, Col. Guthrie to BW-CW Division, Asst for Atomic Energy, SUBJECT: Military Characteristics for a Biological Bomb for Balloon Delivery, 29 Jan 53 and Letter, MG Yates to Commander, Air Research and Development Command, SUBJECT: Development of the Balloon System for Delivery of Anti-Crop BW Munitions, 13 Nov 53 and Memo, BG J.C. Jensen to Asst for Atomic Energy, SUBJECT: Requirements for Coordinated Staff Action on E77 (Biological Bomb for Balloon Delivery), 18 Dec 53, BW-CW General Decimal Files, 1953, Box 6, RG 341; JSPC 954/29, Joint Strategic Plans Committee, "Chemical (Toxic) and Biological Warfare Readiness," 13 Aug 53, in microfilm, Records of the JCS, Part 2: 1946-53, Strategic Issues, Section I, Atomic Weapons, Reel 4. On the Japanese use of balloon bombs in World War II, see Crane, Bombs, Cities, and Civilians (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), p. 122. Army Air Forces Commanding General "Hap" Arnold feared the enemy was going to use them for biological warfare.

³⁷ Statistics obtained from U.S. Forces Korea.

³⁸ Selig Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea: How Real a Threat?" World Policy Journal, 17(Fall 2000): pp. 13-24.

